



# Family farming and gender in a valley in northern Spain

Eloy Gómez-Pellón

Universidad de Cantabria, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Avda. de los Castros s/n, 39005, Santander, Spain

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Family farming  
Farm  
Gender  
Cantabria  
Spain

## ABSTRACT

This study is the outcome of research on family farming in a coastal valley in northern Spain. The objective of the study is to determine to what degree traditional norms and values persist in the practices of family farmers. A qualitative methodology was used in the research. It demonstrates that, contrary to the optimism expressed by some studies, social changes have not succeeded in transforming the organization of family farms, or the rigid guidelines associated with the social reproduction of these rural economy units, which are still subject to traditional forms of succession and inheritance. As a result, so-called farm ideology is still a very present feature of everyday life. This ideology, defined by its strong masculine and patriarchal content, places the man as the majority owner and the woman as the wife and producer, left to take on an endless list of roles, both visible and "invisible". Equal rights for women, although universally recognised, are still far from being achieved in this valley of northern Spain.

## 1. Introduction

In the humid valleys of Atlantic Spain, some ways of working the land persist, with the weight of the past making itself felt. This study considers a rural area in the coastal strip of Cantabria, in north Spain, characteristic of that Atlantic ecozone. The soil and the climate made livestock farming the dominant economic activity until the late 20th century, when it began to lose importance though still playing a significant role as well as enjoying the general appreciation of the inhabitants of the region. This farming activity is still organised around old farm holdings, whose number has declined in the last quarter of a century due to economic efficiency factors. These agrarian units consist of a series of agricultural properties, comprising buildings, land and livestock, worked by the owner or head of the farm, and thus represent the livelihood of a family dedicated to farming either exclusively or in a system of pluriactivity.

In this family system, the farms are veritable economic units, in which the labour is exclusively provided by the family members. Most of the produce is aimed at the market, although a part of it is generally kept for consumption by the household. Nonetheless, some farms are based principally on their own consumption of their produce but these are usually small or marginal units and will not be an object of study here. On these family farms in the coastal valleys of Cantabria, the agrarian sector has not diversified and production for the market is generally in volumes of milk. It should be noted that family farming is defined as a type of farm or organisation of agrarian production that results from an

organic link between the unit of production and a family, through which mainly family labour is used. Therefore, when paid work exists, it is complementary (Bélières et al., 2014; Bosc et al., 2014). The role of women is vital owing to their occupation both in the domestic sphere and in the daily farm work, which is sometimes combined with other activities in local or more distant labour markets.

Family farms have sometimes been seen as a way of organising production that is resistant to capitalism (Thompson, 1971; Scott, 1976; Wolf, 1982) and on other occasions as a form of production that is refractory to the political context (Chayanov, 1966; Narotzky, 2016). However, there is now a growing consensus that family agriculture and livestock farming, owing to the proportionality of the means they use, contribute to the sustainability of the rural world in ecological, economic and social terms, and they decisively support food security and the fight against poverty (Hilmi and Burbi, 2015, 2016, Ploeg and van der, 2008, 2010). The efficiency of family farming is the reason why it is found all over the world and in the European Union it accounts for nearly all the existing farm units. Family farms play a key role in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda as they participate very favourably towards achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals that have been set out in the United Nations Agenda 2030 (UN, 2015). Family farming is inseparable from food security and sustainable agriculture, promoted in SDG 2, or as regards combatting climate change, as stated in SDG 13, and can play a key role as a guarantee of balance between the urban and rural worlds (SDG 11), or as a guardian of biodiversity, as expressed in SDG 15. Above all, SDG 5 deals with gender

E-mail address: [gomezpel@unican.es](mailto:gomezpel@unican.es).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103340>

Received 26 June 2023; Received in revised form 17 June 2024; Accepted 2 July 2024

Available online 16 July 2024

0743-0167/© 2024 The Author. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

equality, which makes it inseparable from the role of women in farm units all over the world even though they are still very far from reaching the equality proposed for them in the 2030 Agenda designed by United Nations. Other SDG, such as number 8, also allude to the equality between men and women that is implicit in this study of family farming. It should be borne in mind that, until now, gender policies applied to the rural world have been insufficient as regards the women who live there (vid. Bock, 2015; Little, 2015; Wiest, 2016).

In Spain, the rural world acquired great interest for social sciences after the 1970s, when emigration from the country to urban areas intensified, leading to the consequent abandonment of family farms (Nadal et al., 1977). This coincided with the interest in European agricultural policy at the time, in view of Spain's imminent accession to the European Community. In this way, literature was produced, with a delay compared to other European countries, from sociological, anthropological, economic, legal and geographic perspectives, among others, with a predominantly functionalist position, as in France and other countries (Cardon, 2001). The main studies include those by Fernández de Rota (1983), Alonso et al. (1991), Díaz Méndez and Díaz Martínez (1995), Gómez García and Rico González, 2005, Díaz Méndez (2006), Camarero (2006), Camarero and Sampedro (2008), Moyano Estrada (2014) and Aguilar Criado (2014). They focus much more on the rural environment than on family farming although this is always taken into account. At the same time, other scholars have examined the situation of women in the rural world and specifically on family farms: such as García Ramón and Canoves (1988); Canoves et al. (1989), Mazariegos and Porto Vázquez (1991), García Bartolomé (1992), Sampedro Gallego (1996), Cruces Roldán and Palenzuela Chamorro (2006), among others. In general terms, women are considered in those studies but their situation is not necessarily viewed from a gender perspective.

The objective of the present study is to determine to what degree traditional norms and values persist in family farming units in a valley in north Spain. It therefore aims to examine the possible presence of patriarchal notions, rather than doctrines of modern equality in such spheres as gender, associated with working the land and how they have governed agrarian activity historically. Consequently, the research question being posed is: since human societies are generally moving from traditional values to those of modernity, to what extent has greater resistance to change in the small world of family farms slowed down the conquest of the rights of gender equality?

## 2. Theoretical framework

The practice of family farming is of great interest for social sciences in general. Although this type of agrarian unit is characterised by a wide array of forms with deep historical roots, family farms are undoubtedly an area of analysis that can be approached from different points of view. As an analytical category it acquired consistency in the 1980s (Rodríguez Zúñiga and Soria Gutiérrez, 1985; García de León, 1996), when peasant studies gradually gave way to the study of agrarian units corresponding to modernised agriculture, in which family farmers fulfilled a very important function. In Europe, family farming is currently the most common agrarian model (Bélières et al., 2014), as it makes up 97% of all the existing farms, and occupies 69% of farmland (FAO, 2019). In Spain, 93% of the 914,871 farms that exist are framed within the field of family farming (FAO, 2020) and their labour represents 63% of the total employment in the agricultural sector. Family farming can be defined, in the words of authors such as Bélières et al. (2014), as a way of organising agrarian production characterised by an indissoluble connection between the unit of production and the family, either through ownership or leasehold, which is able to make use of family labour and excludes the existence of permanent employees. This organisation of production allows the family's own consumption of the produce, which may be partial or dominant.

Family farmers establish relationships with the means of production and society that give rise to practices that have been studied with

different approaches in recent decades. The *livelihoods approach* is well known as it pays special attention to the farmers' strategies in daily life. Through the use of their available assets, they confront the conditions imposed by the environment and the social and cultural world in which they live. A text by Sen (1981) is often cited as the starting point for this approach. The methodology of this procedure empowers case studies on a local scale. It aims to identify all the household's assets: human capital, social and natural capital, capital produced and cultural capital, so that the wide range of their possibilities can be analysed (Bebbington et al., 2004).

A rather different approach among those used to study family farmers is the *farming styles* procedure, following the initial proposals of Ploeg and van der (1993) and Long (2001). It takes into account the agency of the individual actor, which comprises two main capacities: that of understanding or *knowledgeability* and that of acting or *capability*. These amount to an approach that is largely taken from Giddens. It has been extremely successful in social science and is very present in the work of Ploeg and van der (1993), but has also been severely criticised, as by Long (2001), who notes an individualist bias in the approach.

These conceptualisations are closely connected with one another and a genealogy linking them is widely recognised. One that has acquired most prestige in recent years analyses the *resistance strategies* of family farmers, and is closely related to rural sociology. It refers to the fact that family farmers are living in a globalised world, governed by productivity models, in which the small local producer adopts an attitude of material and symbolic resistance, in accordance with a view seen in Scott (2000) and which does not differ too much from that of Ploeg and van der (1993). Family farmers, beleaguered by a situation that creates risks and produces uncertainties, opt for differential attitudes that allow them to compete in the market, with innovative products, within a decrease in the dependency on raw materials, and with collaborative means of production in places of local production.

Finally, another very interesting approach corresponds to what might be termed *reproduction strategies*, which like the others are strategies of those actors in a small-scale production, but focusing primarily on the practices they carry out in order to preserve the social and economic space of the family business. These are practices that social science theory has described as pre-reflexive or unconscious (Bourdieu, 1994), as they originate out of the need to give a practical meaning to everyday life, which is often explained by the concept of *habitus* developed by Bourdieu himself. In accordance with this, socialised people in similar social environments reproduce habits, practices and customs that are also similar. Individual actions are framed in long-lasting attitudes that have been internalised by the people, without necessarily being considered consciously. As understood by this reproduction strategy approach, small family farmers, uniquely tied to the land and its produce, adopt practices that unconsciously involve ways of avoiding the risk of unproductiveness through the generating principal that includes the *habitus*.

This last approach is particularly close to the idea of resistance strategies and to a greater or lesser extent to the other approaches, since they are all related. It is not for nothing that it has been taken into account by most theoreticians of family farming. The success of the reproduction strategies approach lies in the special importance it gives to the practices of unconscious social reproduction, resulting from the principle of *habitus*, in which family farmers perpetuate their position in the social space without renouncing their capacity of agency (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2005; Craviotti, 2012). The accidental weight that Long (2001) attributes to unconscious practices of Mexican famers, whose decisions are above all rational, becomes the substantial reason for the regularities of social life in Bourdieu's theory. We believe that the present approach, framed in the *reproduction strategies* perspective, will provide concepts and explanations that will help us to reach the objective of the study and answer the research question that has been set. It will contribute towards understanding the existence of practices of succession and inheritance that tend towards the conservation of the full

ownership of assets in the hands of men and the adoption of a traditional patriarchal type of ideology that favours the position of males over that of females in daily life. This contributes to the perpetuation of a situation of inequality between men and women.

Indeed, as regards gender, this paper acknowledges the change that has occurred in social science literature since the 1980s, owing to a shift from a functionalist perspective to a feminist one, generally of a constructivist type. This change in position was soon evident in the studies of Sarah Whatmore (1991a) when she discovered the surprising weight of the family and kinship ideology, which favoured the masculine status and related roles, in her research on dairy farms in southern England and the area around London. However, she also showed (Whatmore, 1991b) the theoretical deficiencies that existed at that time, including the consideration of the family as a unit of study but without taking into account that it was formed by power relations. She did not exclude criticism of feminist theory, which continued to employ the old dichotomy between production and reproduction or work and family, when family life took place in a single social space. Sarah Whatmore's critique of Marxist and feminist theories became even clearer in her study of *hybrid geographies* (Whatmore, 2002) and interest in *lived spaces*, in which rather than dichotomies, natural and social processes were inseparable.

The feminist perception was clearly present in Linda Price's studies of family farms in Wales (Price, 2010: 90–94), in which she found powerful patrilineal rules governing succession and inheritance; the consequence of an evident patriarchal conception that relegated the role of women. Equally, the studies of S. Shortall (2014: 72–74; 2017) on Irish family farming revealed, despite the discreet change that had taken place in gender roles, continuity in the old *farm discourse*, i.e., an old set of traditional values that supported an outlook based on powerful masculinity insensitive to women's rights. The gender perspective also led L. Balaine (2019) to detect the same hegemonic position of males on Irish family farms and an identical subordination of females, just as in the past.

A recent study by Gomes et al. (2022) carried out with qualitative methodology in two towns in inland Beira in Portugal, a country in which family farms contribute 68% of agricultural labour, demonstrates the existence of a sector where, despite growing feminisation, studies of family farming from a gender perspective are still scarce, and the ideology of farming is characterised by powerful masculinisation, based on the patrilineal transmission of the farm and clear subordination of women. This view does not differ from that of L. Saugeres (2002) in a study on the values of masculinity on farms in southern France, or even that of Sheridan et al. (2021) regarding Australian farms.

Nevertheless, together with these approaches, others have been adopting new and perhaps more optimistic points of view. For example, Contzen and Forney (2017) notes that on Swiss family farms the values of masculinity that still exist for practical rather than ideological reasons are giving way to new forms of succession and the inheritance of farms, as women take on responsibility for decision-making in the management of family farms. These new approaches include the attribution of epistemological explanations for the subordinated role of women. According to this viewpoint, researchers that employed functionalist or structuralist approaches have focused on male roles in family farming and ignored the increasingly important functions of women, as shown by Andersson and Lidestav (2014) in a study of Swedish agriculture. In turn, an article by Dufour and Giraud (2012) about south-west France notes a range of ideological discourses, depending on the background of the couples. A study of family farms in Austria (Eder et al., 2021) similarly showed the variation in continuist ideologies, such as the prevalence of the stem family and an appreciable change in the patterns of solidarity and conflict that extends to gender relations.

3. Methodology

A qualitative methodology has been used in the present study. As will

be explained below, the unit of observation is a coastal valley in Cantabria, one of the historical regions in Atlantic Spain, bordering on the Basque Country. Its name is the Aras valley. Although livestock farming is no longer the main activity of the inhabitants of the valley, it is still important because it forms the way of life of over a hundred families. I have obtained documentation previously, based on statistical information in successive population censuses and municipal statistical date. Censuses are conducted every ten years in Spain, the latest of which, now being published, was in 2021. The municipal registers are updated permanently and therefore it is possible to obtain reliable data at all times. Another source has been the agrarian censuses that are taken every ten years in Spain; the latest one in 2020. Agrarian statistics provided by the Government of Cantabria and other indicators of the National Statistics Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estadística: INE) and the Cantabrian Statistics Institute (Instituto Cántabro de Estadística: ICANE) have also been consulted.

The present study is part of much wider research undertaken since 2018. The ethnographic fieldwork that led to this paper has taken different courses. First, during the time of the research, I have carried out intense *information-gathering* (Table 1), focusing on and observing aspects of daily life, based on visible realities, such as those related to the division of labour. Second, the field notebooks contain information from 26 *informal conversations* of a circumstantial, random nature during everyday interaction with the inhabitants of the Aras valley. This number refers to conversations that led to useful information and does not include those that I have regarded as unenlightening. Another source of information, and possibly the most important one, has been *interviews* that were all *semi-structured*. This type of questionnaire is left open to allow for the introduction of questions, based on a basic script, depending on the course that the dialogue takes and which the interviewer had not even thought of, when the interviewee reveals something new that needs clarifying. It also enables the interviewee to feel comfortable with the dialogue, which resembles any other conversation, in which one or both of the participants enrich their knowledge during the interaction.

This paper is thus the consequence of interviews carried out in successive fieldwork from 2018 to mid-2022, during all seasons of the year. They were designed in advance in a semi-structured way. 17 of them were with women, between 19 and 84 years of age, of whom most (10) were between 45 and 65 (Table 1). Since 2018, I have interviewed 15 men between 22 and 83, most of whom (9) were between 45 and 65 (Table 1). All the interviews lasted more than one session and were longitudinal; that is to say, they remained open in time, thanks to the possibility of taking up the dialogue periodically. Finally, I was able to stay in the community under study during two periods, limited by my academic activity, of three weeks each, one in 2020 and the other in 2022. In that time my observations focused on two families whom, owing to their makeup and their communicative capacity, I had selected in the first phases of the research. These families allowed me to become an active member of the local community, welcoming me in different periods and allowing me to live among them. Their mediation also gave

**Table 1**  
Qualitative techniques used in the research in the Aras valley. Source: author's fieldwork. Produced by the author.

Technique	Frequency/ Number	Subjects
Visual ethnography (net-mapping)	Permanent	Subjects present in the units of observation
Semi-structured interviews	15 men - (3) <45 - (9) 45-65 - (3) >65	17 women - (3) <45 - (10) 45-65 - (4) > 65
Informal conversations	26	Random and circumstantial
Active observation	Permanent	Subjects present in the units of observation

me access to other families among which I was able to find my interviewees. Finally, these host families helped me to discover, understand and interpret aspects of local life which aroused my attention or involved greater complexity.

4. Results

4.1. Family farming rooted in the past

Although in physical geographical terms the area of study is the Aras valley, administratively it is a municipal district with a surface area of 77 square kilometres. Owing to its size and population, it is an optimal area for fieldwork with ethnographic methodology. Although its population was 4079 in the mid-20th century, it only had 2221 inhabitants in 2000, but then 2682 in 2020 (Table 2). This means that its population has grown in the 21st century because of the importance the valley has acquired as a residential area. In the same period, agrarian activity has declined from a situation in the 1960s when it was the occupation of practically all the inhabitants of the valley. Since 1962, when there were 806 units in the area dedicated to family livestock farming, the number has not stopped decreasing and many residents have chosen to migrate. The number of farms fell to 360 in 1999 and to 152 in 2020 (Tables 2 and 3). Since the late 19th century, farming has been based on intensive dairy herds, focused on Friesian cows, which are particularly suitable for milk production.

Until half a century ago, family farming was the almost exclusive economic activity of the residents of this Cantabrian valley. Since then, there has been a steady decline in this activity, which nonetheless is still very important in shaping local identity. The inhabitants of the valley agree in valuing the role of the family farmers positively, among other reasons because the families of all the local inhabitants were connected with dairy farming in the past. In addition, over time, agrarian activity has been fused with subsistence and Arcadian values of country life. In other words, the agricultural world has provided idealised images that have been woven around village life. The abandonment of farming and migration are justified locally by older inhabitants as unwished-for acts that do not break the link to the land of their ancestors. As one person told me: “nobody went away [referring to the rural exodus], it was the land that forced them to leave [alluding to the small size of the farms and the dispersion of the fields]”. This is the reason for the local prestige in family farming, which contrasts with the lack of interest shown by younger residents, in the same way as observed by Čerňič Istenič and Knežević Hočevar (2013) in Slovenia, by L. Šikić-Mičanović (2009) in Croatia and by C. Charatsari (2014) in Thessaly in Greece.

Even in the last quarter of the 20th century, family farms had hardly been mechanised, which meant that daily work in the fields was carried out largely by hand. The farms, then and now, are routinely handed down from the past, owing to the social reproduction of the structure, generation after generation (Bourdieu, 1994). This means that the

**Table 2**  
The Aras valley (Cantabria, Spain). Sources: *Population Census* (1991, 2000, 2010 and 2020); INE, *Agrarian Census*, 1990, 2000, 2009 and 2020).

Population and number of farm units (1990–2020)	
Population of the Aras valley (municipality of Voto, Cantabria)	1991: 2546 inhabitants
	2000: 2221 inhabitants
	2010: 2712 inhabitants
	2020: 2682 inhabitants
Units (family farms)	1990: 448 units
	1999: 360 units
	2009: 239 units
	2020: 152 units

**Table 3**  
Changes in family farming in the Aras valley. Source: National Statistics Institute (INE); Cantabrian Statistics Institute (ICANE).

Year	Family farms	Heads of cattle	Heads per farm
1962	806	7,911	9.8
1990	448	10,786	24.5
1999	360	10,029	27.8
2009	239	6,814	28.5
2020	152	6,366	41.0

house, the land and the tools, and usually the livestock, were transmitted from one generation to the next without dividing up the inheritance. As each unit was conceived historically for subsistence farming, it was always small and rarely any larger than 5 or 6 ha. As one interviewee told me, each farm “was just large enough for no one to die, but to be quite hungry”, alluding to the historical insufficiency of the system. However, a transcendental change took place in the late 20th century. As the drift from the land was a reality that had increased in the course of the century, the farms that persisted grew in size considerably as they bought up or rented the land of farmers who were gradually giving up the activity (Table 4).

But, why were these family farms abandoned? There are several reasons and they are all important. First, the agrarian structure in the Aras valley has long been an obstacle to the development of modern farming because the current system has not been able to break from the past. Each farm still occupies an insufficient area of land. At the start of the 21st century, each unit farmed between 3 and 15 ha, and for the most part fewer than 10 ha. Similarly, the 360 units in the 1999 Agrarian Census were divided up into 3,464 fields. This is not an efficient way for agriculture and livestock farming to be carried out. The reduction in the number of fields (by the concentration of plots) that took place in the late 20th century did not suffice to solve the problem of the excessive division of the land into small fields. This makes mechanisation of the farming system difficult, especially considering that much of the land is on steep hillsides. For this reason, more than a quarter of the farms do not own a tractor. In 2020, the majority of farms (88) have an area between 5 and 20 ha, with an increasing number of farms between 20 and 50 ha (50). Therefore, the progress that has been made in farming has involved large investments in capital, mortgaging the farms, but also with a constant increase in the units of labour employed.

I have been told on numerous occasions about the cost of the investments needed to modernise holdings that required new stables, silos to store feed, milking parlours, tanks to refrigerate the milk, and so on, as well as the purchasing of expensive machinery. “It forces us to taken permanent or temporary jobs off the farm to pay off the never-ending interest on the debt” as one interviewee told me, in allusion to the pluriactivity that is common on family farms. In addition, a general crisis in dairy farming occurred in Spain because of the milk quotas imposed by the European Commission between 1984 and 2015. The milk quota system was applied in all the countries of the European Union and consisted of fixing a volume of production for each one that, in the case of Spain, was extremely low as it did not reach 60% of national consumption. This system forced farms with better prospects to buy

**Table 4**  
Family farming in the Aras valley in 2020. Source: National Statistics Institute (INE), *Agrarian Census* (2020).

2020	
Number of farm units	152 (81 produce for the market)
Total surface area	3,553 ha.
Area of the most common type of holdings	5–20 ha: 88 units 20–50 ha: 50 units
Full-time head of the farm unit	126
Part-time (head of the farm) unit	26
Tenure of the farmland	79.37% (owned) 20.63% (rented)



quotas from farms that were ceasing activity, which in some cases led to them mortgaging the family farm for several years. An interviewee explained that “when a farmer said that he was not going to continue, all the active farmers in the valley were knocking on his door to buy his milk quota, which caused disputes that made local life tense”.

4.2. Institutional respect and resistance

These transformations have not led to substantial changes in the historical system of family farms during the 21st century, despite the significant modifications, and agrarian activity is still the basis of the local economy. Moreover, family farms are still the key institution in social reproduction, not only because of the provision of homes, land and livestock that families need but also because of the family organisation, based on what is known as a *stem family* and even on the family’s collective memory, as Cassidy and McGrath (2014) have shown in the case of Ireland. A stem family is a kind of extended family, ideally with three generations (grandparents, children and grandchildren) living together in the same household in such a way that there is only one conjugal unit, although single siblings and other relatives in any of the generations, also usually single, may also form part of the household (Ruggles, 2010). It is a common mechanism of social reproduction in family farming in Europe and other parts of Eurasia, both historically and in the present, as demonstrated in the publication edited some years ago by Fauve-Chamoux (2009). The cases of Ireland (Gibbon and Curtin, 1978), France (Fauve-Chamoux, 2009), Austria (Ehmer, 2009) and Western Europe in general (Reher, 1998) are well known, among others. In northern Spain, the Aras valley is an excellent example (Table 5), of how stem families guarantee the functioning of the family farm by managing the economic needs and supplying the labour required at any given time. Generation after generation, the adult members ensure the transmission of the indivisible inheritance of the property and unipersonal succession. In this way, a male son, often the eldest, becomes the heir and successor.

This is in accordance with the situation in other parts of Europe as regards the social reproduction of family farming, as studies in Wales have eloquently observed (Price and Evans, 2006; Price, 2010). The present study, however, differs in that it has shown that the transmission norm alters when the eldest son and other male sons are uninterested in continuing the family tradition and desist, so that a daughter then inherits the farm. An interviewee stated that “we women were always the outsiders in the family” to explain how women entered the family that owned the farm through marriage. Nonetheless, such an occurrence is regarded as an anomaly that does not alter the philosophy of masculinity and patriarchy that pervades all aspects of family farming. As an interviewee said: “even when a man entered the family and was the outsider, he ended up being the one who organised the household”. All the norms are based on the permanence of the institution which is the economic unit of the farm rather than the transience of the people. However, this institutionalisation of family farming is not without its conflicts, which

come out in the conversations with the interviewees: “you can’t imagine what it’s like to live with your mother-in-law or a brother-in-law in a house that belongs to your husband - I’ll die without it being mine”.

In reality, L. Price’s observations in Wales do not differ from those made more than thirty years ago by Sarah Whatmore about two agricultural areas in the south of England, in western Dorset, where there are numerous dairy farms, and the green belt around London, where mixed and diversified farms are more common (Whatmore, 1991a). After discarding the biologicist interpretation of the sexual division of labour, she concluded that the rules that govern family farms do not lie only in the nuclear family but in what might be called the ideology of the family and kinship, which particularly favours masculine status and the associated roles. She showed (Whatmore, 1991a) that in the United Kingdom in the late 20th century, about 90% of farmers were married men, and only an insignificant number of women were farm owners, between about 1 and 3%, generally owing to contingencies of different kinds. The same author pointed out that, according to anthropological and sociological literature at that time, the percentages were similar in the USA and France.

Indeed, the institutional changes in succession and inheritance in the Aras valley in the last quarter of the 20th century were a response to the permanent desertion of the system. The fact that the eldest son was replaced by another son had no other repercussions than those derived from a profound crisis in the institutional structure in the valley. Yet, the replacement of a son by a daughter was more significant because this meant that the man who married her joined the family project. If women had always been the outsiders in families, during the second half of the 20th century, the role of outsider was taken by men. “When men saw that a woman would inherit, she had a lot of suitors around her”, one old lady told me. The problem was serious then, because in the traditional structure, as we have seen, the family farm was passed down the male line, with the associated patriarchal values. In other words, no form of family business was imagined other than the man being the owner of the farm with his consequent condition as heir and successor.

At the same time as those changes, which are really strategic, were taking place, others were inspired by the prevailing philosophy in international organisations, with which they aimed to save family farming. Thus, from the 1970s, *part-time farming* became increasingly common, at the instance of the OECD and following the criterion of *time of employment*. (OCDE, 1978, Part-time farming in OECD countries, vol. 1 general report). Part-time farming was defined as the situation in which the owners of the farm unit devoted less than half of their working hours to the farm, or in which less than half of the family income came from the farm. This alternative became a way of avoiding the definitive abandonment of family livestock farming and at the same time, of increasing the inhabitants’ standard of living. However, it involved increasing the workload of the wife and children during the part of the day in which the owner of the farm was employed elsewhere. Interviewees explained that “it was the only way for the family farm not to disappear, but at the same time, many families discovered that they could live without the farm”. Moreover, it was not a new procedure because to a large extent it resembled the case of the *mixed workers* that had existed in other times, but inversely. Those had complemented their work in industry with subsistence farming, unlike the *part-time farmers* whose main job was generally in agriculture.

In the 1980s, while the mode of part-time farming did not disappear, the so-called *pluriactivity of the family unit* became important. This refers to those cases in which any of the family members of working age, and not only the owner, obtain a complementary income from the farm. It was a very difficult time for the survival of family livestock farming because agrarian activity was no longer considered primordial in the rural world, in a very different way from how it was seen in the case of part-time farming. This change had started when the European Commission published *The Future of Rural Society* in 1988 (COM, 1988 501 final, Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 4/88). Changes were gradually introduced that did not substantially threaten

**Table 5**  
Family farming in the Aras valley in 2020. Source: National Statistics Institute (INE), *Agrarian Census* (2020), Cantabrian Statistics institute (ICANE).

2020	
Owners of the farms	Men: 101 Women: 51 Shared: 0
Households dedicated to family farming	152
Family farms with three generations (stem families)	37 (out of 123 in the municipality)
Farming families in which the heir is not the eldest son.	32
Farming families in which the heir is female.	26
Dedication to agrarian activity in the municipality	11.34%

the permanence of an agrarian structure based on family smallholdings. However, once again the weight of innovation would fall on the wife and daughters of working age who, without giving up their work on the farm, also earned an income working locally or further away. A way of life was being developed which has become inseparable from family farming today. It can be summed up in an interviewee's comment about the coming-and-going and even the weariness of life on the farm: "we work more than ever and some of us have a little more money, but our lives are much worse than before".

#### 4.3. Hard times in gender terms

The consolidation of over a hundred farms that persisted in 2020 reflect an ideal type of farm with 50–70 dairy cows but based on the old field structure, which has always been an encumbrance. In this current ideal model that is being traced, its 25–30 ha of land are usually fragmented in 15 fields that are not even all in the same village or place as the farm but in surrounding villages. The meadows used by the farm unit are often several kilometres apart, even if the small core of the farm still exists. The old model of smallholdings, instead of disappearing, has maintained its structure intact. To put it another way, the problem is that farmers no longer work a small farm but the sum of dispersed small farms, whose fields are subject to different forms of tenure. The conclusion is that it is a model of farm that has undergone an irrational growth. The modernisation that has implied an increase in the size of the farm has taken place while preserving the historical agrarian structure.

The repercussions of so many changes have unmistakably affected the life of rural women in families devoted to cattle-farming. They are forced to spend much of each day away from the domestic environment *stricto sensu* and take on roles that would have been unimaginable in the past. In a normal working day, women spend a considerable amount of time moving the animals to graze in the meadows, of which there are several because of the small size of the fields. At the same time, there are the tasks of mowing grass and growing crops, which are generally carried out by men but which also increasingly involve women. In addition, women have not lost their responsibilities in the stable where they work, together with men, feeding, milking and cleaning the cows. All this is carried out in long working days which now cover practically every day in the year, unlike the usual situation in the past.

Whereas the tasks in cattle-farming used to be seasonal, in modern farming they are permanent. This is a form of cattle-farming that increasingly resembles large-scale corporate farming and which, however, is still tied to its traditional archaic family condition. The modern agrarian unit in the Aras valley never employs paid labour despite the increasing workload, in order to keep the modest profits. Unlike farming in previous times, most of the production is transferred to the market in the form of surpluses, with which they obtain profits that are small after taking into account the large investment and interest. The desolation caused by this way of life is expressed in the constant criticism of the administration: "politicians only come to see us when there are elections", or "no sector is more despised than farming", or "the government robs us and abuses us".

However, the burden supported by women is even heavier. The way to compensate for the insufficient profits is generally to take an outside job, which is usually done by women, because of the demand in the services sector in nearby towns. The mother or a young daughter often take temporary jobs at any time of the year in the tourism sector, especially in hostelry, in the canning industry or cleaning. They also often do care work in the social sector. The wages they obtain in this way are decisive because they balance the losses that might occur in agrarian activity and, naturally, pay the interest on the costs from investments. However, as may be supposed, this off-farm work is a large extra load for women who, at the end of the working day, sometimes even working in the underground economy, still have to carry out their work on the farm. In the ethnographic research, these women always regret their situation: "it was a mistake to stay working on the farm; those that left have much

better lives than me ...; I wouldn't want my daughters to do this ...".

Therefore, patriarchal conceptions envelop each and every aspect of life on family farms in this small valley in north Spain. The recent study by Elisabeth Prügl (2014) on agriculture and rural development in the European Union picks up many of these points noted in rural studies. The idea running through her monograph is that, just as Whatmore (1991a,b) and Price (2010). Price expressed, there is a hidden rule of male dominance in European rural farms that, for Prügl, has increased because of the neo-liberalism that emanates from community policies. The author, who links her analysis of political economy and philosophy with her fieldwork in the Altmark region in east Germany and the Bavarian forest and Danube region in west Germany (Prügl, 2014: 56–87), takes as her main point of reference the application of EU LEADER programmes and the CAP. She concludes that patriarchy is still very present in European agriculture. Adopting a constructivist feminist approach, Prügl detects multiple mechanisms of male power both at national level and on an EU scale (Prügl, 2014: 131–142). This perception has been nuanced in some of S. Shortall's studies on the difficulties in including the gender perspective in the European Rural Development Programme (Shortall, 2015) and, more specifically, the limited reach of the gender perspective in the CAP, which is even described as empty rhetoric (Bock, 2015; Shortall and Bock, 2015) because of its entrepreneurial nature and minimal attention to gender inequalities.

These observations of Prügl (2014) and Shortall and Bock (2015) are fully applicable to the present case of the Aras valley. Women are still responsible for housework, including cleaning and cooking, as well as looking after the children and any elder members of the household. Furthermore, rural women who live on farms also do the shopping in nearby supermarkets or a local shop, as well as many other chores, such as dealing with any paperwork that might involve going to the Town Hall or the corresponding public administration office. If the family have children of school age, it is the mother who goes to the schools for any meetings when necessary. Therefore, the list of jobs is so long that no woman on a family farm would say that she works less than her mother did. In the fieldwork it was commonly heard that "I made a mistake when I chose this way of life"; "we're a bad example for our children: from an early age they learn that they'll never do the work their parents do"; or "I never imagined what it would be like". When a relative is ill at home or in hospital, it is the woman who usually takes care of them or accompanies the sick. Thus, in the studies of Dufour and Giraud (2012) about Ségala aveyronnais, or of Dufour et al. (2010) when they establish a comparison, through multi-site ethnography, between that region and the Salto region in Uruguay, they reach the conclusion that female commitment to care and support, in accordance with traditional or more modern values, is deeply internalised in the ideology of agrarian activity. This has also been noted in the study of Knežević Hočevar (2012: 76–79) about Slovenia.

It cannot be said that men do not also participate in all the activities that have been mentioned, but in the division of labour, men take charge almost exclusively of agrarian work whereas women divide their time between housework, the farm and numerous other obligations, as well as taking on outside work. In this, we agree with the idea expressed by Contzen and Forney (2017) in their study of Swiss family farms, where the division of labour is often based on an inertia that conceals practical reasons rather than ideological ones, although we cannot be so hopeful that the possibility of women becoming the owners of farms will lead rapidly to new and innovative forms of family farming, simply because of the overwhelming weight of the values of masculinity. While the data in Table 5 might indicate a possible improvement for women, the reality is that the role of women is secondary and they only replace the man as owner of the farm when the contrary is not an option: for example, a woman may inherit the farm in the absence of male heirs. The fact that women never share the ownership of the family farm with their husband is proof of their secondary function.

Until the start of the last quarter of the 20th century, migration had

been basically male. Since then, it is women who have left most, forming part of what has been called the “enlightened escape” in the sense that young women take advantage of the time of their secondary or further education to never return to the rural world. One of these young women, when she was asked about this apparent alienation during one of her increasingly rare visits to her family home, told me: “women are still far from reaching equality with men but in the country we haven’t even started to achieve it”. This is very clear in the case of family farming. The decrease in younger population cohorts and the increase in the older ones are indicative of the change that rural life is undergoing in many places and in this small municipality in Cantabria in particular. In 2017, according to the Cantabrian Statistics Institute, the percentage of inhabitants under 15 years of age in the municipality was 11.85%. In the same year, the percentage of residents over 64 was 25.41%, and these proportions are not the worst in Cantabria.

#### 4.4. Male values versus female values

The statistics are eloquent as regards the transformations that have taken place in family farming in the last half century. Some of the statistics reveal the situation of women. For example, the high dependency indices of an aging population imply a complementary workload for women, and this is very evident on family farms, and the indivisible inheritance that involves obligations for the generation that takes on the farm. It is not a coincidence that the Aras valley is in an area with traditional extended families, whose structure still powerfully influences the present, as some years ago Canoves et al. (1989) and G. Canoves (1995) observed on farms in Gurb, in the Osuna region of Barcelona.

Although the extended family is an ideal type in a certain kind of society, due to random genealogical reasons it does not always emerge. It is indicative that in the Aras valley in 2018 there were still 123 extended families compared with 312 of two generations, and even four households with four generations, as the best cultural example of the traditional guarantee of the continuity of the farm, or rather, of the consubstantiality of the family-farm. It is not that this type of extended family (stem family) does not fulfil the role it had in other times, but the weight of tradition is so overwhelming that it maintains its structure. Except on rare occasions, three generations or more living together is not explained by economic reasons but because “it’s the custom here”, “because we’ve always seen it like that”, “because the younger ones have to look after the older folk”, and other tautologies of that kind that I jotted down in my notebook. One of the economic sectors in which extended families are more common is precisely the agrarian sector, with many cases of such families. As remarked above, they involve a complementary task for women, who are generally in charge of looking after the dependent people in the home.

This reality of the extended family, indivisible inheritance, uni-personal succession and other aspects of traditional life, with a clear patriarchal imprint, also suggest the existence of a hierarchy of values dominated by customs that favour and legitimise masculinity, as shown quite clearly by Knežević Hočvar (2012), Černić Istenić and Knežević Hočvar (2013) and Černić Istenić (2015) through their detailed studies of family farms in Slovenia, and similarly noted in the north of Europe by Bjorkhaug and Blekesaune (2007) and Bjorkhaug and Blekesaune (2008), for family farms in Norway. As regards agrarian activity in the Aras valley (Table 5), it is indicative that men are always at the head of farms as owners if they are the heirs, and as co-proprietors if they are married to a woman that inherited the farm. When a woman has married into the family, she is unlikely to inherit. Moreover, even when the woman has inherited the farm she does not usually make the day-to-day decisions, which fall to her husband, who will hold that power throughout his active life and even afterwards in some cases, with the consequent subordination of the woman. “Men are in charge on the land” is a concept that I have often heard repeated with different words. It is no different from the explanations of Whatmore (1991a), who pointed out the ideological contradiction arising on family farms in the

United Kingdom in the 1980s as regards the division of labour.

Whatmore’s observation is in agreement with the more recent study by Shortall (2014) about Northern Ireland, in the sense that “the ideology of the farm”, or family farms, has survived the many changes that have taken place, sometimes in society in general and other times in the particular developments in family farming. However, Brandth (2002) noted with optimism the increasing importance of women on farms in the north of Europe in the first years of the 21st century. Research in the Aras valley suggests an increase that is more apparent than real, because changes have favoured the pretensions of men, sheltering behind the discourse of the values of masculinity. The perception obtained in the present study is much closer to those that followed Brandth’s initial 2002 paper, and similar to those by M. S. Haugen and B. Brandth (2002), which underscore the great weight of patriarchal values and the traditional morality of gender in modern family farms in Norway, where divorces are nonetheless frequent. In any case, there can be no doubt that the many changes that have taken place in social values have ended up modifying the “ideology of the farm” even if they have been more moderate than expected. This was noted by G. Osterud (2014) in a study of family holdings in Sweden and Norway that reaches the conclusion that despite their resistance, the changes occurring in society as a whole ultimately alter, not without difficulty, the internal organisation of those economic units of family agriculture.

In the Aras valley, it is only when the man reaches retirement age, and the farm begins a rapid decline which will lead to its abandonment, that the ownership is transmitted to his wife in order to keep the property rights active. It is merely a stratagem that allows the continuity of farm activity when it is legally impossible for the husband to be the owner, and therefore not even in this case can it be classed as a situation of joint ownership. In this way, the years of greatest activity, largest profits and greatest prestige of the farm are those when the proprietor is male, whereas the years of decreasing profit, before abandonment, are when the wife is the owner. As in many other areas of culture, the activities that involve prestige are usually male-owned, anywhere, including in the area of study. As a good example, we can recall that in a society like Spain, which has adopted many of the characteristic profiles of liberal modernity, the phase that began in 2009, after the enactment of the law on shared ownership of agrarian units (Royal Decree 29/2009, 6th March), enabled the generalised use of this legal instrument. However, co-ownership, when it occurs, takes place in those cases when the original owner was a woman or when co-ownership allows the man to exercise some form of pluriactivity. However, even in those cases, it is the man who usually continues making decisions about the farm, whether he is the owner, co-owner or even if he has retired.

## 5. Conclusion

The study of family farmers in this rural part of north Spain shows how the economic units that provide their livelihoods have changed, in general moderately, in order to maintain the rigid norms that govern the relationship with the land and the internal organisation of the farms. After the 1960s, as farming was widely abandoned in Mediterranean countries like Spain, with a considerable delay with regards to the rest of Europe, in the Aras valley the population decreased so drastically that family agriculture went from being represented by about 800 holdings in 1962 to 152 in 2020. These have increased the size of their fields and land by taking over the land of those who abandoned activity. Thus, the farms that sell their produce have enlarged from the traditional 5 or 6 ha to nearly 30 ha, and from 15 heads of cattle to an average of 70 today, still dairy herds as in the past.

In recent decades, at the same time as those changes took place, family farmers introduced changes that can be described as lukewarm. The degree of abandonment meant that the traditional regime of inheritance by the eldest son had to change and allow access to younger sons as heirs and successors or, increasingly, to daughters. However, although those changes have been significant, they have not affected the



institutional essence of the system; i.e. the transmission from generation to generation, which is still attached to traditional male principles of indivisible inheritance and unipersonal succession. In addition, these family farms slowly introduced the complementary changes that lay in the philosophy of European and international organisations, such as *part-time agriculture* and the *pluriactivity* of farmers. These changes normally allowed the survival of family farming but with extraordinary intensification in the work of women on the farms. This is because, despite the efforts of the administration, many of the characteristic problems of the old agrarian structure still persist, such as the small size of the farms and excessive fragmentation of the land, with the resulting difficulty for mechanisation.

Ultimately, the changes to family farming in this rural area mean that the position of women has worsened. In the first place, they have been forced to take on part of the enormous workload on modern farms, if only as a result of their increase in size in order to obtain minimal profitability. This need has also required women to find supplementary sources of income in the local area or further away, using the route that was opened to pluriactivity in family farming. Furthermore, women have not been relieved of the full domestic workload historically attributed to them, including looking after the growing elderly and dependent population. Paradoxically, when a woman inherits the family farm, she generally shares ownership with her husband, while allowing the latter to make decisions about running the business. When the heir is the man, the woman has access to shared ownership when the farm begins to decline, as that occurs at the end of the active life of her husband. However, he will still maintain the right to make decisions.

Therefore, returning to our original objective, this is a case of the clear survival of patriarchal patterns and male values that are characteristic of traditional family farming. To answer our research question, the transition to the values of modernity, including those that are vitally linked to the right of equality, has encountered resistance that at the moment has proved insurmountable, unlike other sectors of society. This may be proof of the strength still shown by the so-called “ideology of the farm” as it is known in social science literature.

### Formatting of funding sources

This research is funded by the Government of Cantabria (Spain), through the Puente 2022 Call for Projects, and corresponds to an ongoing project entitled “Social actors in the development strategies of rural areas to be revitalized in Cantabria and Castile and Leon”. The author thanks the blind reviewers and the editor for their very constructive comments and feedback on previous drafts of the paper to improve the quality of the article.

### CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Eloy Gómez-Pellón:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

### Declarations of competing interest

The author declares that he has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

### Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

### References

- Aguilar Criado, E., 2014. Los nuevos escenarios rurales: de la agricultura a la multifuncionalidad. *Endoxa* 33, 73–98. <https://doi.org/10.5944/endoxa.33.2014.13560>.
- Alonso, L., Arribas, J., y Orfí, A., 1991. Evolución y perspectivas de la agricultura familiar: De “propietarios muy pobres” a agricultores empresarios. *Polit. Soc.* 8, 35–69.
- Andersson, E., Lidestav, G., 2014. Gendered resource access and utilisation in Swedish family farming. *Land* 3 (1), 188–203. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land3010188>.
- Balaine, L., 2019. Gender and the preservation of family farming in Ireland. *EuroChoices* 18 (3), 33–37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1746-692X.12242>.
- Bebbington, A., Guggenheim, S., Olson, E., Woolcock, M., 2004. Exploring social capital debates at the world bank. *J. Dev. Stud.* 40 (5), 33–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0022038042000218134>.
- Bélières, J.-F., Bonnal, P., Bosc, P.-M., Losch, B., Marzin, J., Sourisseau, J.M., Baron, V., Loyat, J., Etienne, G., Lutringer, C., Fayse, N., Léonard, E., 2014. Les Agricultures familiales du monde. Définitions, contributions et politiques publiques. Cirad/AFD, Montpellier.
- Bjorkhaug, H., Blekesaune, A., 2007. Masculinisation or professionalisation of Norwegian farm work: a gender neutral division of work on Norwegian family farms? *J. Comp. Fam. Stud.* 38 (3), 423–434. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.38.3.423>.
- Bjorkhaug, H., Blekesaune, A., 2008. Gender and work in Norwegian family farm businesses. *Sociol. Rural.* 48 (2), 152–165. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2008.00456.x>.
- Bock, B.B., 2015. Rural, gender and policy. Gender mainstreaming and rural development policy; the trivialisation of rural gender issues. *Gend. Place Cult.* 22 (5), 731–745. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.879105>.
- Bosc, P.M., Marzin, J., Bélières, J.F., Sourisseau, J.M., Bonnal, P., Losch, B., Pédelahore, P., Parrot, L., 2014. In: Sourisseau, J.M. (Ed.), *Agricultures familiales et mondes à venir*. Ed. Quae, Versailles, pp. 43–60.
- Bourdieu, P., 1994. Stratégies de reproduction et modes de domination. Suivre cet auteur Pierre Bourdieu. *Actes Rech. Sci. Soc.* 105, 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.3917/arsp.p1994.105n1.0003>.
- Bourdieu, P., Wacquant, L., 2005. Una invitación a la sociología reflexiva. Siglo XXI, Buenos Aires.
- Brandth, B., 2002. Gender identity in European family farming: a literature review. *Sociol. Rural.* 42 (3), 181–200. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00210>.
- Camarero, L.A., 2006. El trabajo desvelado. Trayectorias ocupacionales de las mujeres rurales en España. Instituto de la Mujer, Madrid. Coord.
- Camarero, L., Sampedro, R., 2008. Por qué se van las mujeres? El *continuum* de movilidad como hipótesis explicativa de la masculinización rural. *Rev. Española Invest. Sociol.* 124, 73–105. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40184907>.
- Canoves, G., 1995. Family structure and women's work in agriculture: the case of Osona and Baix Empordà. *Doc. Anal. Geogr.* 26, 53–71.
- Canoves, G., García Ramón, M.D., Solsona, M., 1989. Mujeres agricultoras, esposas agricultoras: un trabajo invisible en las explotaciones familiares. *Rev. Estud. Agro-Soc.* 147, 45–70.
- Cardon, P., 2001. Mujer, familia y agricultura: análisis de las perspectivas teóricas en Francia. *Rev. Int. Sociol.* 29, 191–207. <https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2001.i29.761>.
- Cassidy, A., McGrath, B., 2014. The relationship between ‘non-successor’ farm offspring and the continuity of the Irish family farm. *Sociol. Rural.* 54 (4), 399–416. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12054>.
- Černič Istenič, M., 2015. Do rural development programmes promote gender equality on farms? The case of Slovenia. *Gend. Place Cult.* 22 (5), 670–684. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2013.879102>.
- Černič Istenič, M., Knežević Hočevar, D., 2013. Intergenerational assistance on family farms in Slovenia: expectations and practices. *East. Eur. Countrys.* 19 (1), 77–103. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ee-2013-0005>.
- Charatsari, C., 2014. Is this a man's world? Woman in the farm family of Thessaly, Greece, from the 1950s onwards. *Gend. Issues* 31 (3–4), 238–266. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-014-9125-y>.
- Chayanov, A.V., 1966. [1925]. A. V. Chayanov on the Theory of Peasant Economy. Univ. of Wisconsin Press, Madison.
- COM(88) 501 final, 1988. Bulletin of the European Communities Supplement 4/88 the Future of Rural Society. Commission Communication to Parliament and the Council, Luxembourg. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/P\\_88\\_100](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/P_88_100).
- Contzen, S., Forney, J., 2017. Family farming and gendered division of labour on the move: a typology of farming-family configurations. *Agric. Hum. Val.* 34 (1), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-016-9687-2>.
- Craviotti, C., 2012. Los enfoques centrados en las prácticas de los productores familiares. *Rev. Int. Sociol.* 70 (3), 643–664. <https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2011.09.06>.
- Crucés Roldán, C., Palenzuela Chamorro, P., 2006. Emprendedoras rurales en Andalucía. Posibilidades y límites de sus estrategias. *Rev. Española Estud. Agrosociales Pesq.* 211, 239–305.
- Díaz Méndez, C., 2006. Cambios generacionales en las estrategias de inserción sociolaboral de las jóvenes rurales. *Rev. Española Estud. Agrosociales Pesq.* 211, 307–338.
- Díaz Méndez, C., Díaz Martínez, C., 1995. De mujer a mujer: estrategias femeninas de huida del hogar familiar y del medio rural. *Agric. Soc.* 76, 205–218.
- Dufour, A., Giraud, C., 2012. Le travail dans les exploitations d'élevage bovin laitier est-il toujours conjugal? *Inra Prod. Anim* 25 (2), 169–180. <https://doi.org/10.20870/productions-animales.2012.25.2.3206>.
- Dufour, A., Courdin, V., Dedieu, B., 2010. Femmes et travail en couple: Pratiques and representations en élevage laitier en Uruguay et en France. *Cah. Agric.* 19 (5), 371–376. <https://doi.org/10.1684/agr.2010.0421>.



- Eder, A., Haring-Mosbacher, S.A., Höllinger, F., 2021. Intergenerationenbeziehungen im bäuerlichen Milieu zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts. *Berliner J. Soziol.* 31 (2), 219–248. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11609-021-00440-y>.
- Ehmer, J., 2009. House and the stem family in Austria. In: Fauve-Chamoux, A., Ochiai, E. (Eds.), *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective*. Peter Lang, Bern, pp. 103–132.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., 2009a. The stem family and the Picardy-Wallonia model. In: Fauve-Chamoux, A., Ochiai, E. (Eds.), *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective*. Peter Lang, Bern, pp. 203–252.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., 2009b. In: Ochiai, E. (Ed.), *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective*. Peter Lang, Bern.
- Fernández de Rota, J.A., 1983. El trabajo de la mujer en un municipio rural gallego. *Rev. Estud. Agro-Soc.* 124, 65–84.
- García Bartolomé, J.M., 1992. El trabajo de la mujer agricultora en las explotaciones familiares agrarias españolas. *Rev. Estud. Agro-Soc.* 161, 71–97.
- García de León, M.A., 1996. El campo y la ciudad: Sociedad rural y cambio social. Ministerio de Agricultura. Pesca y Alimentación, Madrid.
- García Ramón, M.D., Canoves, G., 1988. The role of women on the family farm: the case of Catalonia. *Sociol. Rural.* 28 (4), 263–270. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.1988.tb00344.x>.
- Gibbon, P., Curtin, C., 1978. The stem family in Ireland. *Comp. Stud. Soc. Hist.* 20, 429–453. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417500009075>.
- Gomes, D., Jesus, M., Rosa, R., Bandeira, C., Amaro da Costa, C., 2022. Women in family farming: evidence from a qualitative study in two portuguese inner regions. *Front. Sociol.* 7, 939590. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2022.939590>.
- Gómez García, J.M., Rico González, M., 2005. La mujer en el medio rural de Castilla y León: diversificación sectorial y proceso de dinamización económica. *Estud. Econ. Apl.* 23 (2), 465–490.
- Hilmi, A., Burbi, S., 2015. Peasant farming, A buffer for human societies. *Development* 58 (2–3), 346–353. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41301-016-0035-z>.
- Hilmi, A., Burbi, S., 2016. Peasant farming, a refuge in times of crises. *Development* 59, 229–236. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41301-017-0109-6>.
- Knežević Hočevar, D., 2012. Family farms in Slovenia: who did the measures 'setting up of young farmers' and 'early retirement' actually address? *Anthropol. Noteb.* 18 (1), 65–89.
- Little, J., 2015. The development of feminist perspectives in rural gender issues. In: Pini, B., Brandth, B., Little, J. (Eds.), *Feminisms and Ruralities*. Lexington Books, Lanham, pp. 107–118.
- Long, N., 2001. *Development Sociology: Actor Perspectives*. Routledge, London.
- Mazariegos, J.V., Porto Vázquez, F., 1991. La implicación de la mujer en la agricultura familiar: apuntes sobre el proceso de desagravación de España. *Polit. Soc.* 9, 15–28.
- Moyano Estrada, E., 2014. La agricultura familiar revisada. Una mirada a la agricultura como factor de desarrollo social y económico. *Ambienta* 107, 6–18.
- Nadal, E., Posada, J.L., Sumpsi, J.M., y Tió, C., 1977. La explotación agraria familiar. Ministerio de Agricultura. Pesca y Alimentación, Madrid.
- Narotzky, S., 2016. Where have all the peasants gone? *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.* 45, 301–318. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102215-100240>.
- OCDE, 1978. *Part-time farming in OECD countries: general report*. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris.
- Osterud, G., 2014. The historical roots of differing rural gender orders in Norway and Sweden. *Scand. J. Hist.* 39 (5), 664–688. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03468755.2014.955053>.
- Ploeg, J.D., van der, J., 1993. Rural sociology and the new agrarian question. A perspective from The Netherlands. *Sociol. Rural.* 33, 240–260. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.1993.tb00963.x>.
- Ploeg, J.D., van der, J., 2008. *The New Peasantries. Struggles for Autonomy and Sustainability in an Era of Empire and Globalization*. Earthscan, London.
- Ploeg, J.D., van der, J., 2010. The peasantries of the twenty-first century: the commoditisation debate revisited. *J. Peasant Stud.* 37 (1), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150903498721>.
- Price, L., 2010. 'Doing it with men': feminist research practice and patriarchal inheritance practices in Welsh family farming. *Gend. Place Cult.* 17 (1), 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690903522438>.
- Price, L., Evans, N., 2006. From 'as good as gold' to 'gold diggers': farming women and the survival of British family farming. *Sociol. Rural.* 46 (4), 280–298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2006.00418.x>.
- Prügl, E.M., 2014. [2011] *Transforming Masculine Rule: Agriculture and Rural Development in the European Union*. University of Michigan Press, Michigan.
- Reher, D.S., 1998. Family ties in western Europe. Persistent contrasts. *Popul. Dev. Rev.* 24, 203–234. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2807972>.
- Rodríguez Zúñiga, M., Soria Gutiérrez, R., 1985. *Lecturas sobre agricultura familiar*. Instituto de Estudios Agrarios, Pesqueros y Alimentarios, Madrid.
- Ruggles, S., 2010. Stem families and joint families in comparative historical perspective. *Popul. Dev. Rev.* 36 (3), 563–577. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2010.00346.x>.
- Sampedro Gallego, R., 1996. *Género y ruralidad: las mujeres ante el reto de la desagravación*. Ministerio de Asuntos Sociales, Madrid.
- Saugeres, L., 2002. The cultural representation of the farming landscape: masculinity, power and nature. *J. Rural Stud.* 18 (4), 373–384. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167\(02\)00010-00014](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0743-0167(02)00010-00014).
- Scott, J.C., 1976. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press, New Haven & London.
- Scott, J., 2000. In: Era, México D.F. (Ed.), *Los dominados y el arte de la resistencia. Discursos ocultos*.
- Sen, A., 1981. *Poverty and Famines: an Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Sheridan, A., Newsome, L., Howard, T., Lawson, A., Saunders, S., 2021. Intergenerational farm succession: how does gender fit? *Land Use Pol.* 109, 105612. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2021.105612>.
- Shortall, S., 2014. Farmin g, identity and well-being. *Managing changing gender roles within Western European farm families*. *Anthropol. Noteb.* 20 (3), 67–81.
- Shortall, S., 2015. Gender mainstreaming and the common agricultural policy. *Gend. Place Cult.* 22 (5), 717–730. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2014.939147>.
- Shortall, S., 2017. Changing gender roles in Irish farm households: continuity and change. *Ir. Geogr.* 50 (2), 175–191. <https://doi.org/10.55650/igi.2017.1321>.
- Shortall, S., Bock, B., 2015. Introduction: rural women in Europe: the impact of place and culture on gender mainstreaming the European Rural Development Programme. *Gend. Place Cult.* 22 (5), 662–669. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2014.917819>.
- Šikić-Mičanović, L., 2009. Women's contribution to rural development in Croatia: roles, participation and obstacles. *East. Eur. Countrys.* 15 (1), 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10130-009-0005-5>.
- Thompson, E., 1971. The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century. *Past Present* 50 (1), 76–136. <https://doi.org/10.1093/past/50.1.76>.
- UN, 2015. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development*. In: General Assembly. Seventieth Session. Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015.
- Whatmore, S., 1991a. Life cycle or patriarchy? Gender divisions in family farming. *J. Rural Stud.* 7 (1–2), 71–76. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0743-0167\(91\)90043-R](https://doi.org/10.1016/0743-0167(91)90043-R).
- Whatmore, S., 1991b. *Farming Women: Gender, Work and Family Enterprise*. Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Whatmore, S., 2002. *Hybrid Geographies: Natures, Cultures, Spaces*. SAGE Publications, London. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446219713>.
- Wiest, K. (Ed.), 2016. *Women in Rural Areas: Labour Markets, Images and Policies*. Palgrave, London.
- Wolf, E., 1982. *Europa y la gente sin historia*. Fondo de Cultura Económica. México D.F.