

Understanding the diversity of farm pathways as a co-evolution between the family organization and the farming system.

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Keywords - Agriculture, Descent group, Domestic group, Family Farm, Livestock farming

Abstract

Despite important changes in the French agricultural world over the past 6 decades, agriculture remains family-based. Thus the operation of the farm remains organically linked to the functioning of the family, so that the family organization and its evolution both imply choices and compromises on the way the farm is managed and on everyone's position on and off the farm. Reciprocally the farm management has consequences on the family and on people's life paths. Whereas Rural Sociology has focused on family arrangements on the farms, Agricultural sciences propose theories to analyze farm functioning. For this reason, it is a real challenge to link farm and family functioning within a holistic understanding. To qualify long term co-evolution of family and farm over a generation, we propose an analysis framework of the interaction between family and farm, based on 7 case studies conducted on dairy cattle farms in the Vercors (mountain area, France). In each farm, we carried out interviews with each family member working on the farm. This allowed us to grasp the diversity of representations within families and to reconstitute the farms' structural, technical, and commercial pathway. Using the two concepts of descent group and domestic group borrowed from the Anthropology of kinship, we explore the various impacts that property and skills transmission have on farms' pathways (ranging from a structural and functional stability of the farm to its radical change). We also investigate the role of individual emancipation within the family on farm evolutions. Our first results suggest a large diversity of ways of being a farm family; ways of being that do not have the same consequences on farm management and on its pathway. We show inversely how the history of the family and the farming system can have more or less influence on people. Even in farms which are legally designed to keep the family at a distance, it is never absent and deeply impacts the farm pathway.

1. Introduction

In literature, there is a lack of definitions surrounding the theoretical and operational definition of a family farm (Westhead et al., 2002). We however assume here that a farm is a family farm if: (a) the principals are related by kinship or marriage, (b) business ownership is usually combined with managerial control and (c) control is passed from one generation to another within the same family (Gasson et al., 1993). Following this definition, it must be noted that in spite of the significant changes experienced by the French farming world in the past sixty years, all predictions that the family farm will disappear have proved to be inaccurate (Barthez, 1982 ; Pichot, 2006). To quote just one figure, it is worth remembering that, in France, 85% of the farmer has a father who is or was a farmer (Dubuisson-Quellier & Giraud, 2010).

However, what has changed is that the notion of family farm covers now a diversity of situations (Hervieu, 2010). Numerous evolutions in the farming family (development of paid work for female family members, seeking free time for oneself or as a family, etc.) as well as in the farms (enlargement, specialization and mechanization, etc.) contribute indeed to the emer-

gence of a diversity of forms of family agriculture and of development pathways. This diversity challenges the very meaning of the family-farm link and involves taking account of the diversity and complexity of the entanglements between family and farm. It is why Rémy (2010) invites us to think of these two institutions in their interaction with each other.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to put forward a framework to analyze the interplay between family and farm in order to enlighten the diversity of the configurations of the contemporary family farms.

Whereas, the reference of the “family farm” recently disappeared from the law (Rémy, 2010) in favour of the “farming enterprise”, we argue here that, in France, the functioning of farming enterprises remains organically linked to that of the family, and therefore the family arrangements and its evolution over time involve choices and compromises through time both on the management of the farm and on everyone’s place on and off the farm. Reciprocally, we posit that the management of a farm has consequences for the family and for individual life paths. Grasp how the farm and the family could be articulated involves being in a position to be able to understand how each of these two terms evolves over the time and within the interaction. We therefore propose here a cross-disciplinary study of changes in livestock farming systems and family configurations with a diachronic approach.

The paper is organized into four parts. Firstly, from the review of literature, in particular in sociology, we propose a first definition of the articulation between farm and family. This overview leads us to identify several analysis categories from which we elaborate our methodology of data collect. From the confrontation between the data collected and the theoretical literature, emerges an interpretation grid of the interactions between the farm and the family over the long time that we will introduce through case presentations.

2. Theoretical positioning and framework: the articulation between the farm and the family

2.1. The articulation between the farm and the family: an unthought-of

Understand how the farm and the family could be articulated over the time implies the construction of a research subject which is at the interface between sociological and agronomic sciences. But whilst the social relations in agriculture were very well described in the 1980s, by French rural sociologists (Barthez, 1982 ; Mendras, 1984 ; Rieu, 1989), their impacts on farm management, technical choices and organization were left largely in the shade. At the same time, whilst rural sociology was abandoning the family farm as a subject for study, a certain branch of agronomy was being constituted, focused on the application of systemic analysis to farm functioning and dynamics. Systemic analysis gained acceptance as the favoured theoretical framework for understanding the complexity of the interaction between farmers’ decisions, their environment and their farming practices (Capillon & Manichon, 1978 ; Osty, 1978 ; Brossier et al., 2003) and the way they build long term farms trajectories ((Dedieu, 2009). However, although many authors do speak about the family-farm system, the family has gradually disappeared from the analysis, reduced to the lone figure of the pilot, the decider, the farmer.

Thus today, there is no theory in a position to account for the relations between the family dimension of the agricultural activity and the way the farm is managed. Formalizing this interaction between family and farm therefore becomes an issue in itself, notably when considering the dynamics and changes of both elements.

Because the two disciplines (i.e. agronomy and sociology) have their own research subjects (and so their own theoretical positioning and hypothesis, methodology, etc.) that are not easi-

ly compatible, we have chosen to embed our study in a privileged one: whereas the theoretical framework has emerged from the review of the sociological literature which, contrary to agronomy offers concepts to grasp the farming family functioning, we have also used agronomical tools to elaborate an understanding of the articulation between the farm and the family.

2.2. The lessons of the sociology: toward a first definition of the articulation between the farm and the family

Since Barthez (1982), we have known that social relationships in the family farm cannot be reduced to exclusively production relationships (meaning the social relations involved into the farming production process) or to what would seem to be exclusively family relationships. It is the collision of both relationships, combined into one and the same, which is the foundation of the specificity of agriculture (Barthez, 1982). Over and above the overlapping of professional and family spheres, the interactions of individuals within the families are also governed by different timescales that contribute to this collision of productive and family relationships. In fact, the professional and family socializations are inextricably linked in farming families, and at the same time the family plays a role of reproduction and farming coproduction (Jacques-Jouvenot & Schepens, 2007).

To precise this entanglement between the farm and the family, we propose to separate two different for the analysis needs. Whereas the first one refers to the transmission of the farm over the long time from one generation to another, the second one questions the interactions within the couple, and the places of everyone on and off the farm regarding the organization and management of family business.

- **The transmission of an heritage**

The rural sociology literature teaches us that one of the particular features of farming families is how the farm inheritance forms part of a transmission of an heritage from one generation to another. The farm and family heritage are closely interconnected so it is difficult to separate them. And to the transmission of professional and family heritage is completed by the transmission of farming 'know-how', of an organization of the world, of the history of a calling which belongs to a process of farming socialization from infancy (Salmona, 1994 ; Jacques-Jouvenot, 1997). The farming heritage in its plural dimension thus binds the generations together, creating a basis for family production and reproduction.

The transmission of heritage, production tool and farming socialization are all part of a long-term transmission process which can be understood by the concept of *descent group* (Gramain & Weber, 2003). The descent group is an affiliation which shares symbolic properties such that the individual aims of each member of the group are transcended by a common objective which is imposed on all: the future of the descent group, the reproduction of the group. The very essence of a farming descent group is the succession of generations in possession and in charge of the management of this particular entity represented by the farm, which at one and the same time supports the farming descent group and is supported by it. By being firmly fixed in a farming descent group, the management of a farm often comes within a multi-generational time scale which more or less marks the individuals in place today. By questioning the logic of the descent group, we adopt firstly a structuralist point of view on the articulation between the farm and the family trying to understand the influence of the collective project of the farm transmission on the individual's behaviors and actions and on the farm pathway. The potential importance of the logic of the descent group for farmers and their family raises a set of issues: how could the importance of the inheritance be visible on the farm's pathway? Does the farm inheritance have the same importance for all the farmers? How is the family functioning modeled by the place of the farm inheritance?

- **The permeability of the family and professional spheres**

Another of the most significant characteristics of agriculture is the considerable everyday porosity between family and professional spheres; the family members frequently participate in the production process, and the scenes are often in close proximity, which also makes the times very permeable at one-day scale. In fact, in agriculture the domestic and productive scenes are frequently under the same roof and in the same place: the house and the farm headquarters are very often in the same place, which makes for close interplay of domestic work and farming work from geographical and temporal viewpoints.

Moreover, agriculture often brings into play members of the family. These workers are the parents of the farm manager who often work beyond retirement age, and sometimes the wife and the children. Today, the plurality of situations, in particular of the women, is real. Many of them work outside the farm (in 2000 there were more than 40% of them (Bessi re, 2004)). Some of them combine work on and off the farm. Others choose to devote their time and efforts to the farm, to very varied degrees of intensity, from just giving a hand to taking complete charge of a production unit (Oldrup, 1999 ; Bjorkhaug & Blekesaune, 2008). This plurality of situations is related with the fact that more and more farmers marry a wife who does not come from the agricultural world (Giraud & R my, 2008).

To this diversity of situations, corresponds also a diversity of expectations vis- -vis the farm. Authors show indeed how, with the development of the situations in which the wife works off the farm, there is an increasing willingness of farmers to separate family and professional lives or to benefit from more free time for oneself or as a family (Dubuisson-Quellier & Giraud, 2010).

These different practices (farming coproduction, social and leisure practices of the family, geographical proximity or separation of the scenes, social and professional careers of the wives, etc.) take family negotiations into account as to everyone's position in relation to the farm. The sociology of family, with Van de Walle (1993) in particular, highlights indeed how, in some families, the organization gives importance to the autonomy of the individuals (which could result, for example, in an individualization of the professional careers and the refusal that the farm takes to much place for the family) whereas in others the collective is more important than the individuals' aspirations.

So, we propose now to question how the roles played by the different family members, and in particular by the women, maintain the link with farming descent group or on the contrary contribute to weakening it. The practices described above refer to a short time frame, an everyday situation. This concerns the logic of the *domestic group*, which shares a common cause and pools certain resources (housing, income, work) with a view to its material survival (Weber, 2005). Behind the collective cause, the domestic group is also crossed by individual aspirations more or less expressed. It is a question of understanding the place of each member of the domestic group in order to understand the family « balance of power ».

To grasp this articulation between the farm and the family in the long term, what is interesting for us is to understand how these different practices referring to the logic of the domestic group traduce arbitration on: (i) the place that should have the farm for the family, (ii) the importance of the family collective for the functioning of the farm and (iii) the place of every family member according to the farm.

3. Method

We carried out a survey of seven dairy cattle farms in the Vercors (French mountain area). The purpose was to understand: How do these two logics – the descent group logic and the domestic group logic – be expressed? How could these two logics be expressed together? How could they be made visible both on the farm pathway and on the family organization?

3.1. The field of study and the sampling

The Vercors plateau is relatively isolated and traditional: the dairy cattle farms there are all family farms (no cases strictly outside the family framework), and cases of associations between unrelated peers are very rare.

On our study area, the farms are all specialized and belong to two types of dynamics: the intensification of dairy production per worker by enlarging the land areas and the herd, or by enhancing value associated with the territory by processing the milk into PDO cheese. Moreover, it must be stressed that dairy cattle farms in general call very heavily on the family workforce, in particular because of routine work with the animals (Dedieu et al., 1998). The working couple is also more frequent in these farms than in other production sectors (Giraud & Rémy, 2008).

We chose contrasting situations in order to take account of the many different relationships families have with the farm. To do this, in addition to farms where both members of the couple are involved with the farm, we studied associations between both family and non-family peers, situations where the family had a variety of activities and even where the farm was managed by more than one generation. The factor common to all these situations was the management of a dairy cattle unit on the Vercors, with or without milk processing on the farm.

3.2. Data collection and analysis

We carried out individual interviews with each member of the households studied as well as with the parents of the head of the farm when possible, in order to understand the position of each of them in relation to the farm, and collect the different viewpoints and representations within the family itself.

We collected two kinds of data related to (i) the family organization and its evolution over the long time and (ii) the farm pathways.

- **The family configurations**

On the basis of the literature overview, we have retained several analysis categories to grasp and understand the expression of the logics of the descent group and of the domestic group. Following (Van de Walle, 1993), we were so interested in: (i) the inheritance of the farm, the willingness to transmit it to the next generation and the participation of the previous generation to the farming work; (ii) the social and professional careers of the spouses, (iii) the gender division of work on and off the farm (iv) the balance of power between the spouses and between the generations especially regarding the financial balance between the farm and the family, (v) the management of time and space (including so the leisure practices of the family).

- **The farm pathways**

We also retraced the farm pathways by using methodological tools from agronomic sciences (Moulin et al., 2008). Our hypothesis was that the logics of both descent group and of domestic group are reflected in the farms' pathways. To retrace them, we rebuilt the evolution of five elements from the farmer establishment until today (the time span involved in the interview is

from 10 to 35 years): (i) the dimensioning of the farming activity, i.e. the size of the herd, buildings and land areas. Investment in the construction of a building is without doubt the most significant factor in the technical paths of dairy cattle farms, enabling an important change to be made in the dimensioning of the farm. But what differs, according to cases, is the moment in the pathway when this investment will be made; (ii) the ways of doing things on the farm: herd management, i.e. the management practices and renewal of land areas and herd (Landais, 1992); (iii) the production project of the livestock unit, i.e. the types and volumes of products (milk or cheese) as well as the labeling adopted; (iv) the work group and the work organization on and off the farm (Dedieu et al., 2006 ; Dufour et al., 2010) in order to identify the gender division of work and responsibilities, but also regulation practices and distancing between the farm and the family via the simplification of work, or membership of the replacement service for example; (v) finally we looked at the system of activities of the families studied (Laurent et al., 1998), i.e. all the non-farming activities of the members of the domestic group and how they interacted with the farm (Blanchemanche, 2000).

Our conceptualization of the articulation between the farm and the family arose inductively and iteratively over the course of the interviews and their confrontation with the theoretical knowledge described above. We did not use any tool of qualitative data analysis. On the basis of the analysis categories beforehand chosen, we have sought to understand how the two logics of both descent group and domestic group were expressed in the family configurations and in the farm evolutions.

4. Results: the family – farm interaction at the crossroads of the descent group and the domestic group

Our results confirm that living on a farm implies specific conditions for the daily life of the members of farming families via practices associated with heritage, workload and the values associated with work and leisure. These different practices have to be placed in a long timeframe, that of the descent group and the succession of generations to which the individual experiences of the members of the domestic group on the farm are more or less subordinated.

From the reading of the cases surveyed it appears that the logics of the descent group and of the domestic group mean different things from case to case. It seems not possible to elaborate ideal-types of the articulation between the farm and the family that would be based on a set of specific characteristics. However, by crossing over the analysis categories beforehand chosen, it is possible to enlighten the senses that take the two logics in the different cases.

To illustrate this, we propose to discuss the different forms of expression of the two logics of both descent group and domestic group and therefore of the articulation between the farm and the family through the presentation of several particularly illustrative cases.

4.1. The weighty influence of the previous generation: the case of Jacques Bernard

It appears that in some cases, the logic of the descent group seems to generate a path dependency (Sutherland et al., 2012) that we can read both on the farm's pathways and on the farmer's behavior (farming practices and financial investment choices). This situation is illustrated by the case of Jacques Bernard presented below. In other cases, as the case of David Dubois shows it what reveals the importance of the descent group logic the willingness to transmit the farm to the next generation which implies specific choices on the farm.. In other cases, not presented in details in this paper, the logic of the descent group is almost not visible, as there is no evidence in the farm pathways and in the family functioning that the farm had been transmitted. Let's now illustrate the importance that could have the descent group logic on the manager's behavior and on the farm's pathway.

Jacques Bernard is a livestock farmer aged about forty. The only son among the siblings, he took over the family farm from his father about twenty years ago, after having been a family help for a few years. What is striking in his farm pathway is that many things happened even before he became established on the farm. It is noticeable that the farmer has not changed to the system he inherited twenty years ago. It seems that, for their time, his parents had been « visionary»: in 1990, when Jacques Bernard took over, he inherited a herd of 35 dairy cows (presently the herd average size in the Vercors) managed on 83 hectares, with wrapped bales and barn drying completed by a cheese making unit, all this before the massive adoption of wrapped bales on the plateau of the Vercors and the setting up of the local cheese PDO. But the modernity of the equipment installed by the previous generation does not explain everything. By the investment choices they made in their time, the farmer's parents transmitted a production tool (farm and equipments) which afterwards could be only very slightly modified. But over an appropriate production tool,, the farming practices on the farm seem to have been transmitted too, from one generation to the other. Although he has been the head of the family farm for more than twenty years, the farmer has made no changes to his way of managing the herd and the land, and what is rare, even the herd size has remained stable. This absence of change is doubtless to be placed in relation to the very evident, even burdensome presence of his parents who are still in control. The significance of the paternal authority despite the statutory transfer of the farm, can be read as a tension between the legal hand-over which declares the farmer manager of the farm, and therefore independent as to his decisions about the management of the farm, and the practical transfer, the withdrawal of the parents and the end of paternal farming socialization. There is obviously a tension here between the title and the position (Bourdieu & Boltanski, 1975), which accounts for the impossibility for the farmer of taking the power from his father, and which is expressed on the farm by an astonishing stability in the ways of doing things on the farm.

This example illustrates how the close involvement of production means and ways of doing things in the descent group, can determine how a farmer manages his farm over a long time-scale which structurally and functionally models the family farm. All this is bound up with the choices of the previous generation but sometimes with a possible succession too. For example, we can briefly mention the interesting case of another livestock farmer, David Dubois, who has for about 20 years kept the size of his herd at around 25 dairy cows for lack of places in the cowshed, and who, ten years from retirement suddenly doubles the size of his herd by building a shed for 50 cows in anticipation of a future association with his daughter who is yet only 15 years old.

4.2. Different domestic group logics revealed by the position of the female partners

At the reading of the cases studied, it also appears that grasping how the farming choices and the individuals' behaviors express the descent group logic is not enough to understand how the farm and the family are articulated. The families surveyed don't run according to the same rules, and the family practices of the domestic group are varied. In some cases, as in Jean Martin's presented below, the farm seems to have a central place in the family life and marks the individuals' places in the family and on the farm. In other cases, the situation is different: the arbitration between the farm and the family is not always in favour of the farm, and the individuals try to respond to their own aspirations. Moreover, it is interesting to note that on the contrary of what observed authors like Van de Walle (1993), it is not because the logic of the descent group is important in the way of managing the farm that there is no place for the individual's aspirations.

Regarding to the analysis categories retained to describe the family organizations, we can oppose two kinds of situations: in the first one, the logic of the domestic group emphasizes the collective dimension of the family and there is little room for the expression of the individ-

ual aspirations. In the situations of this kind that we met, we observe that the farmers' wives don't have any professional career off the farm or on the farm. They can be involved by working on the farm, but this work is not always made visible by a legal status. In the second situation, the balance of power seems different: the farmers' wives have a professional career which is considered in the family as important as the farming career. The social and leisure practices are different too: the centrality of the farm for the first kind of family makes difficult to take holidays and even weekends, whereas in second ones, it is a common practice which had needed specific adjustments in the farming practices. The differences between the two situations are more revealed through the cases presentations below.

The example of Jean Martin's farm illustrates the primacy of the farming descent group over the domestic group. The Martin family's farm, like Jean Bernard's presented above, is characterized by a very strong relationship to the farming descent group that we are not going to develop. Jean Martin's wife has no legal status on the farm although she forms part of the workforce; she looks after the calves, helps with the mulching as well as the cleaning of the cowshed, and from time to time she gives a hand with fencing and during haymaking. She has no employment outside the farm either. There are many reasons for this, and not all in association with the farm. A certain number of elements lead us to think that the possibility for her of having an outside job is largely subordinated to the place occupied by the farm in the family and to the resulting division of work. Jean Martin, her husband says, when we ask him if his wife works with him on the farm, that yes, yes, she looks after the children. Looking after the children is therefore for the farmer a job in itself. And it is doubtless because for the farmer, the distinction between family and farm doesn't make sense that the gender division of work here at play – the wife has to take on the whole domestic load whilst the farmer devotes himself to the farm – is seen as coming from one and the same scene: the family farm. Jean does say that his wife *helps* him. The interview with his wife, Nicole, reveals that not only it is difficult for her to get involved in the farm – she is afraid of the cows – but also to take on work outside the farm. Needing to go and fetch the children from school, which limits the days in terms of time, added to the geographical distance of the farm from potential places of employment, are just some of the constraints to taking on work outside the farm. So Nicole Martin has no other choices than to spend her time and energy on a domestic role or in work on the farm, even if this work is not recognized by a status. From this personal account, it can be thought that everything goes on as if Nicole Martin's life were subordinate to a wider objective, that of managing the farm, or of maintaining the heritage. Her place in the family and on the farm and the possibility for her of working or not off the farm are restrained by imperatives that are beyond her.

The observation of free time management also takes account of the central position of the farm for this family. Nicole Martin speaks at great length and on several occasions of the impossibility of going on holiday as a family and the burden this represents for her:

« Well, I go away with my mother, because my parents have a flat at the seaside... he (her husband) has never seen it! Well no, he can't go away with me. One day is too short ...the sea is too far away for the day. So at the weekend, we don't go away ... [...] anyway, there's always something! There's something all the time! For everything. When his parents were buried, he didn't find anybody to replace him. We got married, he didn't find a replacement. We married our daughter in September last year and, well, instead of going for the aperitif with us, he went off to do the milking. So it's true that there are times like that ... so after that, going away for a weekend break, I don't care, I just go. Too bad, he doesn't want to. [...] there are lots of things we don't do because of that. We don't do it You have to keep cheerful. Frankly, you have to keep cheerful. There are times ».

So the interaction between family and farm in this case has its expression in a very strong relationship to the farming descent group that is unchallenged by the family organization within the domestic group. Here it is the individuals who regulate their position around the farm, which for several reasons occupies a central position for the family. Here we are in a case of a strong descent group and of a domestic group which doesn't leave room for the individuals' aspirations. We propose to qualify this kind of domestic group logic as weak regarding to the importance of the descent group's.

In other domestic groups on the other hand, which we qualify as strong, adjustments to the farm and its management can be observed. They aim at satisfying certain family objectives such as taking holidays, separating family life and farming work, and generally speaking, ensuring that the professional worlds of the different family members are compartmentalized. This is the case of the Dubois couple, for example, in which the wife, herself the daughter of a dairy farming couple, has a part-time (¾) job outside the farm and who although only working occasionally on the farm, also benefits from the status of business partner. On this farm we observe work simplification practices via mechanization of farm buildings (which allows to spend less time on the farm), which is an expression of the desire for separate times. In addition, this configuration of relations is given practical expression in the fact that investment in building the livestock building is only happening late in the farm pathway: the first investment was the construction of a house separate from that of the farmer's parents. This reveals that the balance of power is clearly different that in Jacques Martin's family.

4.3. Toward an interpretation grid of the articulation between the farm and the family

We propose to read the family-farm interaction as what emerges at the end of a comparative reading of family configurations and farm pathway in the prism of concepts of descent group and domestic group (Figure 1). Four situations can be distinguished according to the importance of the logic of the descent group and of the type of functioning of the domestic group. From the reading of the cases surveyed, it indeed emerges that certain farms are managed according to very marked descent group logic. This collective project has different meaning according to the logic of the domestic group at work: the farm could be more or less central for the family and its individuals. The domestic group more or less regulates the descent group. Other farms on the other hand see their technical pathway evolve jointly with the aspirations of the members of the agricultural domestic group and seem to have only a tenuous link with the agricultural descent group, as if the domestic group had taken priority over the descent group.

The application of this interpretation grid to each of the cases surveyed thus makes it possible to create a space organized around two key elements – the descent group and the domestic group – each of them appearing in two modalities– strong and weak. Each of the farms under study can then be allocated to its appropriate space.

However, if this interpretation grid allows a better understanding of the articulation between the farm and the family at stake in individual family farms, it is legitimately possible to question its use in the hybrid cases of associations, between family and non-family peers in particular, cases which are often presented as being innovative.

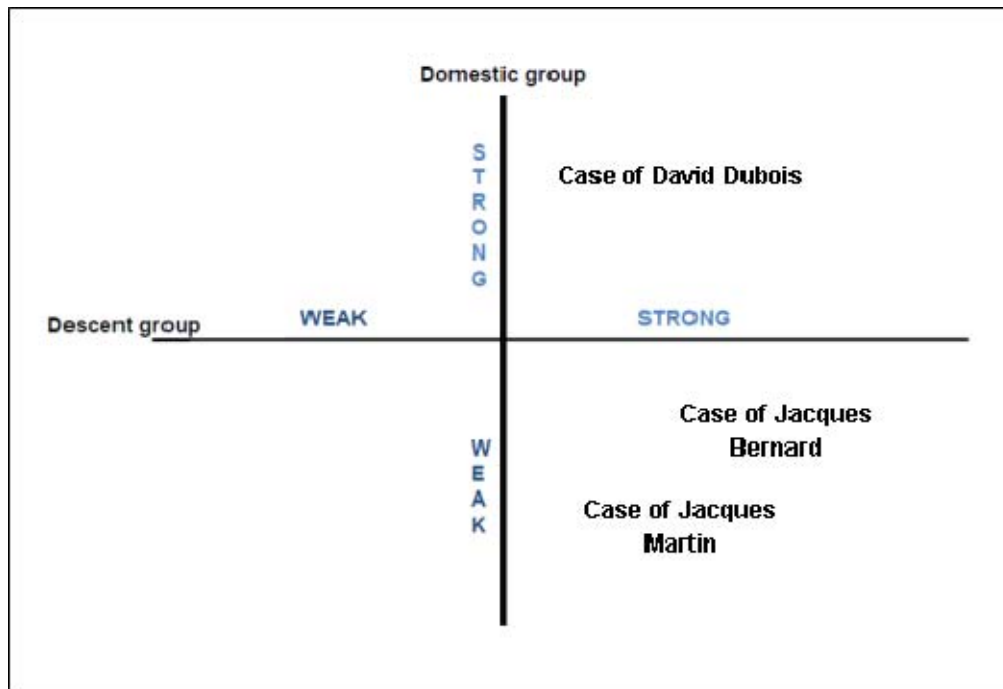


Figure 1. Interpretation grid of the interaction between the farm and the family and positioning of the cases presented.

5. Discussion : the hybrid case of associations between family peers and non-family peers

An association, the “GAEC des Moulins” offers an example of a case which questions the interpretation grid. This is a farm combining dairy production and cheese processing which associates a dairy farmer, Claude Thomas and a cheese maker, Stéphane Petit. But the family dimension of the farm is far from being absent: Claude Thomas settled on the family farm in 1990, taking over from his father Denis. At the time he was specialized in milk production, but when the PDO was declared in 1998, he seized the opportunity to set up an associated project with a cheese maker. The creation of the GAEC in 2000 marked the passage to an association between non-family peers from what was a very close-knit family farm - Claude Thomas and his family live on the farm, his father too; although retired, his father works on the farm every day and is very involved in decisions. As for Stéphane Petit, he has different professional references from those that come into play in the working relations between Claude Thomas and his father, which generates tensions at work collective scale. Here, the « collision » of family world and salaried world, as described by Barthez concerning associations between non-family peers, perfectly applies (Barthez, 1999). The working conditions of the two associates are very different: Stéphane Petit lives in the village, functions on a salary basis and separates working time from non-working time. The farmer lives on the farm so that when he has ten minutes free, he can go home. For the livestock farmer who lives on site, it is as Stéphane Petit says, « *a bit mixed up* ». Beyond the close interlinking between farm and family that he denounces in his associate, the cheese maker also mentions the generational conflict between the farmer and his father, whom he describes as being very present on the farm and he concludes, saying : « *...the family GAEC is not simple. Already, if there are problems between father and son, then ...* ». If we refer to the interpretation grid, we can see here the importance of the farming descent group which marks the relations between the farmer and his father who apparently has difficulty in withdrawing from the farm. But it is also the different natures of the two associates’ domestic group logics which generate the tensions mentioned by Stéphane Petit. Whilst the farmer is seeking to affirm his status as head of farm

in relation to his father in different respects, the cheese maker is seeking his position outside of any family reference. The reconstitution of the farm pathway reveals an array of changes in direct connection with the development of the cheese processing unit: change of cattle breed, changes in forage practices, etc. Other more recent changes are directly linked to this tension between the cheese maker and the farmer. In 2009, opinions hardened between the two associates concerning the enlargement of the herd: ever since his installation, Stéphane Petit has wanted to develop the GAEC, which according to him must involve enlarging the herd. Claude Thomas, on the other hand, is not in favour of this and it is only when Stéphane Petit threatens to leave the enterprise that he begins to think about it. This episode reveals that in spite of statutory equality between the two associates, it is the farmer, who is the owner of the farm and of its family history who asserts final authority in decisions taken ultimately for the enterprise. The equality of status in reality masks a great inequality of power of decision conferred by holding the means of production, in other words, the heritage. And it is only by threatening to leave the enterprise, i.e. to put the enterprise in danger and therefore the maintenance of the heritage, that the cheese maker manages to reverse the balance of power in his own favour. But, the solution proposed by Claude Thomas – of building new housing to be able to enlarge the herd – does not satisfy Stéphane Petit, who does not want to invest massively on the farm. An increase in numbers of cows without increase in building size is translated by taking to the summer mountain pastures the heifers that the buildings cannot house.

6. Conclusion

The GAEC des Moulins is a case which nevertheless confirms the close links that exist between the nature of family interactions and choices concerning farm management and farm trajectory. Even in associations between non-family peers where a certain distancing from family heritage could be expected, the proximity of the scenes (i.e. of the domestic life and of the professional farming life) and the family involvement in the history of the farm interfere at the very heart of work relations between associates, which relates to the question of the challenges of agriculture enterprises which are no longer just a family concern. In spite of the diversity of forms of family-farm interaction, relations to the descent group and configuration of everyone's position on and off the farm, the family dimension of farm dynamics seems never to be absent. The interpretation of the family-farm interaction in terms of descent group and domestic group thus reveals the diversity of ways of being a farming family; ways of being that do not all have the same repercussions on the way the farm is managed. And conversely, the family and technical history intrinsic to the farm more or less marks the individuals in place today. It is indeed in the dialectic between farm and family that the evolution of farm management and family interactions has to be understood.

However, as the framework proposed here is built up on the observation of seven case studies in a specific territory, it needs to be strengthened. Further empirical research could contribute to know better how could the two logics of the descent group and of the domestic group express themselves in farm' pathway and in family functioning.

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