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Gender and entrepreneurship in the formation of family farms during the postsocialist transformation in Hungary

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how women and men in commodity producer family farms that emerged during the post-socialist transition in Hungary negotiated gendered and entrepreneurial identities within the emergent gender regime balancing between three entangled and conflicting processes related to globalization, retraditionalisation and state socialist legacies. During this period, the agricultural production structure polarized between units with rapid land concentration and intensified commodity production and small-scale subsistence farmers. Gender dynamics showed to have had great importance for how farms could position themselves on the capital accumulation trajectory. The study is based on a selection from fifty life-history interviews carried out with farm families on the commodification trajectory during the post-socialist transition in rural Hungary between 2000 and 2004 (the years prior to Hungary joining the EU), among which a number of farm families were revisited after three years of the first occasion. Four major types of family farms were identified based on how they (un)done the gender entrepreneurship nexus while reconciling production and care: traditional family farm, semi-equal partnerships in joint farms, feminized one-woman farm, masculinized one-man farm. Semi-equal partnerships in joint farms moved towards different directions over time: farms with separate spheres adjusting to care, masculinization, woman-led joint farm with care mission out-sourced, and farms with dual crises of care and enterprise. The demands for reproducing family farms under globalized market pressure assumed the mobilization of family labour. Women's inputs were of great importance, while their responsibility to organise care prevailed, putting extra pressure on their health and work burden.

KEYWORDS

entrepreneurship; gender; family farms; postsocialism; capital accumulation

Introduction

This paper attempts to unravel how women and men in commodity producer family farms emerging during the postsocialist transition in Hungary negotiated gendered and entrepreneurial identities within the emergent post-socialist gender regime balancing between three entangled and conflicting processes: that of globalization (rooted in neoliberal market-fundalism), retraditioanalisation (implying a re-naturalization of binary gender roles) and state socialist legacies (of policies for "women's emancipation") (Gradskova and Asztalos Morell 2018). The study is based on a selection from fifty life-

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history interviews carried out with farm families on the commodification trajectory during the postsocialist transition in rural Hungary between 2000 and 2004 (the years prior to Hungary joining the EU), among which a number of farm families were revisited after three years of the first occasion. During this period the agricultural production structure polarized between units with rapid land concentration and intensified commodity production and small-scale subsistence farmers (Csurgó, Kovách, and Megyesi 2018).

Exploring the gender studies literature on the family farm (on the basis of research predominantly in developed industrial Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, Francophone, and German culture-area countries), Brandth (2002) found three main discourses, that is "*family farm*" (focusing on patriarchal inheritance and power relations; women "marrying in" to become the farmer's wife, and being assistants with reproductive duties), "*masculinisation*" (highlighting male roles in mechanization, commercialization and specialization resulting in deskilling of farmers' wives, one-man farms, women's off-farm employment) and finally "*detraditionalisation and diversity*" (problematizing women's changing identities).

The postsocialist emergence of family farms in Hungary created a new landscape for gender differentiation. Exploring farm families in the postsocialist context needs to take into consideration the gender history of the destruction of family farms during state socialism, the resilience of household-based production (Asztalos Morell 1999) and its resurrection in the postsocialist privatization process (Asztalos Morell 2005), in other words the entangled values of entrepreneurism, state socialist legacies and tendencies towards re-traditionalization. Alhough state socialism entailed a brake on the transfer of economic capital and land as the basis for generation transfer, other immaterial assets such as social, human and cultural capital, that is *habitus*, differentially distributed between men and women, played an important role in the rise of farm family enterprises (Asztalos Morell 2009). Furthermore, manual labour of family members played an important role in the rise of family farms in the period of capital accumulation before mechanization was possible. Research in the postsocialist context made it possible to distinguish a variety of farming entities: *one-man farms, joint family farms, farms with women working off farm* and *women-led farms*. Women's influence was seen to be related to the type of engagement they had in the farm and was strongest where they were *involved in production in a multifaceted way* (Asztalos Morell 2005, 2007).

While previous categorization of family farm types focused on the differing degree and form of men's and women's participation in work and management in these various farm types, this paper adopts a constructivist perspective (Csurgó and Kristóf 2018). The focus is on how gender and enterprise, including care, is co-constructed by unpacking diverse layers of (un)doing gender in cross-sections of the enterprise/care nexus and how heterosexual matrix of gender is transgressed and re-aligned by boundary-setting practices (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004).

Theorizing the gender and entrepreneurship nexus

Neo-liberal entrepreneurialism was seen as the solution to the postsocialist transition to capitalism (Marsh and Thomas 2017). In the late eighties, at the dawn of transition, theoreticians of embourgeoisment envisaged family farms as the emergent drivers of agrarian third way development (Szelényi et al. 1988). The expansion of market principles

promised new liberties, based on the ideologies of self-realization and self-reliance (Swain 2013). In this effort a window of opportunity emerged for the realization of a new gender order within the emergent family farm enterprises. Instead, a polarized production structure emerged. To start with, large-scale limited companies and inheritor organizations of former state socialist enterprises obtained a dominant position, by seizing opportunities during privatization, while family farms had to embark on primitive capital accumulation in the challenging context of EU competition. Due to capital concentration within family farms, 200000 smaller farms disappeared between 2000 and 2003, a process that continued and was accompanied by growing inequalities within landownership structures. By 2010 two percent of agricultural units owned 65.5% of arable land. In 2010 50% of the land cultivated by family farms were over 50 hectares, while nearly two-thirds of the family farms cultivated less than one hectare each. Many commodity farms fell out of competition, while the capital accumulation for those staying continues to expand (Csurgó, Kovách, and Megyesi 2018).

Mainstream research views the personality traits of the entrepreneur as central to understanding entrepreneurship, and depict the entrepreneur as innovative, creative, risk-taking and striving to achieve autonomy (McClelland 1987), one that is the locus of internal control (Thomas and Mueller 2000) priorising the interests of the enterprise. Meanwhile, critical perspectives highlight the backsides of entrepreneurship and how it can result in precarity (Essers et al. 2017; Berglund et al. 2018). Images of the lone, segregated frontiersmen of colonization: settlers and conquistadores, have amalgamated in the figure of the entrepreneur conquring new markets, braking new grounds and launching new productive activities (Mendelssohn 1976), making entrepreneurship central in the construction of hegemonic masculinity (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004).

Women's experience, by contrast, is constructed as "in deficit", without entrepreneurial subject (Ahl and Marlow 2012), with limited ventures, which are of a smaller scale (Calas, Smircich, and Bourne 2009). This is explained by women having inadequate access to capital and with an obligation to combine enterprise and family life, and the fact that they often chose self-employment due to loss of jobs (Momsen, Kukorelli Szörényi, and Timár 2005). In the hegemonic entrepreneurial discourse, there is an underlying assumption of the entrepreneur being a man (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004; Ahl 2004), rooted in the binary construction of gender associating men with reason and women with nature, and women with the private rather than the public sphere (Harding 1986).

From a constructivist perspective gendered identities are seen as discursively produced (Steyaert and Hjorth 2003), the focus being how identities become rather than what they are (Essers and Benschop 2007, 52), while acknowledging how the material aspects of man's domination over women impact how they perceive their agancy and identitiy (Walby 1990, 20). The problematization of the gender-technology nexus by, among others, Harding (1986), Faulkner (2001) and Lie (1995), is relevant when unpacking the gender-entrepreneurship nexus. They emphasize the importance of how individuals position their identities relating to gendered symbols in the context of prevailing structural inequalities, such as relations and division of labour, and by this form their agencies and behaviours. Thus, identities explore the agency aspects of "doing gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987). In this context, implicit in the construction of "femininity" is being available for caring, a characteristic that stands in opposition to the business-like mentality associated with "masculinity" and entrepreneurship.

While binaries and hierarchies elevating elements seen as masculine compared to those seen as feminine have been considered as the core of gendering work (Gherardi 1994), studies of female entrepreneurs and female engineers suggest that gendered relations are somewhat more complex than women having to negate their femininity to be an entrepreneur or engineer (Ogbor 2000; Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004; Essers and Benschop 2007; Faulkner 2001). More needs to be done in terms of unpacking the tenacity of the masculine association with entrepreneurship given women's manifest participation in entrepreneurial activities. Connecting to Butler's notions (1990), research (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004) turned to emphasize the performative aspects of "doing" and "undoing" gender and entrepreneurship in mundane daily practices through ongoing positioning men and women within enterpreneurship and entrepreneurship within gender. On the one hand, along with West and Zimmerman (1987), "undoing" gender was seen as making gender irrelevant. On the other hand, Butler (1990) perceived that "undoing" gender proceeds through subversive performances countervailing the normative. Along these lines, Bruni conceptualized "(un)doing" gender as an ongoing agentic process, restoring the "balance between symbolic universes thrown out of kilter by the transgression of heterosexual practices" and identified ceremonial, remedial, boundary-setting, footing and gender commodifying work as various aspects of ongoing restaurative processes (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004, 424).

Research on women and entrepreneurship focus often on women as entrepreneurs (Momsen, Kukorelli Szörényi, and Timár 2005) rather than on women in enterprises (Asztalos Morell 2005). Developing Connell's (1995) notion that the social organizing of reproduction lays at the heart of gender relations, family enterprises can be seen as arenas where demands of production and reproduction are reconciled, and how this happens forms a crucial arena for the production and reproduction of gender relations. Not least recently feminist political ecology (Barca 2020) research has called critical attention to the negative impact on capital accumulation on the sphere of reproduction. Since women make up the overwhelming majority of care workers, whether in families or in the paid sphere, capital accumulation and erosion of the care sphere impacts women's lives adversely, causing emotional sacrifices and vulnerabilities. Thus it is primarily women who need to reconcile the contradiction between demands of production and reproduction, especially in the phase of capital accumulation.

Furthermore, refocusing the study of the entrepreneurship/gender nexus from the heroic male entrepreneur's innovative endeavours, and how women can enter this masculine sphere, to the reproduction of the enterprise, allows to showcase the interplay between productive and reproductive work and how it is gendered (Asztalos Morell 1999).

(Un)doing enterprise and gender in family farms

The farms included in this research, as outlined in Asztalos Morell (2009), differed in terms of type of production, size of economic assets and/or degree of mechanization. The degree of mechanization reflected the level of economic assets in the inititial capital accumulation phase. Those that began with few economic assets had to rely heavily on manual labour and engaged often with labour-intensive production cultures (Katona family), which typically required the collaboration of a pair. In contrast, some of the

farms could draw on assets from previous economic activities, such as private small business during state socialism (Darvas family), or had access to technology and machinery during co-operative privatization, as in the case of former agronomists who turned to private farming.

Postsocialist family farms emerged from socialism via a variety of trajectories. Some came from ancestral roots in peasant family farms prior to collectivization, such as the Katona and Darvas family farms. Others had ancestors who came from an agrarian proletariat background and started household-based greenhouse production during state socialism, such as the Sárdi family farm. Some of the new family farms had members with agrarian education and occupied leading position in the state socialist collective agriculture. Yet others seized the opportunities offered by transition and utilized their skills and networks to launch farming following loss of employment in the postsocialist transition (Asztalos Morell 2009).

The narratives of these families on building the family enterprise included some common elements, which resonated with the earlier mentioned theories of entrepreneurship, setting in the core the entrepreneur as the conqueror of new markets, establishment of networks in unknown realms, and the venture of new production lines. Other recurrent elements have been the endurance and hard work of the family, good management, keeping discipline in supervision of hired work, communication and trust with local actors. Meanwhile, work sacrifices could be easened by capital accumulation and introduction of labour saving technologies. The interviewed entrepreneurs identified themselves with the ethos of the market, which required the prioritization of enterprise interests to meet market expectations. Reliability, discipline and hard work were not only characteristics that the market required, they became internalized values. Concerning women's participation, the hardships of outsourcing care were emphasized. Venturing on family farming in the post-socialist transition implied risks and demands on the resources of the family, prompting questions on how power relations within the family were formed and how decisions were made and how these were gendered.

Traditional family farm in the making

In "traditional" family farms, similar to cases highlighted in the literature (Brandt 2002), women made a regular and major labour contribution to the farm. However, men were identified as the driving forces of the enterprise. Women in these farms were generally informed about the farm's affairs, and in some urgent cases could make basic decisions. Nonetheless, they stepped aside concerning major decisions about the farm's economy or development strategies. As the example of *Boglárka Baloghné* illustrates, women in traditional farm families were not necessarily involved with the market networks surrounding the farm.

> *"Q: Do you follow your husband on shipping trips?*
>
> *Boglárka: No, but I follow them to the field when they produce. We go out with the people* – [day labourers] *-, the family, and we stay there until we gathered the quantity we have to deliver" (Boglárka)*

Thus, the demands of production dictated daily routines of men and women, which were excessive especially in labour intensive farms with a low degree of mechanization. Despite major contributions to farm labour, either as regular workers or as occasional labour, farm wives' contributions were made invisible (Sachs 1983) by describing it as help, underscoring women's "deficit" as entrepreneurial subjects (Ahl and Marlow 2012):

> I help sometimes in packaging, if something is urgent, or we have less time than we calculated. In such cases I do most naturally the same manual labour. It is the same out on the fields also. (Boglárka)

Like *Boglárka*, women in traditional roles refrained from taking on technologically demanding duties: "*I do not work with machines. . . . I do not drive the tractor.*"

The needs of the farm requried women's participation in farm work, since women had the dual responsibility for care and for making themselves available for farm work. Conspicuously, the latter assumed to be able to out-source care. Care duties were typically organized through an intergenerational solidarity between women in traditional farm families, where mothers and mother-in-laws took care of children while young wives worked along side their husbands on the fields (Sireni 2007). This system was inhibited during state socialism due to women's labour force participation in later life (Asztalos Morell 2013). These care networks were revitalized in the process of family farms and complemented often with siblings and older children. Although, after-school care and daycare services were available as institutional legacies of state socialism, however, these services were not adjusted to the care demands in farm families. *Boglárka* developed an elaborated scheme of assistance mobilizing female kins:

> *"Q: Your daughter does not stay in after school care. But, do the grandmothers fetch her after school?*
>
> *Boglárka: And the sisters. We have it divided. My mother is still working, therefore . . . at the weekend, she has Sunday and Saturday and she and my younger sister alternate. My mother-in-law, my husband's mom helps during the week anytime if we need someone to take care of her for 1 or 2 hours, then she is at them.*

Due to the all-pervasive demands of the enterprise she even has to leave her child for care during the nights:

> *"Q: Does it happen often that you need to be away from home for the work?*
>
> *Boglárka: From the end of May to October almost every day. During the summer it happens that she sleeps there [at kin]. Then I fetch her only in the afternoon, early afternoon, when we arrive home, than I take her home. Than she is here up to the evening. Then I take her back in the evening, because we are leaving at 5 a.m., so I do not have to wake her." (Boglárka)*

Other farm women, who had to hand over the care of their children to grandparents suffered from alienation from their children, because grandparents practically took over parental functions:

> *"Flóra: My daughter, she is now 12, she always used to go over to my parents after the school. She is closer to them then to us. If she has some problem, she goes and tells them first. To papa, (my father) first. Than to mama (my mother) and the last to us." (Flóra Feketéné)*

For *Flóra* this loss led to the brake-up of her marriage. Thus, the retraditionalisation of gender identities in the farm family context, was not incommensurate with prioritizing the labour needs of the enterprise. This presupposed, however, women's ability to rely on intergenerational help. However, the accessive demand for women's labour during the capital accumulation phase put the ability of farm families to provide good enough care at test.

Semi-equal partnerships in joint farms

In contrast, women in farms identified as semi-equal occupy an autonomous sphere of influence and authority within some core areas of the family farm enterprise central for the production process or marketing. On the road to capital accumulation, many farms specialized in high labour-input branches or resolved the lack of mechanization by labour-intensive cultivation. Material, aswell as immaterial assets, such as human, social and cultural capital, were needed in this process. Women obtained a variety of occupational experiences, particularly in the feminized fields of accounting and economics, during state socialism. Especially farm wives with varied immaterial assets have acquired key roles in what is seen as the core of the entrepreneurship, i.e. conquering markets and introducing new production lines (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004), transgressing by this gendered boundaries, since these entrepreneurship aspects are central for the construction of masculinity and the construction of entrepreneurship as masculine endeavour.

Semi-equal partnerships with separate spheres

Many of the interviewed families formed an organic part of extended families beyond the nuclear family. Even where the two families did not live at the same location, their shared household bonds between the generations were very tight. During the state socialist period, the older generation typically took on household-based production to contribute economically to their children setting up a family home, e.g. buying a plot, building a house and furnishing it. This was the case in the *Darvas* family, where the parents initiated a sauerkraut business in the late seventies. This was handed over to their son *Dávid* and his wife *Dóra*.

While their children were small the couple lived together with *Dávid's* parents, where they also had the processing unit. *Dóra*, who earlier ran her own business taking wedding pictures, got engaged with the family business full-time. *Dóra* and *Dávid* modernized the enterprise and expanded the scale of production and transformed its marketing channels from sale on urban producer markets to contractual arrangement with supermarkets. Supermarkets dictated the term of delivery with just-in-time methods, transferring much of the expenses, such as transport and insecurities about when and how much should be produced to meet short-notice delivery orders, to the primary producers. To scale up both field production of cabbage and the processing to sauerkraut demanded the intensive engagement of both *Dóra* and *Dávid*. *Dóra* was a driving force in developing the new strategy and taking an internal conflict with *Dávid's* parents, who were opposing the expansion as risky. Thus, *Dóra* entered the core spheres of the enterprise, transgressing by this the gendered distinctions which associated the role of conqueror of markets and developer of new products to masculinity.

> *"Q: Who is initiating the new ideas in the family?*
>
> *Dóra: Both of us. And we see things, one goes around in the world with an open eye. One sees what the other is doing. We try to step in everything, packaging, we try to develop a little by little in everything." (Dóra Darvasné)*

This stood in sharp contrast with the traditional family farm femininity represented by *Dóra's* mother-in-law, who has been as unusual as a none-employed farmwife during state socialism. Meanwhile, *Dávid's* father was agronomist in the co-operative, being in charge of the family business as a side activity.

However, it seems, *Dóra* and *Dávid* found a "silent agreement" to remedy the transgression of the gender divide:

> We are a limited company. We two are employees in the limited company . . . The truth is, that . . . we have a silent agreement. My husband does after all the sales part of it and me the conservation part, and practically the organisation of the whole at home. (Dóra Darvasné)

This agreement concerned what we could call with Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa (2004) the marking of the symbolic boundaries for masculine space of action. In this case, all external contracts with business partners and shipping to the market: "My husband takes care of marketing, he delivers the goods, he acquires the new business opportunities, he goes after them". Therefore, while *Dóra* participated in the generation of ideas, *Dávid* was positioned as the agentic in pursuing and realizing these. Thus, the association between masculinity and a core symbolic feature of the entrepreneur, that is, being the de facto conquerer of new markets (Connell 1995), remedied the transgression of symbolic boundaries created by *Dóra's* positioning herself in the core of the family venture.

To be clear, *Dóra* is in charge of core activities:

> I am at home. . . . I supervise conservation, and do it also. I take care of the workers, and with the paperwork. I am at home with the people, so we can deliver goods on the orders. I see to it that it is ready to the time they need it, when he is shipping it. Than the household. This is my task. (Dóra Darvasné)

While *Dóra* has key managerial responsibilities in the enterprise, identifying herself as in charge, responsible, an organizer and supervisor, she positions herself within the close vicinity of the home, indicating explicitly her availability for household duties. This recurring emphasis on availability sounds almost as an excuse for why she could be the person in charge. Carving out the homebased niche in the entreprise while maintainting some domestic duties, can be seen as a remedy of her transgressions into masculine territories, redrawing the boundaries between masculinity and femininity. At the same time, by talking about "taking care of the workers", and being responsive to the demands of others, she frames her managerial role by symbolic features attributed to femininity. She redraws how entrepreneurship is done by positioning care in the heart of management, and putting forward the contribution of feminine virtues. At the same time, she constructs care for the enterprise as responsive to the needs of the market, embodied in the agentic masculinity of *Dávid*, by describing how she needs to adjust to when he needs to "ship".

Her emphasis on care connects to her care duties. Taking over the enterprise coincided by building family and raising small children. As illustrated by the case of the traditional

family farm, there has often been an intergenerational care contract. Grandparents often took over the burden of child rearing.

> *"Q: Did grandparents help when the children were small?*
>
> *A: Naturally. My mother-in-law's live here, and together with them. When the children were small and I worked, than grandmother took care of them. (Dóra Darvasné)*

Multiple generations living together could ease domestic duties considerably. While in the same household, the grandparents took care of cooking, leaving to the younger generation the tasks of cleaning and washing.

> *"Q: Did they help with the cooking also?*
>
> *Dóra: Naturally. Cooking and taking care of the children.*
>
> *Q: Keeping the household?*
>
> *Dóra: That did I alone . . . we were together for 15 years, on one kitchen, in one household, in one house." (Dóra Darvasné)*

The help of *Dávid's* mother, living in the same household, has been an important precondition for *Dóra's* engagement with the enterprise. This availability of support in the same household was both a great asset, compared to other farm wives who had to make complex arrangements with several female kins living in separate households, and a limitation. For *Dóra* the "price" of occupying a core role in the enterprise have been the abandonment of family autonomy and handing over the so crucial childcare duties to her mother-in-law "for 15 years". A limitation she could leave behind when they finally built a separate house on the same lot with distinct households.

From semi-equal partnership to masculinization of the farm

The reconciliation of gender and enterprise followed another path for the *Katona* family. While *Károly* had worked as technician and *Kinga* in an office in the late state socialist period, their parents both had household-based agricultural production and obtained a few hectares land during the dissolution of collective farming, which sparked their engagement to revitalize family farming. It was crucial to establish markets and at first they sold products on the wholesale agricultural producers' market. This demanded preparing goods over night and taking them to the market during the small hours which placed great demands on family resources. The *Katona* family solved this pressure by rotating the burden, and this implied that everybody had to be involved equally in market decisions and contacts on the large-scale producer market. All had to be up to date with the prices and be able to make deals:

> *"Q: Do both of you go on the large-scale producer market [nagybani piac]?*
>
> *Kinga: Yes, it depends on who has time. . . . One needs two people. Either I go with my son. Or I go with my husband. Or the two men. Or my son and his girlfriend. It depends on who has the duty just then, what is planned for labour next day. Say we decide that you go on the market, than you can sleep the day after, and we go than and prepare the goods for you.*
>
> *Q: Do you participate as much in this as [he]?*

Kinga: Yes.

Q: Are you also informed about the prices?

Kinga: Yes, I am. The whole family is involved with this. Even the children knew how much is the price of pees, and such. During these periods we do not talk about other things than this. Consequently, everybody is informed." (Kinga)

Yet complementary elements emerged, although *Kinga* and *Károly* were both involved in the marketing activities. Larger, more comprehensive contracts were prepared by the husband:

> Károly does such things such larger things, which one has time to prepare, such as the wheat contract, sunflowers. These have to be prepared ahead of time, these are done by him. (Kinga)

By reserving an area of exclusive control over major contracts with the market for the husband, the gender order was realigned, since, what Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa (2004) refered to as boarder-keeping between male and female spheres of action implied an assertion of hierarchical advantage to the symbolic field of masculinity, just like in the case of the *Darvas* family.

Meanwhile, the daily realization of such contracts or the settling of smaller day-to-day agreements were handled often by Kinga. This was an era when mobile telephones were not standard and being at home, close to the land-line was still strategic for communication:

"Q: Which of you is working with the daily marketing?

Kinga: This is done by everybody, since I am more at home. I am easier to get in touch with. I know about everything, up to date. If something happens, I also know everything." (Kinga)

This symbolically realigned the farm wife's involvement with marketing to her closer connection to the home, since care responsibilities remained the wife's duty. Just like for farm wives in traditional farm families, the combination of productive roles with care implied the intergenerational solidarity of women. Kinga lacking available grandparents experienced a great deal of anxiety making things work.

"Q: Do you receive help with domestic tasks?

Kinga: No, I do not get. The summer is very hard. I am also out with the women from 7 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon. When I return, I have to start cooking, washing and tidying. But, there is hard, serious work through the whole summer." (Kinga)

Kinga's older daughter was obliged to take over caring over her smaller siblings.

"Q: How long were you on childcare benefit?

Kinga: During the first year yes. I started to help out on the fields during the second year, since the older daughter could start to help with the little. And after that more and more . . . . it became harder and harder to get day labourers, and people to help. There are fewer and fewer who want to do this hard job." (Kinga)

She describes her increased work duties as impeding on her care duties:

Q: Do you take out her also [to the fields]?

> *Kinga: Naturally, we made a playhouse for her there, we have a hammock, and other things. We have furnished it for her. So she feels herself fine there. But she is not there for days. She comes out for 2–3 hours, and that she had enough" (Kinga)*

The intrusion of the enterprise hindered her to live up to her own expectations for good family life, limiting her ability to be with her family:

> The only thing I like in it [engagement with the farm], that in turn we have time for the family during the winter. In the winter we can be together so nicely, that we have time for everything. (Kinga)

The demand on *Kinga's* increased engagement in the enterprise shuffled around the connectivity between feminity and care. *Kinga's* contemplations about a "nice" family time "together", can be interpreted as a symbolic remedy of the damage by realigning the two:

> Of course, when the little was born, she was born when we were already in this agriculture, we can claim that it was a better period, since I was at home more, it was better for the family, that mom was always at home, that mom did everything. (Kinga)

Her anxiety concerning expectations on good enough motherhood and family life could be interpreted as a signal of "gender trouble" (Butler 1990). This "symbolic boardering work" (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004) seem to had an efficacy, since upon return 3 years later, after some period of illness, *Kinga* withdrew from work in the enterprise and took an off-farm job instead as day-care nurse, opening for a better work-life balance. Meanwhile, the symbolic association of the enterprise with masculinity was also realigned. The primary capital accumulation phase was concluded by mechanization and streamlining of the production, cutting the physical labour demand and establishing long-term marketing opportunities with a profile that could be handled by *Károly* alone. In other words, this led to the masculinization of the farm (Brandth 2002) and indicates the liminalities of women's positioning in the core of entrepreneurship.

Dual crises of care and enterprise

In the *Sárdi* family, the wife (*Sára*) and the husband (*Sándor*) worked in close collaboration at the first visit in 2000. While *Sándor* had a leading role driving a year-round greenhouse-based paprika production venture, *Sára* both worked within this branch and ran a greenhouse-based flower cultivation venture from January to May. Both husband and wife grew up and started their careers under state socialism, living in the outskirts of Budapest, when wage labour was the norm for both women and men. *Sándor* initiated a home-based plastic toy production business and *Sára* a floral gardening as parallel activities to their wage work. However, *Sára* went on childcare subsidy after the birth of their children, and has not returned to wage work.

After the transition, they decided to move to the rural settlement where *Sára's* father had a greenhouse that he started during the state socialist period with the support of the state farm. At the new site they expanded the production. *Sándor*, with a technical background, built the buildings and installed the watering pipes which he also operated and maintained. He was also the main operator in the field production of cereals. Within the enterprise, *Sándor* speciliased on paprika production, an area in which he maintained external market contracts (as *Károly* and *Dávid*): "But I am the one, who takes care of the

majority of the personal contacts with our partners. But she has also an active part in it." But, unlike them, he even received most of the delivery orders on his cellphone. *Sára* with an administrative experience took responsibility for all the paperwork and official arrangements. She handled issues at the land registry, fixed paperwork at the local administration. She also assisted in her husband's production areas and had the responsibility for growing and partly for marketing flowers. It was mostly *Sára*, who worked with the employees through the daily chores. Thus, although focusing on different branches, both of them worked with some core activities of managing the enterprise. When asked about farm management, *Sándor* formulated it in the following way:

> *"Q: Do you carry out the development of sales contracts, and channels together?*
>
> *Sándor: We talk through it with my wife. How would it be? What would be more advantageous? We are after all just one family." (Sándor)*

Nonetheless, by Sándor retaining most of external contacts for marketing, symbolic gender boundaries were drawn as remedy of transgressions, which aligned keeping key market contacts, that is, "conquering the market" (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004), with masculinity.

Revisiting the farm some yours later the family business was found at the verge of collapse. The high level long-term stress associated with running the farm contributed to *Sára* falling seriously ill. *Sándor* experienced a hard time in marketing paprika and making ends meet. Greenhouse cultivation continued to have high labour demand, which was difficult to satisfy, and kept the costs of production high. *Sándor* did not manage to keep the enterprise profitable on his own and convert it to a successful masculinity project, despite his technical knowledge and endeavours with the market. This illustrates well the notions on the fragility of the entrepreneurial masculinity project (Essers et al. 2017).

Meanwhile, *Sára's* illness prompts reflections on the fragility of women endeavouring the masculine sphere of entrepreneurship without intergenerational care resources. While still in Budapest, they lived on the same lot as the husband's widowed mother, yet in a separate apartment. *Sándor* made a point of saying that: "we built a floor upon my parents' house, but we lived absolutely separately, had a separate household". *Sándor*'s mother helped "when the children were babies", as *Sándor* formulated "a few times". Meanwhile, work in and for the entreprise seem to have required all time for both *Sándor* and *Sára*:

> We had a green-house even there and we were working with plastic manufacturing machines. There we produced a summer flower under folia. Practically we were there on a 200 m2 lot and did, beyond child rearing plus two jobs. But, there, we were together. The automatic machine, that I supervised, worked. The buyers came for the flowers, that my wife has serviced, and when the time allowed us, then we worked together either in the workshop or in the poly-tunnel (Sándor)

Thus, seen from *Sándor's* perspective, when the children were smallest, the family's work conditions did not necessitate much help from the grandparents, since all production was concentrated on the same lot as the residence.

Later, they moved to *Sára's* by-then-widowed father, when they decided to expand greenhouse production at the site of the in-laws' greenhouse. As *Sándor* argued, it was not possible to carry out such intensive production without living on the farm. However,

the children started school in the outskirts of Budapest, in a school located closer to the previous residence. The children had very good teachers and were doing well, so they decided to leave the children in the school, but this placed a daily burden on the family, as well as decreased their flexibility. Neither the mother-in-law nor the father-in-law could take the children to school, since it was 15–20 km away, nor was there a direct school bus that would have allowed the children to make the trip on their own. There was a little intergenerationel help with daily household routines. This was the sphere, in which *Sándor* accepted and acknowledged that they were not able to maintain standards:

> *"Q: How can you co-ordinate the needs of the household with the production? Does your wife also work in the production?*
>
> *Károly: In such a way that the household is jeopardized sometimes. Some times we eat only bread and dripping for lunch. The first priority is the income side, which is to say to sell the products.*
>
> *Q: Is nobody complaining at such times? Does everybody accept it?*
>
> *Sándor: The children were brought up in this. They know it. Sometimes they take it happily that we can eat lunch at McDonalds on the way home from school or they order a pizza that they deliver at home. . . . It happens that we eat only fast food for the whole week: scrambled eggs and alike. Yesterday evening, e.g. we arrived home 9:30 [p.m.] from the delivering of the last flower. When one has no energy left to anything, then we go to the restaurant at the lake-side and eat some warm food quickly, so we get something nutritious at least once a week." (Sándor)*

Due to the overriding demands of the enterprise, and lacking inter-generational care support, the family de-prioritized care duties concerning food and cleaning, while maintaining the importance of a good education for the children. Even if *Sándor* did not step up to take over *Sára's* care burdens in the household, men in the family made some care contributions. *Sándor* drove the children back and forth from school, the two teenage boys helped in cleaning, and *Sára's* father with washing the dishes. *Sándor* was also ready to decrease expectations on healthy food and scaling down care standards. Although *Sára*, taken *Sándor's* account, had the full blessing of the male members of the household, her sons and husband, it left her with grievances and discomfort: "I am surrounded by four boys, so they cannot help me much in the household" commented *Sára*, resentfully. *Sándor* corrected her, arguing that the boys did help sometimes, but, as he argued, *Sára* was not satisfied with the quality of their help. She acknowledged this: "They [the children] do the vacuuming and the dishes, but not in the way I would like it to be done".

Thus, *Sára's* overburden with work and responsibility in the enterprise inhibited her to secure the standard of care she felt desirable and to conform to feminine expectations. She signalled even anxiety over transgressions of gendered boundaries associating care and femininity, a kind of "gender trouble" (Butler 1990).

Four years after this interview, her illness forced her to withdraw from enterprise activities. Without psychologizing too much, it was unsurprising given both her perpetual exhaustive subordination to the demands of the enterprise and the identity-conflict prompted by abandoning expectations concerning the feminine care mission. Care needs were obviously de-prioritized due to the hegemonic demands of production sphere. Care being so tightly associated with femininity, such a care deficit placed demands on *Sára* above all, leading to personal grievances. Meanwhile, the priorities of the enterprise and symbolic boundary-drawings devaluing and destabilizing male family

members´ care contributions as gender transgressions, hindered a renegotiation between *Sándor* and *Sára* of the gender contract and a division of duties and expectations relating to care.

Woman-led joint farm with the care mission being out-sourced

One of the interviewed family farms was founded by an urban, university-educated couple, where the wife, *Irén Halász*, was the clear head of the family. *Irén's* grandparents had been so-called kuláks, i.e. they had a larger farm, that was stigmatized by politics as exploitative, due to which the family was persecuted in the fifties. *Irén's* parents could not continue with the farm and decided to move to the capital where they encouraged their daughter to pursue university education. The opportunity to retain former land owned by the family gave *Irén* the impetus to move back to the village of her ancestors. In many ways rebellious, she and her husband *Imre*, engaged at the time in unconventional production profiles, such as eco-egg production. *Irén* has been the entrepreneurial core driving the farm in a business-like manner, and was seen as the entrepreneurial "genius" of the farm, seeking new adventures and risk-taking. Her university education in economics and business management, family legacies of entrepreneurialism, the sudden opportunity to reclaim land on her side, the subversive stance towards hegemonic systems which pressed her parental family to an urban exile, all certainly served as fertile soil for her subversive role-taking in the context of the emerging opportunities for establishing a family farm. The couple's running of the farm, with *Irén* as the head, broke customary gender patterns and can be considered to have "undone" the gender code.

The *Halász* family also subverted norms in terms of solving care issues for their children. Since they had moved to the countryside, they had no help from grandparents. Very atypical for the rural context, they hired a nanny for the six-month-old child. When the nanny left, because of the hard working conditions, the situation became quite difficult. The older children had to take care of the little one. The family also had some discipline problems with the children at school.

The family's unconventional style was perceived as being at odds with village life. *Irén's* way of compensating and her strategy to create respect included making economic contributions to the school. By playing the entrepreneur card as a woman, she thus subverted conventional expectations about femininity, both concerning the division of duties within the family and in her contacts with surrounding society.

Some three years later, the couple had divorced and *Irén* had moved back to the city searching new entrepreneurial opportunities. In some ways her mission indicates the potentials for subverting expectations of femininity and the possibility to "undo" gender expectations both in business and in the family. On the other, the case reveals the fragility of subversive performances and the presence of prevailing sanctions on the part of the surrounding society.

Feminized one-woman farm with off-farm working husband

Erzsike Enyedi a woman in her late fifties, ran her farm on different terms. She was educated as an agronomist, yet had a seed shop prior to the transition period. Following the transition she initiated her own agricultural production and started to sell her products on the city market. There is a long tradition in this area of women selling

small quantities of surplus products from their own farm and from other small-scale producers on the city farmers' markets. With her mini-bus she transported other ladies with small amounts of produce to the market. It was teasingly referred to as the "banya-kamion" "witch-lorry". The other women involved were older (between 70 and 80) and dressed in traditional wide peasant skirts with black headscarves. They represented a feminine niche of small-scale entrepreneurship, existing in the shadow of "larger" economic interests. *Erzsike* was very careful when planing her activities not to be dependent on her husband's help. She could (or rather would) not operate the tractor since she had difficulties operating them:

> The truth about the small rotavator (kisrotáció) is . . . that it is difficult, since it . . . drags me in (beránt), so I do not know what to do with it. With other words I would need to learn it. I was thinking about it, it would easen my work. But, do not know why, it does not work. Therefore I hoe (kapál), rather." (Erzsike)

She could ask her husband to help, but rather than doing so, she chose to narrow her production profile to avoid dependence on tractors, and her husband's help. He had a professional job as the village agronomist but was in poor health. She was making her own decisions about the farm and therefore was an autonomous agent, mobilizing her own resources. Fitting her enterprise to her own conditions, such as avoiding using technologies and dependency on her husband, limited her ability to expand. Nonetheless, it also opened a way to fit business to the "feminine" condition, adjusting to the health condition of her husband, operating within a gendered sphere of small-scale entrepreneurship, rather than intensifying production to conquer distant, dominant markets.

Masculinized one-man farm with off-farm working wife

Unlike the one-woman farm with its conscious strategy to scale down and keep the enterprise at a low level in order to avoid dependency on the husband's help, one-man farms typically aim to scale up. Many of them, like the *Vámosi* family, have from the beginning had comparatively high material assets from either state socialist enterprises outside agriculture, or assets gained, by their managerial insider knowledge, from the privatization of state socialist co-operatives. These one-man farms often rely on the labour support of the wives, both in terms of their expert knowhow and time-wise contributions. *Viola, Vince's* wife works off-farm, yet she is performing the administration of the farm:

> *"A: – my wife – she has an independent work. . . .*
>
> *Q: Does she participate in the farm?*
>
> *A: She works with the computer, does the accounting tasks, writes the contracts, business contracts. . . . She sends the faxes, on my account she does it . . . She does the closing." (Vince)*

As it sounds, *Viola* has important responsibilities which are timeconsuming, which *Vince* estimates to take "daily one to one-and-a-half hours. No rather two hours." He underscores that this not much: "It keeps her busy a bit in the evenings." *Vince* explains, why he would not do this job by stating: "She just helps with these. Since I have so much work.

I have no desire to be occupied with such things in the evening." While, *Viola* has full-time work as well as taking care of the family and household, she seems not have as much work as him, or at least cannot declare lack of desire for doing this paper work late in the evening. This signifies a symbolic hierarchy of value attached to a gendered disposition over time, giving men, what Connell (1995) calls a "patriarchal divident", while making women's contribution invisible (Sachs 1983).

Discussion: The hegemonic enterprise: "The children grew up in this"

Recent decades witnessed the strengthening of retraditionalisation in many of the post-socialist countries, leading to, among others to shut down gender studies. This paper contributes to shed light on the crucial importance of gender not only for the health of those engaged with family farming but also for the possibilities of farm enterprises to prosper. The families in the study examplify a wide range of associations between entrepreneurship, care, and gender. What they shared in common was that, especially in the phase of capital accumulation, the demands of the enterprise were hegemonic over the care needs of the family household, and this resulted in an extensive care drain on the family resources. Since care is traditionally associated with women, the pressure fell on women to fill the gap, a result corroborating research on the adverse impact of neoliberal transition on care (Németh and Váradi 2018).

The paper used as a point of departure Bruni et al.'s (2004) agentic approach focusing on on the performative and reflexive aspects in untangling the complexity of the enterprise care nexus for (un)doing gender. The postsocialist formation of family farms opened opportunities as well as made necessary the mobilization of farm wives labour and creative forces. Women entering in the masculine heartland of entrepreneurship transgressed gendered norms. Meanwhile, this step assumed the outsourcing of care. By using the conceptual tools of remedial and boundary work (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggioa 2004) the study explored how gender has been (un)done in the interplay between mundane daily practices, symbolic framings and identification processes. It could also show, how over time, practices transgressing normative boundaries striked reflexive work necessitating symbolic (re)framing, as well as how such reflexive identity formation and symbolic significations could rerail or consolidate practices.

We could start up using this matrix by setting the spotlight on women who challenged simultaneously the construction of entrepreneurship as the core of hegemonic masculinity and care as the core of feminity. *Irén* took on the entrepreneurial hat, positioned herself at the core of farm activities, and, in doing so, assumed duties that were traditionally associated with masculinity. She was also the one who subverted the traditional local expectations about care by employing *nannies*. The breakdown of her marriage might reflect the hardships associated with making her subversive productive and reproductive roles work. It would seem clear therefore that Irén, who wore the *entrepreneurial hat* with an entrepreneurial agenda, representing expansion, risktaking and hard work and chose unconventional forms for caring in her family, which had difficulty gaining acceptance for her unconventional, subversive undoing of femininity.

The *Sárdi* family provides another example on subversive ways to handle the mounting conflict between the pervasive demands of the enterprise and normative pressures for adequate care performance. The family *abandoned* the normative expectations of good

care due to priorities given to the enterprise. Protracted high pressure to prioritize the enterprise, *Sára's* own normative expectations to perform adequate care, her anxiety concerning her ability to either to do so, or approve her male family members' attempt to help, resulted in growing feelings of ambivalence ending in her falling seriously ill. Even though, to some degree *Sándor* had been present for their children (driving them back and forth school, ordering fast food) and the teenage sons did help (doing dishes), their contribution could not compensate for her expectations of adequate care and seeing it to be her feminine duty. *Sára*, in contrast to *Irén*, did not rebel against feminine expectations. Rather she suffered from not being able to live up to them.

Among women prioritizing the needs of the farm we find those, who managed to solve ambivalences rising due to transgressing the space reserved for masculine hegemony. This was realized by boundary work implying on the one hand leaving a very core, such as the "conquer of markets" for their partners, and on the other hand, the carving out a "feminine" niche within the enterprise, over which they could excercise authority and redo femininity. Meanwhile, the all-pervasive demands of the enterprise pressurized these women to live up to *normative expectations* about adequate caring by outsourcing care, relying on the intergenerational solidarity of women relatives. Some could achieve this only by losing the primary bond to their children being replaced by caring grandparents. These women's ability to engage in the economic activities was preconditioned by their ability to find solutions for care. Women with extended intergenerational solidarity networks could live up to these expectations through "transposing" their duties to women in other generations. This to some degree can be seen as revitalizing peasant traditional ways, where young wives were expected to work on the fields while the elderly grandparents took on care duties (Asztalos Morell 2013). Thus, the all-pervasive pressures of the neo-liberal entrepreneurial project were preconditioned on the revitalization of traditional ways. Nonetheless, the costs of the care-drain created by farm wives' mobilization for capital accumulation was the outsourcing of care to other women rather than a subversive regendering of care at large.

Pressures to be available at home contributed to many of these women taking tasks close to home, and complementary, secondary managerial roles in "feminine" segments of the enterprise. Such included responsibility for managing the workforce, being in charge of locality-based sales networks, rather than being engaged with large-scale market contracts and contacts. While maintaining the high priority of the enterprise, they could cope with the overwhelming pressures by finding complementary feminine spheres of agency without downsizing the goals of the enterprise.

For many, this subversive prioritization of the interests of the enterprise was scaled down over time. With successful capital accumulation, farming became increasingly mechanized, allowing "re-doing" gender divisions by retreating to off-farm work, as in the case of *Kinga* in the Katona family. This line of action complied with the ongoing masculinization of farming identified as a process typically associated with highly capital-intensive farming. In the family farms in this type, women prioritize care needs in different forms. As *Kinga* in the later phase of the farm, off-farm working women succeed striking a better balance between work and care through engaging in off-farm wage labour, utilizing public care facilities adjusted to the time-periods of wage work. However, many, like *Viola*, continued to contribute to the family farm, a work, that invaded their possibility

for regeneration, and which was to large degree made invisible (Sachs 1983). Nonetheless, in none of the cases in this study did this mean a retreat to the housewife status.

Similarly, there is a clear gender division of spheres in the traditional family farms with a male head and farm-wives, such as Boglárka, keeping a distance from the masculine core activities, such as working with machines. Care constitutes the core orientation for her participation, even if key seasons with excessive labour demands may bring production needs to the fore and jeopardize care provision negatively.

Yet another way to do feminity in the farm family context has been to balance the needs of the enterprise with care needs without the enterprise taking priority. The farm run by Erzsike exemplifies such a strategy, adjusting her farming activity to her personal ability to engage with production while being the provider of care, by *downsizing the scale of activity*. Thus, her way to cope with dual pressures from work and care was to resist the pervasive demands of the enterprise and better avail herself for home-making.

Summing up

As this analysis has indicated, gendered expectations on care roles play important parts in forming entrepreneurship. The identities of women in farm family enterprises as well as the resources they can mobilize influence their abilities to stage performances according to the expectations associated with these identities. *Ambivalence* arose when resources and expectations did not match, which placed specific pressures on women in farm family enterprises. Thus, entrepreneurship opened up differential gender challenges for men and women. Looking at the production and reproduction of family farm enterprises during the capital accumulation phase, the hegemonic demands of production pressurized wives to compromise expectations on adequate care. This created an ambivalence that they, perhaps with the exception of the two subversive cases discussed above (Irén, the farm woman with the entrepreneurial hat, and Sára, who had no opportunity to outsource care), have not been able to resolve by "undoing" gender. Rather, they met these challenges by "re-doing" gender in a new context, by locking other women (parents, siblings, female children, cousins . . .), into feminine tasks. Reflecting on their struggle, one can but think how important it is not to lay the burden of blame on them. Entrepreneurship, the demand of the market to generate profit, or to simply reproduce the unit or meet the demands of dominant market actors might seem gender neutral, yet it assumes a man free from reproductive duties. Transforming entrepreneurship into an institution that is democratic, socially just and open for the engagement of both men and women appears to require the incorporatation of needs and demands for care. Rather than outsource care beyond the sphere of entrepreneurship, it needs to be brought in.

This study supports critical perspectives on entrepreneurship (Essers et al. 2017) and highlights how neoliberal pressures on entrepreneurial success emphasize the priority of production and self-realization through the enterpise. A priority that is necessitated by the dependent position of family farms within the global agro-industrial complex (McMichael 2009). This priority given to the enterprise is reminiscent in some ways of state socialist legacies which exemplified ways in which women were to be emancipated, "made free" from care in order to be able to offer their creative forces to production (Asztalos Morell 1999). Meanwhile, the all-pervasive demands of the accumulation phase of establishing family farms has not been matched with state or market institutions of

care, neither were they preferential for the promotion of a gender neutral engagement in care, making gender irrelevant for the division care. Rather, with few exceptions, traditional patterns reinforced the gendered division of care and production through diverse forms of out-sourcing care on the one hand, or by creating of gendered spaces of action and authority within the enterprise.

An alternative perspective would be to make care the normative, not to liberate women from care, but make care the principle. In some way, *Erzsike* and her "witch-lorry" (banyakamion) movement could exemplify how entrepreneurship can emerge without compromising care, how solidarity between women, wearing the traditional skirts and headscarves can resist demands of the market and state socialism. Making a living by helping each other, taking care of relationships. Perhaps letting go the priority given to market logic could open up an undoing of gender and allow the principle of care to embrace the scale and forms of farm activities. This would, nonetheless require to step beyond from the agenda of capital accumulation towards large-scale corporatized producers dictated by the engagement with the globalized agro-industrial complex, setting the terms for the reproduction of family farms by and to reconfigure the role of peasant farms (Douwe van der Ploeg 2010; Visser et al. 2015) in agriculture.

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