AN EXPLORATION OF CONFLICT IN FARMING FAMILY BUSINESSES IN THE SOUTHERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA.

by

Maria Magdalena Kleynhans

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Masters in Conflict Transformation and Management

at the

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

January 2012

Promoter/Supervisor: Dr L. Snodgrass
I, Maria Magdalena Kleynhans, student number 202333213, hereby declare that the treatise for M.Phil Conflict Transformation and Management to be awarded is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

Maria Magdalena Kleynhans
II DEDICATION

I dedicate this treatise firstly to the families who bravely put their light and their darkness at my disposal that others can learn from them. It is my deepest wish that they will gain more than they had to give from this research.

I also dedicate it to my promoter, Dr. L. Snodgrass for her patience and perseverance with me as a student and her help to focus my thoughts and ambitions.

Lastly, a deep and sincere thank you to my husband for his belief in me, his never-failing encouragement and the litres of coffee he made.

Marna Kleynhans
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Family businesses are considered to be among the most important contributors to wealth and employment in virtually the world. This qualitative study looked at farming family businesses. Farming family businesses present certain unique features that discern them from other family businesses and are worthy of investigation.

Two domains are identified in the literature and research about conflict in family business: The business and the family. The researcher postulated that the domain of the family is too broadly drawn and that farming family systems in the Sibling Partnership Stage, with their unique way of life and functioning, consist of several sub-systems which impact on the business. Conflict develops in and between the sub-systems. This study looked at conflict within farming family businesses from a systemic viewpoint, particularly focusing on the process aspects, the interactional dynamics in and between the sub-systems.

Four active types of subsystems were identified in the case studies: Couples subsystems, parent child subsystems, sibling subsystems, in-law subsystems or subsystems of which at least one member is an in-law.

The research aim was to explore the circular patterns in the two cases as systems and to uncover the function of the conflict in these systems. In both cases, circular conflict patterns came to the fore with the subsystems part of the feedback loops. The conflict escalation happened between the subsystems as elements and the conflict paths were circular, not linear.

Sub-themes around family scripts, communication and perceptions about fairness were also uncovered in the research. Both cases were family businesses in the two-generational development stage.

The function of the conflict in both systems could only be hypothesised due to the exploratory nature of the research. The researcher hypothesized that the function of the conflict in the systems centred around conflict as an attempt in the system to shake loose from entrenched restricting family scripts. The important themes that
presented themselves in the research not envisaged in the planning stage. These themes are part of the systemic patterning in both the cases:

Perceptions of fairness or rather unfairness feed into the conflict loop. Rewards and compensation are sensitive matters in all families. The more there are perceptions of unfairness in a subsystem, the more entrenched that belief becomes, the more the conflict in the system escalates and the bigger the emotional distance gets from the assumed beneficiaries of benefits.
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CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

This Chapter provides an overview of farming family businesses in the world and in South Africa, describing the uniqueness of this type of family business. It also offers a more detailed focus on the methodological paradigm within which this research was done. It explains the research design and the methodology that was used, clearly stating the research question, main aim, objectives and motivations for the study.

1.1 THE CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Family businesses are considered to be among the most important contributors to wealth and employment in virtually every country of the world. About 98% of businesses in South Africa are small businesses, of which the majority are family businesses. Family businesses have been making a positive contribution towards the South African economy for the last 300 years. Approximately 80% of businesses in South Africa could be classified as family businesses and they comprise 60% of the companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (Venter, 2009; Van der Merwe, 2009; Van der Merwe, 1998; Ackerman, 2001).

Family businesses are fast becoming the dominant form of business enterprise in both developing and developed economies and can play an important role, both economically and socially, in these economies (Van der Merwe, Venter and Ellis, 2009; Farrington and Venter, 2003). Growth, job creation and poverty alleviation are pressing priorities for the South African economy and society in general (Venter, Boshoff and Maas, 2003).

The general tendency is that between two thirds and three quarters of family businesses either collapse or are sold during the first generation’s tenure and that only 5-15% make it to the third generation (Neubauer and Lank, 1998). Leach (2007) put it between 65% and 80% and Kets de Vries (2001) said that only 1 out of 10 family businesses make it to the second generation.
In South Africa, only one in four family businesses survive into the second
generation, while only one in ten makes it to the third generation. There is no
doubt that the economic and social cost of this high failure rate has impacted
negatively on economic growth in South Africa (Venter, Boshoff and Maas, 2003).

1.2 THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

This study looked specifically at farming family businesses. Leach stated that
nearly 94% of all agricultural business in the UK are family owned and managed
(2007).

Farming has traditionally been a family affair in South Africa, with sons farming
with the father and later inheriting the land (Giliomee, 2003: 321). A family farm
can be defined as a farm where a single family owns a majority stake of a farm,
two or more members are employed by the farm and the future continuation of the
family farm is foreseen. Family farms, as an integral part of family businesses,
play an important role in the South African economy, especially in the non-urban
areas. Family farms are unique in the sense that family interests are aligned with
the business interests of the farm (Van der Merwe, 2007).

The statistics for family farming business in South Africa do not reflect a
substantial contribution to the economy. The 2007 Census of Commercial
Agriculture (2007: 4) reported:

- 83, 2% of the 39 966 active farming units in the commercial sector are
  owned and operated by individuals.
- Followed by close corporations (5, 7%).
- Private companies (5, 4%).
- Only 2.2% are family owned.
- 52, 4% of the gross farming income was generated from farming units
  owned by individuals, followed by private companies with 33, 6%.
- The smallest contribution towards the gross farming income was made by
  units that are owned by ‘other’ and families with 1, 2% and 1, 5%
  respectively.
The researcher disputes these statistics and contributes it to the fact that many family businesses are registered in the name of one person (reflected as individual) or are registered as a family trust or close corporation (reflected as private company or close corporation).

The national importance of farming family businesses in terms of food security, employment and income from export and as worthy fields of study are reflected by the statistics reflected in the *Growth and Development Strategy* (2007) of the Eden District Municipality in the Southern Cape area of South Africa, the area in which this study will be undertaken:

- 25% of economic activities in Eden’s economy are agriculture-related.
- Agriculture contributed 11.3% to the region’s GDP.
- Agriculture contributed 15.8% to the region’s employment.
- Its contribution will be more than 25% if the processing of agricultural products, the trade in agricultural commodities and agri-tourism are taken into consideration.

The empirical research and literature that focus on farming family businesses are sparse. During the literature study for this treatise it was found that farming families have been studied from various theoretical perspectives, drawing on theory from agricultural and feminist geography, sociology, rural studies, business and economical studies but little research looking in a systemic manner at farming family businesses.

Johnson (2004, 410) reflected on the debate in the 1970’s to late 1980’s within agrarian sociology, regarding the future of family farming and the possible extinction thereof. She highlighted the uniqueness and resilience of family farms that enable them to adapt to financial stress in ways that corporate farms cannot do. She said the family farming business can be differentiated from other units of production because of the spatial coincidence and co-dependence of its household and enterprise components (2004, 429).
1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Little qualitative research has been done on farming family businesses in South Africa, especially on all the factors that ensure successful and sustainable business operations. A review of available research and literature showed that succession in family businesses is a favourite research topic. The research into conflict in farming family businesses has also leaned strongly towards conflict around the succession process. Taylor and Norris (2000, 277) said: "Historically most farm research has been conducted by researchers with disciplinary roots in agriculture, focusing on the operation of farms, the ownership of assets and the financial performance of the business". Review of the literature in SA shows that research in farming family businesses is predominantly rooted in the business sciences.

The Price Waterhouse Coopers Family Business Survey, Kin in the Game, (2010/2011, 29) found that the ability to manage differences of opinion smoothly is now more important than ever, but less than a third of family businesses have introduced procedures for dealing with disputes between family members.

Two domains are identified in the literature and research about conflict in family business: The business and the family. Leach (2007) stated that conflict develops in the overlap between the business and the family (See Annexure 1).

The researcher postulated that the domain of the family in the Sibling Partnership Stage in Gersick’s Three Dimensional Model (Gersick et al in Neubauer and Lang, 1998) is too broadly drawn and that the family in farming family businesses, with their unique way of life and functioning, consist of several sub-systems which impact on the business. Conflict develops in and between the sub-systems.

Although helpful insight and knowledge about farming family businesses can be drawn from the general research and literature on family businesses, farming family businesses present certain unique features that discern them from other family businesses and are worthy of investigation:
• The business (farming) takes place in and around the living space of the family. There is less separation between business and family life than in other family businesses.

• Business takes place everyday of the week and night on farms and flows over into the family life, more so than in other family businesses where the siblings and other family members can physically leave the workplace and go to a home in another geographical setting.

• The wives/partners of the siblings are more involved in the business—it takes place right there in their homes and gardens (or lack of gardens!).

• The wives/partners are more involved with each other due to the business and geographical setup on a farm. The interaction present with more opportunity for conflict.

• The families are more involved with each other due to the business and geographical setup on a farm. The interaction present with more opportunity for conflict.

This study looked at conflict within farming family businesses from a systemic viewpoint, particularly focusing on the process aspects, the interactional dynamics in and between the sub-systems. The researcher aimed to add to the broad frameworks, mindsets and best practices regarding farming family businesses.

Although each farming family business is unique, shaped by its own set of personalities, concerns, objectives and relationships, there are common patterns of experience in all families and certain systemic rules that govern the transactions of family systems. There is a lack of attention in the family business field to the exact nature of the psychological dimensions and mechanisms of family psychology that are most relevant to the family business context. And also to the farming family business arena, a family business type with unique qualities and problems (Björnberg and Nicholson, 2007).

Price and Evans (2009, 2) stated: “... the exposition of issues and life experiences that stem from places and processes within a patriarchal family farming way of life offers a potentially fruitful, alternative line of enquiry”. They also pointed out that
the lives of family farming individuals still remain largely unexplored and have generally been omitted from research informed by post modern cultural studies.

More light needs to be shed on the complex interconnectedness of family farming lives and the field of farming family businesses can benefit from further exploration of the familial narrative.

This study took place in the Southern Cape, but the researcher is of the opinion that the geographical location and the type of agricultural activities do not affect the study outcomes to such an extent that the findings of this study cannot shed some measure of light on other farming families in other parts of the country. The emphasis was on the different systems within farming family business, not the type of agriculture practiced. This exploratory research will hopefully encourage other scholars to see family farming businesses through more complex lenses, encouraging more qualitative research.

1.4 THE CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

Farming family businesses are a neglected area in the field of research on family businesses. The objective of this study is to contribute to the existing knowledge on conflict in farming family businesses. The focus is on farming family businesses who are developmentally in the Sibling Partnership Stage Ownership on the Ownership axis (Gersick et al in Neubauer and Lank, 1998).

The central research question was: What is the function of the conflict in the system?

Two themes were explored:

a) The theme of sub-systems within the family domain of farming family business. The domain of THE FAMILY in the Sibling Phase consists of several sub-systems which impact on the business domain and the conflict processes within farming family businesses. Examples of possible sub-systems are:
Couples-husband and wife.
Mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law.
Father with one son.
Two brothers, excluding a third brother etc.

b) The conflict theme - conflict as a symptom in the system. What is the function of the conflict in the supra system - the farming family business? Important questions are: How do the differing needs and values of these sub-systems contribute to conflict? How do the relationships between the sub-systems contribute to conflict processes?

1.5 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 The overall research aim of the study is:

To explore the conflict processes in and between the sub-systems in farming family businesses.

1.5.2 The research aim was achieved by means of the following:

a) Exploring, through 14 in-depth interviews with the members of 2 farming family businesses, the family domain with its sub-systems and the conflict in the supra-system.

b) A systemic analysis of conflict as part of the interactional circular pattern in the family farming business as a system.

1.6 STUDY DELIMITATIONS

This study did not aim to identify or describe the conflict types or causes of conflict in farming family businesses. The focus was on the identification and description of the structures and processes within the systems investigated.
1.7 SUB-FOCI

The following sub-questions were asked in order to develop understanding of the role of the different sub-systems in the conflict processes:

a) How do the relationships within the different sub-systems (e.g. the different couple systems) impact on or influence the family system and the business system?

b) How do the relationships between the different sub-systems impact on or influence the family system and the business system?

c) How does conflict within the sub-systems impact on conflict in the family system and the business system?

d) How does conflict between the sub-systems impact on conflict in the family system and the business system?

e) What is the function of the conflicts in and between the sub-systems in the supra-system, the farming family business?

1.8 METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGM

This research straddled the philosophical worlds of positivism and phenomenology. The primary viewpoint and point of departure of the researcher was positivist. The data was interpreted within a systemic framework (positivist). Conflict, family relationships, family farming and family business were viewed from a systemic viewpoint. Systems thinking is about wholeness, about organisation, patterns, understanding a part in terms of the whole, and how the whole is more than the sum of the parts. It is a study of relations. Systemic phenomena have essential structures that can be identified and described.

Green and Thorogood (2005, 12) said: "A positivist philosophy is one that assumes there is a stable reality ‘out there’". They also referred to the element of positivism, namely that it is value-free: The knowledge derived from the research is not bound up in subjective or political viewpoints but is true for all times and places. The researcher believes that all family systems share common structures and patterns and can be viewed with the same lenses. The data obtained from this
study can be extrapolated to other farming families, making it ‘true for all times and places’.

Finlay in Finlay and Ballinger (2006) stated that positivists aim for the truth while interpretivists explore multiple meanings and interpretations. The “truth” in this study will be the exploration and description of the structures and transactions within the different systems. Babbie and Mouton (2002, 27) said most positivist would subscribe to “an empiricist theory or conception of knowledge”, where the primary source of all knowledge is to be found in experience and observation. The researcher will in this case gather knowledge about the functioning of the family farming business by experiencing the family farming systems through the eyes, minds and hearts of the interviewees (interpretivist), but the body of knowledge will focus on the structures and patterns in the system.

Although the primary lens is systemic (positivist), the data was collected within an interpretivist paradigm. A qualitative approach was followed, focusing on the narrative of the interviewees, their stories and the meaning they attach to their circumstances. A qualitative approach was required to understand the experiences, the interpretations of the people involved, each person’s unique take on each conflict situation. Neuman (2006, 159) said the passage of time is integral to qualitative research. Qualitative researchers look at the sequence of events and pay attention to what happens first, second, third and so on. Because qualitative researchers examine the same case or set of cases over time, they can see an issue evolve, a conflict emerge or a social relationship develop. They can detect processes and causal relationships.

In qualitative research ideas and evidence are mutually interdependent. Qualitative research makes use of natural observation rather than controlled measurement and the researcher is closely involved with the participant’s experiences. Rhodes (1996, 3) said:“... each member of an organization has a voice in the narrative-some are loud, some are articulate and powerful, while others are silent and unheard”. He quoted Stephens and Eizen (1984): “Stories get to the heart of people’s meaning by explaining the nature of an individual’s reality”.
The definitions and meanings of conflict might differ—what one person might perceive as conflictual might not be conflictual to another. Conflict cannot be approached without exploring feelings—it requires a qualitative interpretation of the individual experiences.

The theoretical literature research makes reference to:

a) Existing conflict theory in literature and research.
b) Existing research regarding work-family conflict.
c) Farming families—drawing on theory from agricultural and feminist geography and sociology, psychology and family therapy, rural and business studies.
d) A systems approach, being a less normative approach and more value free, adding to the understanding of symptomatology by understanding symptoms in terms of their functions.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

1.9.1 Literature study

Babbie, as quoted by Fouché in De Vos and others (2005, 272), asserted that case study researchers must aim to enter the field with knowledge of the relevant literature before conducting the field research. Fouché and Delport in De Vos and others (2005, 124) stated that a thorough literature study lays the foundation for good research. The researcher conducted an in-depth literature study in order to establish a conceptual framework of farming family businesses as well as a systemic view of the functioning of two-generation farming families. The researcher made use of articles in professional journals, internet articles, standard reference materials, dissertations, and scientific books. The literature resources were gathered from the fields of sociology, conflict studies, economic and business studies, psychology, family therapy, agriculture, feminist geography and rural studies.
1.9.2 The study population

The study population consisted of 2 farming family businesses. Fourteen interviews were conducted with all the parties directly and indirectly involved in the family business. Directly was considered the people on the farm directly involved in the business system and the farming, while indirectly was considered the wives or partners of the farmers or retired family members.

Both family businesses are involved in mixed agricultural activities in the Southern Cape area.

1.9.3 Data collection

a) The case study method

A case-based approach in data collection was followed. Although the sample size is limited (two cases), the 14 in-depth interviews and the analysis of the two different systems attempted to provide insight to the questions at hand.

Heck and others (2008) referred to the need to examine the family firm with intense qualitative research, using methods like case studies to explore high-quality data sources. The advantage of the case study method is that a researcher can focus on a limited number of cases and can intensively investigate these cases. Neuman (2006, 41) said case studies help researchers connect the micro level, or the actions of individual people to the macro level or large scale social structures and processes. Yin (1989) described a case study as an empirical research method, which, with the aid of multiple sources of evidence, studies a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. He stated that case studies are ideal when the borders between the phenomenon and the context are not entirely clear. Thus, case studies lend themselves to answering how and why questions.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994, 47) linked the narrative approach with the case study method and said that it effectively represents the results of a qualitative
research study. The study was exploratory and descriptive, aiming to describe the systemic structures, patterns and recurring behavioural loops between the different sub-systems in each of the two farming family businesses.

b) Case study limitations

Doing a case study in a qualitative manner means close involvement with the case study population. Kets de Vries (1996, 6) mentioned that an investigator cannot avoid being affected by the subject of investigation. He went as far as saying that doing research without bias is an illusion—there is always something happening between the researcher and the subjects. The transference and counter-transference will always play a role because the researcher is a part of the greater social system. This can lead to distortions or can be used to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and feelings. There will always be questions about the validity of qualitative methods and if they can lead to real knowledge.

The researcher attempted to provide as faithful a representation as possible. Providing the interviewees with copies of the final research will also ensure faithful representation and increase reliability.

c) Unstructured Interviews

Interviews were unstructured, using a minimally scripted question guideline with open-ended questions to allow interviewees the opportunity to speak widely regarding his/her unique meaning, perceived or real story of the family and the business, focusing on the interactions between persons and groups and the conflict processes in the different systems and the unique meaning the interviewees attach to their lives in and around the family business. Greeff in De Vos and others (2005, 292-293) defined unstructured one-to-one interviews as in-depth interviews, where the researcher both explores and strives to attain understanding of the participant’s subjective experiences and the meaning he or she makes of the experiences.
A narrative approach was followed, with the researcher employing “story-listening skills”. Rhodes (1996) listed these skills as active listening, suspending judgments based on stereotypes, empathising with the storyteller, providing reflective responses to encourage storytellers to tell their stories to the end, and giving feedback to the storyteller to ensure that the story has been received ‘straight’. Essentially, narrative meaning is created by noting that something is a part of a whole, and that something is a cause of something else. Narratives provide links, connections, coherence, meaning, sense. Narrative is the type of discourse that draws together diverse events, happenings and actions of human lives.

The difficult issues are the "tension between interpretation and representation" (Jeffkut in Rhodes 1996). The researcher acted less an interpreter and more a ghost writer, representing stories as they were to be found.

Genograms and drawings were used in an interactive manner in the interviews to enhance understanding. General systems theory principles are used as a basis for the assessment of family systems with genograms and utilized to interpret information (Hurley, 1982). Theoretically the genogram is a clear diagrammatic method of obtaining relevant information, representing a way to view problems across generations while the family diagram visually records the facts of functioning—all essential data about the family and family problems on a single page (Butler, 2008). A simplified combination of the methods was used: The aim was not to be theoretically pure but rather to collect data, check understanding and enhance communication and insight through the graphical representation of the facts.

1.9.4 Data analysis

De Vos in De Vos and others (2005, 335) said that research, data collection and data analysis in the qualitative approach are not done in isolation from each other but instead form an inseparable unit. Empirical data is analyzed as it is gathered. The result of this process is the effective collection of rich data. For the purpose of this study the empirical data was analyzed in an inductive manner. Inductive reasoning entails the observation of a sample and the subsequent drawing of
conclusions about the population from which the sample was taken based on the observation.

Interviews were recorded by hand written notes and drawings during the interviews. Although the researcher planned to make tape recordings of sessions, too many interviewees were uncomfortable with the idea. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Data was analyzed according to the following themes:

i) The systemic structures and patterns in each family – identify and describe the sub-systems in the family domain.
ii) Identify and describe the conflict processes in and between sub-systems.
iii) Identify and describe the recurring conflictual and behavioural loops between the different sub-systems in the family domain and in the business domain.
iv) Identify the function of the conflict in the supra system, the family business system.

The central themes that emerged regarding the function of the conflict in each family domain and the impact on the broader family business system were interpreted with literature control and documented.

Each family system was separately described and analysed. The family domain in each family business system was explored and evaluated after completion of the interviews. Analogies and differences between the 2 case studies were highlighted. The researcher looked for averages or patterns across the sub-systems and cases.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Ballinger and Wiles in Finlay and Ballinger (2006, 46) referred to the importance of ongoing attention to ethical considerations during the research process. Ethics committees usually have a particular brief to protect the interests of vulnerable
groups. Although the participants in this study cannot be described as vulnerable, special consideration was given to confidentiality and to protect their identity. They are from a small population, belonging to the same interest groups (research study groups etc.) as other people who might be interested in this research.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2003, 27) “the fundamental rule of social research is that it must bring no harm to research subjects”. The emotional nature of this research required that the participants had to be treated with respect and dignity: They talked about their family, feelings and conflict. It was foreseen that painful issues might emerge, latent conflicts brought to the fore or even issues revealed about which they feel ashamed. The researcher was prepared to assist and refer interviewees who needed it.

All the families volunteered to be a part of this study. They were families who were struggling with conflict and looking for ways to manage their conflict. They gave informed consent for the interview material to be used for research purposes. The researcher undertook in writing that the identity or any factors that could point to their identity would be removed from the research findings.

Ballinger and Wiles in Finlay and Ballinger (2006, 56) said that it is “... considered ethical practice to share with potential participants the expected findings and possible outcomes of a research project, to enable them to assess the benefits of participation”. They also pointed out that it might be difficult to do this, due to the evolutionary nature of qualitative research design. In this research the researcher explained the research process and the research questions to the participants and discussed with them the potential impacts of exploring their family system.

The findings will be made available to all the family members who participated, especially the findings pertaining to each family, with special effort to help families who require assistance.

The researcher took into consideration that:
• Just talking to the members of a family and asking questions is an intervention, a change introduced in the system.
• When the research findings are made available to them further interventions are made into the system.

If the objective is never to touch or stir a system during research, no research can take place. It was also acknowledged that the participants would not be able to comprehend totally in advance what the impact of the research would be on their family.

A meeting will be set up with each family business to give feedback on the specific outcomes relevant to their family and business before the research report is set in the public domain. Recommendations and assistance will be given as far as possible. Any referrals for other assistance or help will be made at that point. Hard copies of the approved research report will also be given to each family business at that meeting.

1.11 Layout of Treatise

Chapter One: Research context and the problem statement

This chapter provides an overview of farming family businesses in the world and in South Africa, describing the uniqueness of this type of family business. It offers a more detailed focus on the methodological paradigm within which the research was done. It explains the research design and the methodology that was used, clearly stating the research question, main aim, objectives and motivations for the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The relevant literature and research consulted for the study will be presented in this chapter, looking specifically at farming family businesses from a systemic perspective and presenting a systemic perspective of conflict processes.
Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

The design and execution of the research will be outlined, and some reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of that approach will be offered.

Chapter Four: Findings of the Research

This chapter will present and discuss the research findings.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

The researcher will summarise the research findings and link the findings with the research aims. Recommendations will be made for further research and possible steps that farming family businesses can take in conflict resolution.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“Family is the key institution through which social capital is transmitted with time and effort, development of affective ties and guidelines about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours” (Werbel and Danes, 2010: 424).

The family is the social system that takes care of its members and develops emotional bonds and a sense of loyalty and responsibility among its members. Families differ in their level of cohesion and strength of bonding. Connected and cohesive families have a more collectivistic orientation. In a collectivistic family, interactions are characterized by reciprocity of altruism, which links each family member’s welfare to that of other family members (Kellermans and Eddleston, 2004; Lansberg and Astrachan, 1994).

The essence of family businesses consists of the vision held for the firm by the family or a small group of families and the intention of the dominant condition is to shape and pursue this vision potentially across generations of the same family or group of families (Chua, Chrisman and Sharma, 1999).

2.2 DEFINING FAMILY BUSINESSES

A family business can be defined as a business where a single family owns at least 51% of the equity of the business; where a single family is able to exercise considerable influence in the business; and where at least 2 family members are concerned with the senior management of the business (Farrington, 2009). Kets de Vries referred to the unique qualities, problems and challenges of family firms as well as the psychological processes fostered in the closed environment of the family business. He said “.... the intertwining of family and business concerns is at the core of the issues and questions that surround family businesses” (1996, 5).
The dynamics in family businesses become more complex and the problems multiply exponentially when more than one family unit becomes involved, with siblings ending up working together. The multi-family ownership requires a unique combination of people skills and attitudes to make it work and special steps to avoid intra-family conflict. Family dynamics are present in the vast majority of organizations in existence today and the goals of a family are generally to nurture, develop, and support family members. In contrast, firms use profits, market share, efficiency, and other economic criteria to measure performance. Research on family firms indicates that family goals and needs often are the deciding factors in many business decisions and strategies (Leach, 2007; Dyer, 2003).

Keeping family separate from business is therefore harmful, as it attempts to extract the one thing that gives a family business its advantage over its non-family business rivals. Stafford, Duncan, Dane and Winter (1999: 206) in Venter and Kruger (2004, 30) expressed this as follows: “... it is not the business that makes a family business unique from other business arrangements, rather, it is the family”. In other words, a family business that is able to extract and separate the family element from the business will lose the one element that makes family businesses unique and allows them to outperform non-family businesses. Family influence is the one thing that is unique to family businesses, and could be regarded as a resource to a business.

Family influence as a resource is referred to as ‘familiness’. It is the unique bundle of resources a firm has as the result of the interaction of the family, the firm and individual family members with one another (Habbershon and Williams, 2001). Familiness is regarded as a capability, in the sense that it is firm specific, embedded in the firm and its processes, and it is not transferable to other firms.

Several models of family businesses were developed over the years. The three dimensional model of Gersick et al is a developmental model in which three subsystems in a family business, Ownership, Family and Business moves through a sequence of stages over time, making provision for the passage of time and change. The three-dimensional model offers insight into the stages of development in a family business’s ownership, family and management structures.
(See Annexure 2). The result is a three-dimensional model, referred to as the "developmental model" that offers the most advanced insight into the stages of development in a family business’s ownership, family and management structures. Each of the three subsystems, ownership, family and business, has a separate developmental dimension. Taken together as three axis of ownership, family and business development, the model depicts a three-dimensional space. Every family business has progressed to some point on the ownership developmental axis, some point on the family developmental axis, and some point on the business developmental axis (Neubauer and Lank, 1998).

The researcher attempted with this research to describe the existence and inter-relationship between several subsystems in the family domain on the ownership axis (Sibling Partnership Stage) in the farming family businesses explored in this study.

2.3 FARMING FAMILY BUSINESSES

Family farms are part of a unique culture. Family-owned farms are special in many ways. Farming families have a deep emotional tie to farm country and with historic commitment to long term stewardship of the land. Family farm businesses have a unique culture, not only among other family businesses but also among other professions (Bahls, 1994; Danes and Lee, 2004).

Farming is different from other professions, because it has its own discrete set of values, including resistance to change, traditional gender roles, strong work ethic, and self-sufficiency. Roles are mediated by self-standards that combine with self-expectations and those of the larger community. This strong rural farm culture includes expectations about the business and family roles of wives and husbands (steeped in tradition and identity laden), and about keeping the family business viable to pass on to the next generation. Farm life is unique in its potential for stress due to high capital investment that creates high debt loads. Major farm stressors include economic factors, workloads, and relationship issues. In a study of dairy farm wives (Berkowitz and Perkins in Danes and Lee, 2004), role conflict and husbands’ support for wives tension indicated that tensions exist in farm family
businesses, because wives negotiate the demands of the business and those of the family within a context of strong interdependency. A key factor in low couple conflict was acceptance of the other's roles within the family farm business (Danes and Lee, 2004).

Few businesses have as much family involvement in the day-to-day operation as intergenerational farming. Working side by side, family members have opportunities for shared dreams, satisfying communication, and intimacy. At the same time, working side by side presents challenges of high interfamilial stress, strain, and conflict, especially when the family lacks skills in communication, problem solving, goal setting, conflict resolution, and strategic planning. Common to all typologies is an emphasis on the coincidence of the farm enterprise and household and, by extension, the interdependency of the two domains. Theorists interested in the family farm have historically differentiated it from other units of production in capitalist society because of the spatial coincidence and co-dependence of its household and enterprise components (Zimmerman and Fetsch, 1994; Johnsen, 2004).

Marotz-Baden and Mattheis (1994, 133) stated most young farmers work with or for their parents. Thus, women who marry farming husbands are likely to live near their husband's parents and become involved with his kin because of the overlap of the business and family systems. The patrilineal emphasis and the fact that farming is often facilitated by patrilocal residence places the in-marrying bride in a weak position.

Price and Evans (2009: 7) talked about “peering into the dark spaces of family farming to build up a picture of life through the identification of ‘clusters of distress’” and said that this culturally specific way of life deserves greater illumination, especially the ways in which human perception and behaviour within family farming interact to produce negative, distressing experiences. They referred to the ideological pressure on farms in the UK to maintain the name on the land and how it contradicts strong personal desires to leave farming, with anxiety stemming from this paradox. This ideology is also in place on farms in South Africa, with the preference for family names and inheritance, keeping the family
name on the farm over generations (Van der Merwe, 2007). The meaning of land and belonging to the land feature strongly in farming family businesses, with the concept of ‘home’ embodied in cultural beliefs and traditions (Price and Evans, 2009).

Understanding the meanings of home and house and land are vital when attempting to illuminate the sources and causes of distress in farming. The house and home as a site of study has been neglected, perhaps because they are so familiar that we hardly seem to notice them. A feminist approach is useful in revealing that this is because ‘the home’ and ‘domesticity’ are typically associated with women. For farming men and women, the symbolism of the farmhouse can be extremely important, with the shadows of past and future generations in every corner (McDowell 1999; Moore 1986; Carsten and Hugh-Jones as quoted in Price and Evans, 2009).

Price and Evans (2009) said that the unity of farm, family and business, comprising the ‘way of life’ of family farming, has been underestimated by agricultural geographers in explanations for the survival of British family farming. Similar findings were noted in the United States (Ramirez-Ferrero, 2005 in Price and Evans, 2005). They identified distress that are linked directly with the construction of individual farming identities shaped by patriarchal and patrilineal cultural forces, where males learn to become ‘farmers’ and females ‘farming women’ over their life courses. Socialization, usually from childhood, is likely to construct a patriarchal, gender relational sense of belonging to place that is further likely to influence strongly the emotional and behavioural geographies of farming individuals. In these ways, family members initially become ‘rooted’ in agriculture through their internalization of patriarchal and patrilineal gender identities and become acquainted with the nature of appropriate future relations and roles.
2.4 THINKING SYSTEMICALLY

2.4.1 General systems theory

Systems thinking are about wholeness, about organisation, patterns, understanding a part in terms of the whole, and how the whole is more than the sum of the parts. A systems perspective is a study of relations, rather than entities, with an emphasis on process and transition. Systems theory emphasises the inter-relationship of all parts of a system and focus on the environment within which it exchanges energy and information. Properties that are necessary to take note of are: Structure, meta-systems and sub-systems, boundaries, balance and change, triangles, scripts, feedback (positive and negative), feedback loops (circular causality). Lilienfeld (1978, 207) quotes Walter Buckley that on the macro social level the systems theory model holds as much as on the micro level. He describes it as interacting components engaged in transactions with both internal and external environments. A systems approach provides advantages, being a less normative approach and more value free, adding to the understanding of symptomatology by understanding symptoms in terms of their functions.

2.4.2 Families as systems

Family systems theory, which derives from general systems theory, postulates that families are open systems that depend on the environment for their survival, regulating their interaction both internally and externally to achieve a state of bounded equilibrium. In a family system, every action and reaction triggers a change in the system as a whole-such is the interdependence of its various subsystems/parts. Adaptability is fundamental for integrating and regulating change in the family system in relation to its outer and inner environment, and for solving its problems. Cohesion is a prerequisite for the system to remain a unit, since it shapes the boundaries that define it (Bjornberg and Nicholson, 2007).

Cox and Paley (2003) also applied principles of general systems theory to the family as an organized system. Accordingly family systems are characterized by (a) wholeness and order (the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and has
properties that cannot be understood simply from the combined characteristics of each part), (b) hierarchical structure (a family is composed of subsystems that are systems in and of themselves), and (c) adaptive self-organization (a family, as an open, living system, can adapt to change or challenges).

Another important concept of family systems theory is that families have the capacity to reorganize in response to external forces. That is, families can adapt so that they can continue to function in the face of the new circumstances. This aspect of systems theory is important because it points to the need to consider how the family as a system responds to challenges, in addition to considering how each individual or subsystem responds. The property of adaptive self-organization suggests that there will be challenges to existing patterns of interaction at all levels of the family system during both normative transitions (birth of a child, a child entering school) and non-normative transitions (departure of a spouse, entrance of a new spouse, untimely death of a family member). Or life stage transitions in the family business like succession. These challenges affect the family at multiple levels, and changes in activity at each level influence other levels, resulting in a feedback loop that leads to further change. Eventually new patterns emerge as an adaptation to the family’s changed circumstances.

Triangles are the phenomenon in systems when a third party is pulled in or the communication between two parties happens through a third party. Bowen in Hayley (1971, 172) said the basic building block of any emotional system is the triangle. Anxiety can easily develop in intimate relationships. Under stressful situations, two people (a dyad or two-person system) may recruit a third person into the relationship to reduce the anxiety and gain stability. This is called triangulation. Triangulation is a basic process occurring in all families and other social groups. A vulnerable third party may become triangulated when one of the members of the dyad seeks a third party as an ally to support his or her position in a conflict with the other member of the dyad. In cases where the anxiety is too great for this threesome, others may become involved, forming a series of interlocking triangles. Although triangulation may lessen the emotional tension between the two people involved, the underlying conflict is not addressed, and in the long run the situation worsens. Triad patterns will become more rigid when the
family is facing a change or undergoing stress, and will be more flexible in periods of calm.

Triangles allow people to avoid facing the need to change or acknowledging their contribution to the problem, and actually tend to prevent resolutions, resulting in continuous instability. With more family members participating, the emotional field becomes increasingly unstable (Farrington, 2009: 201). Conflict occurs when attempts are made to form an alliance with an outsider and thus form a triangle. As the conflict increases, outside systems will be increasingly involved with increasing interlocking triangles.

Third parties in triangles serve a purpose. They either foster the conflict or help keep the balance by maintaining the conflict, keeping it from not exploding or reaching a higher level. They also then keep the conflict from reaching some solution. Papp (1983) says at moments of intense, internal overload or stress in the system, more and more outsiders or outside systems are ‘triangled in’.

2.4.3 Family businesses and the familiness factor

a) Systems thinking and family businesses

Farrington (2009, 41-42) said systems theory was adopted and applied to understand the nature of family businesses. It resulted in a useful framework for studying the relationship between the family and the business, by presenting the family and the business as overlapping, interacting and interdependent systems, and for analysing both the family and the business as systems-the dual systems approach or the two-system concept (See Annexure 1). The underlying belief is that the interconnectedness of related subsystems is critical to an understanding of how the overall family business system functions. In the non-family business, these two basically incompatible systems operate independently, but in the family business they not only overlap, but are actually interdependent. Leach (1994) said families with their own businesses chronically suffer from “institutional overlap” The boundary between family and business activities is often vague and overlaps; this can produce tensions for individuals involved in either system. If the
boundaries between family and business goals are ill-defined, it becomes difficult for the family members to clearly distinguish business from familial issues.

Heck and others (2008, 324-325) also identified only 2 sub-systems - the family and the business and pointed out that at some level both the family system and the business system must be identified. They said: "Family entrepreneurship involves the underpinnings and interactions of two systems, namely, the family system and the business system, and both are worthy of study as well as the overlap between these two systems is unique". They continue: "The optimal integration of both the family and the business means comprehensive modelling of all relevant subsystems relative to the family firm and recognizing the interrelationships and overlaps between and among all subsystems".

Kepner (1983, 65) said there are certain influences the firm will have on the family dynamics because the firm is a part of the psychological, if not the actual environment of the family. It is always a “third party” that is carried around in the minds of people in the family system. The health of both the individual and the system is affected more by how it manages and adapts to forces that impinge on it rather than by what it has to manage.

One of the keys to the success of a family business is the establishment of clear boundaries, separating the family’s emotional issues from the tasks required for the successful development and operation of the business. Boundaries serve as the rules that define which individual family members participate in the business and how they do so. Strain occurs when family and business boundaries overlap and permeate each other. This overlap produces tensions or stress in the family and/or in the business. Business strains are associated with separating business and family, and manifest in such things as family conflict, unrealistic expectations of family members, emotionality, and informal policies. Family strains, on the other hand, are due to business issues being brought home, resulting in little separation between family and business outside of work (Farrington, 2009: 234).

This study looked deeper specifically at the family system and its subsystems, identifying several subsystems that interact, are interconnected and impact in a
reciprocal manner on each other, on the family system, on the business system and on the overarching family business meta-system in a circular manner.

b) Familiness

The concept of familiness is in essence a systemic one, portraying how the family system’s unique nature impact on the business system. The distinctive resources of family businesses are termed the familiness of the system. It arises from the integration of family and business life, integration that creates several unique characteristics. Familiness emerges as both the greatest source of strength and weakness, often at the same time in family businesses. It describes how the family at the heart of the business is functioning. Familiness describes the “unique bundle of resources (available for establishing a strategic advantage) held by and particular to family firms as a result of their unique systems, interaction among the family members and the business itself (Tokarczyk, Hansen, Green and Down, 2007).

Altruism can be linked to familiness, permeating the dynamics of family businesses. Altruism compels parents to care for their children, encourages family members to be considerate of one another, and makes family membership valuable in ways that both promote and sustain the family bond. These bonds lend family firms a history, language, and identity that make them special. Altruism also fosters loyalty, as well as a commitment among its leaders to the firm’s long-run prosperity. But when the value of altruism is breached in families, it may be replaced by antipathy and the emotions of hate and jealousy (Dyer, 2003). Moshavi and Koch (2005, 238) stated that when there is a conflict between work and family systems facing family businesses owners, the accommodation is generally made by the family rather than the business.

Aldrich and Cliff (2003, 576) terminology for familiness is family embeddedness. They said: “The family embeddedness perspective on entrepreneurship implies that researchers need to include family dimensions in their conceptualizing and modelling, their sampling and analyzing, and their interpretations and implications. Connecting the ‘unnaturally separated’ social institutions of family and business
will pave the way for more holistic-and more realistic-insights into the fascinating processes by which new business opportunities and new business ventures emerge”.

James (1999) said that a consequence of the close relationships in families is that the actions of one person will frequently affect and reflect the well being of another, emphasising the inter-relationship of all parts of a system. Trust, loyalty and altruism develop as family members communicate and experience shared realities by living together, eating together, sharing common rituals and building a ‘deep reservoir of common history’.

Familiness can be both the strength and the dark side of the family culture (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Nicholson and Björnberg, 2004). Six prominent weaknesses or limitations emerge:

- **Enmeshed**: The family is isolated and over-involved with each other.
- **Deficient**: There is insufficient external input with a tendency to make bad judgment or to be short-sighted.
- **Cautious**: The family is risk-aversive and lack entrepreneurial spirit.
- **Uncontrolled**: Overt family conflicts overspill into the business, with unprofessional behaviour, poor communication and relationships.
- **Over-controlled**: Excess patriarchal or matriarchal power with top-down structure and lacking in delegation.
- **Adrift**: Uncertainty, absence of planning and fragmentation of culture are the characteristics of these family businesses.

Nicholson and Björnberg (2004) talked about the reciprocal influence between the founder, the family and the business. Family members of various generations reciprocally influence one another and the business. Familiness is created by the interactions between the founder (or founder legacy), family members, generations of the family, and the business.

It would be wrong to think that familiness is always a positive influence in a family business. Familiness, if not maintained and nurtured, can rapidly become a
destructive force in a business. Habbershon and Williams (1999) distinguished between distinctive and constrictive familiness. Constrictive familiness develops when founder and family capital are eroded and family involvement becomes an encumbrance to the family business. Distinctive familiness exists when family involvement in a family business provides a firm with a sustainable competitive advantage.

Byng-Hall (1995b, 46) said his definition of a secure family base is "a family that provides a reliable network of attachment relationships in which all family members of whatever age are able to feel sufficiently secure to explore". The term "network" implies a shared family responsibility that assures everyone that any member who is in need of help will be cared for. The secure family base is the family members supporting each other. or whenever help is given avoiding being intrusive, competing, or taking over, as Sroufe (1988) in Byng-Hall (1995b) puts it: "A relationship system may be far more powerful than a single relationship in shaping development towards health or pathology". Also the health of the business?

c) The family business as the meta-system

Shepherd and Haynie (2009, 1246) identified a third, ‘over-arching’ system in family businesses: The family business as a meta-identity. The family and the business identities are subsumed within the meta-identity, the structure defined as the family-business meta-identity. The family business meta-identity represents a higher-level identity that serves to inform “who we are as family” and “who we are as a business” in a way that represents the intersection of these sometimes competing identities, thus defining “who we are as a family business”. The family-business meta-identity represents the structure through which conflict at the intersection of family and business is resolved.

In cases where identities have shared meanings, intersect, and are activated together, those identities exist in a hierarchy of meaning where identities at the top of the hierarchy “control the meanings of identities lower in the hierarchy” (Burke in Shepherd and Haynie, 2009). An existing family business meta-identity can
resolve identity conflicts between the lower-level identities of family and business that are similar to those experienced in the past. This meta-identity is dynamic as people begin negotiating, modifying, developing, and shaping expectations through interaction. This role-transforming process happens in response to situations in the environment that trigger identity conflict between the competing roles of family and business owners that are dissimilar to those experienced in the past. Given the general negative consequences of enduring and intense periods of identity conflict in family businesses, understanding the dynamics of the family-business meta-identity takes on an even greater importance (Burke in Shepherd and Haynie, 2009).

The family as a system derives some of its sense of belonging, influence, and social identity from being related to a successful enterprise and a successful entrepreneur. This is a mixed blessing because certain costs and consequences - for example, a heavy social and travel calendar in the service of the firm may put time and energy constraints on the intimate relationships in the system. The family may feel responsible for protecting and projecting their image of being a well-functioning and cohesive family, and masking or ignoring the ordinary conflicts and strains of family life (Kepner, 1983).

### 2.4.4 Farming family businesses

The farming family business system has even more enmeshment than other family businesses between the family sub-system and the business sub-system. Examples of such enmeshment are:

- The locality where the business is conducted – The business is conducted in the house, family hold business meetings in the house, lunch every afternoon at matriarch’s house.
- No neat separation with clear boundaries between the sub-systems.
- Many possible sub-systems in the family subsystem: The couples, the nuclear families of the siblings, the siblings, founder with a sibling, mother with a sibling, mother with a favourite grandchild, mother with a daughter-in-law, in-laws.
Most farms are passed on from generation to generation. Understanding the factors that enhance family relationships and satisfaction is critical. The strategic decisions farming families make concern more than just farming. Consequently, a wider view is needed that include the family members’ history and aspirations and all the activities and ventures they are involved in over their lives and over generations, only one of which is farming (Weigel and Weigel, 1990; Farmar-Bowers, 2010).

Two systemic concepts in farming family business are worthy a deeper look at in this study:

a) The two-generation farming family business.

b) Family scripts.

a) The two-generation farming family business

This research focused as a departure point on families in the Sibling Partnership Stage of the Ownership axis in Gersick et al’s Three Dimensional Model of family businesses (Annexure 2). In this research it became clear that a clear and definite transition point from the Controlling Owner Stage to Sibling Partnership Stage does not exist. A distinct phase exists between the two stages, a two-generation phase. Weigel and Weigel (1990, 449) said two-generation farm families are farm families where the fathers and mothers are still actively involved in the operation or management of the farm, together with the younger generation, consisting of sons and daughters-in-law. The two-generation farm operation is a special system with its blending of work and family roles and its daily intergenerational interactions. It provides fertile ground for studying intergenerational family relations.

According to Weigel and others (1987) the two-generation farm family needs to be treated as a system with the needs and expectations of each generation intertwined and dependent upon each other, whether it be financial, legal, educational, or emotional. Professionals need to work with the entire unit and not only with individual members.
Change is a characteristic of the two-generation family. All change in living systems involves a conflict between two opposing tendencies: The pull to remain the same and defend the status quo and the push to change its processes and structures and move on to a new level of differentiation and integration. Maintenance of the status quo is comfortable; it is supported by well established, dependable behaviour patterns requiring minimal effort and low risk. Change, on the other hand, is challenging. Because there is always the risk of failure, change is experienced both as a danger and as an opportunity and thus is approached with ambivalence. Transitions involve new and different problems that must be solved and new skills that must be learned (Kepner, 1983).

The very nature of the two-generation farm is itself developmental. It is a transition from the time when a father farms alone to the time when a son or daughter has taken over complete control of the operation. Weigel and others stated that two-generation farm families are unique. Unlike most other family systems, the economic and family roles are fused, both generations receive their livelihood from the same farm, family members must deal together in both family roles and work roles, family issues spill into business and business issues spill into family (1987, 45-47).

The rankings of the specific areas of family satisfaction provide further insight into the two-generation farm family. In general, the older generation wants more family togetherness at the same time that the younger generation wants more independence and freedom. The difference may be that the older generation is satisfied with the results of their years of effort and the completion of one of their primary goals - having their children involved in the operation. While the parents can be satisfied with where they have been, the children see how far they still must go. Most of their goals still lie ahead. They may be frustrated because they have not achieved a level of independence and equality with their parents - in other words, they have not come of age. Developmental issues and change are critical in understanding the two-generation farm family (Weigel and Weigel, 1990).
b) Family scripts

Family scripts describe the beliefs, patterns, and processes over generations in systems. Scripts in families are the families' shared expectation of how family roles are to be performed within various contexts. The term 'expectations' imply anticipation of what is to be said and done within family relationships, as well as family pressures to perform the roles as expected (Byng-Hall, 1995:4). Family members sometimes feel they are programmed to behave in a certain way. The plot is scripted, but the cast can change. Family conflict as part of the script can often be viewed over generations where the same conflict within a family is repeated from generation to generation. The term 'family script' is best reserved for relationships that involve more than one generation.

Byng-Hall (1995) talked of corrective scripts, where a new generation resolves not to repeat the pattern of previous generations. But he points out how under circumstances of extreme stress, the replicative script still appears and the behaviour of the previous generation is replicated. Repeating patterns of family interaction can be observed and described.

Kepner (1983, 68) used the term 'myths' for family scripts and said they are perpetuated by “time binding”, a way of denying the passage of time. While such denial alleviates pain, it can lead only to denial of other realities and eventually to dysfunctionality. These myths become fixed and unchanging, a set of well-integrated beliefs. They form the group’s inner image of itself, even allowing a positive perception to be maintained despite flagrant evidence to the contrary (Kepner, 1983).

2.5 SUBSYSTEMS

2.5.1 Defining subsystems

The systems approach is in essence a structural approach. A family’s structure is the invisible set of functional demands or rules that organise the way family members talk and relate to one another. The structure that governs a family’s
transactions can be understood by observing the family in action and paying specific attention to who says what to whom and in what way, with what results, who are aligned to whom, who interacts more with whom, who are in which camp. Essentially, family structure is the way in which family patterns of relating is organised. These patterns reflect the degree to which individual family members are emotionally connected to one another, comprising a kind of “social network” that orders family relationships (Farrington, 2009: 211-212).

Leach’s (2007) description of the overlap between the family and business systems and the resultant conflict can be seen as a systemic viewpoint. He did, however, not include other subsystems impacting on the conflict. He also did not describe the systemic loop between the systems, with mutually enforcing behaviour, leading to conflict escalation. Heck and others (2008, 325) said: “An additional dimension exists that researchers must accept in the challenge of investigating within the family entrepreneurship experience. Family entrepreneurship involves the underpinnings and interactions of two systems, namely, the family system and the business system, and both are worthy of study as well as the overlap between these two systems. A better understanding of both systems and their interactions will provide crucial parameters of possible emerging research paths.”

They also referred to more subsystems than only the family and the business and the interrelationship between the subsystems when they stated that optimal integration of both the family and the business would mean a comprehensive modelling of all the relevant subsystems that are relative to the family firm as well as recognizing the interrelationships and overlaps between and among all subsystems. They said: “We now need to examine the underlying systems relative to the family firm—the family system, the business system, and their overlap/interaction—more fully. It is also true that what we once studied at the family-firm level, may now require deeper excavation” (Heck and others, 2008: 325). They referred to the necessity for research on concepts and variables identified within the family system such as: composition and structure; communication patterns; management styles; and others.
The family is considered to be a basic human system, which is composed of a variety of subsystems. Farrington (2009, 212) said the term ‘subsystem’ encompasses various categories: spousal (husband and wife), parental (mother and father), sibling (children) and extended (grandparents, other relatives and even reaching into the church and school). These subsystems are defined by rules and boundaries. Corey in Farrington (2009) said subsystems are typically determined by factors such as gender, age, common interests, and role function.

Each family member plays a role in different subsystems. A man could, for example, be a husband in a spousal subsystem, a father in the parental subsystem, and a brother in the sibling subsystem of his own family of origin (Corey in Farrington, 2009). Each subsystem has its own identity, its own function, and its own pattern of relationships within it. The identity, functions and patterns of relationships within a subsystem are governed by relationships between subsystems. Thus what happens between subsystems affects what happens within subsystems and vice versa (Becvar and Becvar in Farrington, 2009).

Farrington (2009) further highlighted the numerous family interactions and relationships that exist between the family subsystems. She said the siblings do not only have a relationship with and interact with each other, but also with their parents (in some cases with only one parent), with their spouses (possibly more than one) and with their non-active sibling shareholders (possibly more than one). In the same manner individuals in another group, for example spouses, also interact with each other as well as family members in other groups, for example the parents. It is these numerous interactions that contribute towards the complex family dynamics that plague many family businesses.

The family organises itself by dividing the labour and allocating responsibility to the different subsystems in order to satisfy and manage the needs of belonging, intimacy and identity in the family. The obvious categories are the couples, the parents and the children and each of these subsystems perform certain specialised functions for the family and each of them maintains a boundary between itself and the other subsystems. The family system involves emotional
acceptance while the business system requires rationality and results (Van der Merwe, 2007; Kepner, 1983).

Kepner (1983) pointed out that the only way to understand the systems forces in a family business is not a neat one-dimensional drawing, but rather an intricate web of relationships that consists of subsystems and also cross-structural subsystems. Examples of such subsystems are: e.g.:

- alliance between mother-in-law and one daughter-in-law,
- alliance between father and one son,
- alliance between mother and other son,
- alliance between two brothers, leaving a third out, etc.

2.5.2 Couple sub-groups

a) Women on farms

It is worth first taking a look at women on farms when exploring couples on farms. They play an important role in the couple sub-system. It should be acknowledged that women more and more play an active role in farming, but for the purpose of this research the direct role of women in the couple subsystem are of interest.

Leach (2007) said there is a lack of quantitative evidence about the role women play in family businesses. It is particularly important in farming family businesses, with women all hours of the day more directly involved:

- The nature of farming family business is such that it takes place in a woman’s house, in her garden, in her car (often the farm truck).
- She takes on some farming responsibilities.
- She is involved in support work like bookkeeping, procure goods etc.

Leach (2007, 23) highlighted the following roles and priorities of wives in family businesses:
• Behind the scene confidant and business advisor and sounding board on issues of human perception.
• Family leader and symbol of unity.
• Foster teamwork and communication.
• First priority the preservation of the family.
• Calming the situation and keeping the peace in conflict.

In terms of living, such as raising children, or family health, women seem to have a very substantial, if not a dominant, role in many of the relevant decision-systems. On the farm, where a husband and wife are both involved in the farm business, the lower tier decisions are probably, or perhaps invariable, delegated to one partner; the wife, the person who knows most and can do most. Leach (2007) and Farmar-Brown (2010) referred to research that showed that most of the women interviewed seemed relatively successful in satisfying at least some of their personal interests through the activities of farming and running the farm businesses. But there were frustrations; including always having to do the office work (especially accounts) when they wanted relief from time to time, their advice on farming not being taken seriously and their various contributions taken for granted. These remarks gave the impression that the women often felt themselves employees, not owners.

b) The importance of the couple system for family businesses

The couple system is an important sub-system in the family business. Couple culture is a form of social capital because it is a stock of characteristics that can be drawn upon to achieve family or firm goals. The main function of the spouse subsystem is to meet the personal and interpersonal needs of the husband and wife. It must maintain certain separate activities and privacy boundaries to differentiate itself from the rest of the system. The next phase, the parenting subsystem evolves as the couple have children and begin to raise a family (Werbel and Danes, 2010).

As it becomes more common for husbands and wives to own and manage businesses together, the concept ‘copreneurship’ is receiving increased attention
in the small and family business literature. Copreneurship is a form of business where a couple share in the ownership, management and responsibility of a single business. Across the world there is evidence that the number of copreneurs, or husbands and wives in business together, is gradually increasing (Rutherford, Muse and Oswald, 2006; Marshack in Rhodes, 1996; Venter, Farrington and Boshoff, 2009). Very little statistics of copreneurs in the farming family business is available. The researcher knows from personal professional experience in this field that the younger generation farmers involve their wives more in their decision-making and are more aware of the importance of a healthy couple system and healthy family life. This is a trend that should be investigated in follow-up research. The different couple systems in the farming family businesses in the Sibling Partnership Stage are sub-systems that impact on the functioning of the family system and on the supra-system, the farming family business and will be investigated in this study.

Male farmers often only have their wives to share anxieties about the farm business. Gasson in Werbel and Danes (2010) said their feelings of only being able to discuss farming lives with other farming individuals who have experienced the same socialization process and understand patriarchal and patrilineal gender relations isolate them more and also isolate the couple system. According to Werbel and Danes (2010) the dominance of marital ideology and its gender relations has gone largely unquestioned in British agricultural geography. This conceptual cluster within the framework demands consideration of how farming individuals come to learn and internalize their relational identities and exhibit a public version of masculinity and femininity through patrilineal gender relations. The likelihood that changes introduced in the business will cause stress in the spouse is highlighted by them. They pointed out that rather than being a resource, the spouse may become a constraint and work-family conflicts may have a doubling negative effect when it is a new venture.

Change, especially in South Africa, happens at a fast pace, with transformation still in process, climate changes and severe economic pressure, especially in the agricultural sector. Werbel and Danes (2010) pointed out stress in the spouse is especially prevalent when changes are introduced and there are competing
commitments between what is beneficial for the family and what is beneficial for the business.

Leach (2007, 25) said it is like “…entering a potentially disastrous emotional minefield”. He emphasized the importance of a clearly defined organizational system, with clear role definition and conscious separation of business and family issues so that conflicts about business decisions do not become personal. According to Werbel and Danes (2010, 424) “Couple culture is a form of social capital because it is a stock of characteristics that can be drawn upon to achieve family or firm goals”. Berkowitz (1980) agreed and said congruence arises when the husband and wife are in relative agreement about the role the wife will play in the farm business and when the actual role performance is compatible with those expectations. But he also pointed out that wives reported numerous problems relating to their farm roles and conflicts between mothering and farm work. Such problems were categorized as wife’s role stress or conflict with possible relatedness between marital stress and wife’s role stress.

The social demands of the business may seriously intrude on the energy and time available to the couple for time alone. In the traditional family business in which the founder is the male head of the family, the typical family relational pattern is a ‘complementary one’: He is in charge of the economic security for the family, and she is in charge of the home, child rearing, and social and community responsibilities. Basically, the wife accommodates and supports the husband’s demanding career. While this life structure may be eminently satisfying to many women, it does constrain and limit her choices. Many younger wives today find this situation not entirely satisfactory (Kepner, 1983: 66).

Kepner (1983) also referred to the systemic concept of triangling: Pulling in a third person or group. When spouses are unable to meet each other’s needs for affection and companionship or unable to resolve the inevitable differences and conflicts between them, they may make an alliance with one or more of the children and draw that child into the spouse subsystem as a third member. The child becomes overly involved or enmeshed with that parent, and the usual generational boundaries are breached. Other sets of people or entities that are
outside the nuclear family may be “triangled” into the spouse subsystem. These may not be physically present, but they exist in the hearts and heads of one or both of the spouses. This has implications for the two-generation family: If the now adult child was e.g. triangle into by mother, mother and child will probably form a subsystem in the family business with implications for the new young couple system but also for the meta-system, the family business.

2.5.3 The sibling system

Siblings refer to brothers and/or sisters with a familial bond. A familial bond implies that the siblings share (d) the same parents and/or the same childhood and grew up in the same household (Farrington 2009, 224).

The sibling subsystem is the first social laboratory in which children can experiment with peer relationships, and it is in this system that they learn to negotiate, cooperate and compete (Minuchin and Rodriguez et al. in Farrington 2009, 224). Patterns are set in motion during childhood and tend to persist into adulthood. The sibling relationship usually lasts longer than any other family relationship. Siblings enter each other’s lives long before their spouses do, and most of them outlive their parents. The sibling subsystem is a peer learning group. Siblings relate to each other for mutual support, and for some caretaking and caregiving functions. Siblings must overcome childhood rivalries and misunderstanding from the past; and preconceived stereotypes about each other that come from their childhood must be altered. Kepner (1983, 66) pointed out that sibling rivalries begin as soon as the second child is born into a family, and frequently these hostilities continue throughout their lives. During adolescence, however, as the children begin to leave home, they bond with peer groups and develop outside love relationships, and the rivalries begin to dissipate. As the children separate from the family of origin and establish lives and careers of their own, they may even begin to regard their siblings as people for whom they have some real fondness. In a family firm, on the other hand, it is easy to transfer childhood feuds into the business arena. Other subsystems to emerge will be the nuclear families of the siblings with their unique needs and family culture. These sub-systems are
the “training ground” from which the members of the Cousin Consortium will emerge in the next stage.

Farrington and Venter (2010, 8) referred to sibling partnerships as family teams and the behaviours and activities that influence the effectiveness of their teams. They said that a high-quality relationship, characterised by open communication, managed conflict, encouragement, mutual respect and trust, as well as mutual support and understanding between the siblings, is vital in a sibling partnership. The relationship between the siblings not only influences the degree to which the siblings are satisfied with their working and family relationships, but also has a significant influence on the financial performance of their business.

Levinson (1971, 97) referred to brother-to-brother conflict and said it is important for brothers to see that in their relationship they recapitulate ancient rivalries and to perceive clearly the psychological posture each assumes toward the other. Farrington and Venter (2010) pointed out that it is important that the siblings should have affection and care for each other; at the least, they must like each other and should get along well both inside and outside the family business. Cooperation, closeness and intimacy should exist between the siblings, while healthy boundaries between them should be maintained; they should each have their own circle of friends and not interfere inappropriately in each other's lives.

2.5.4 Parents and children

It can be argued that all children are linked in a subsystem with their parents. In the context of this research is meant the special intergenerational relationship, a two-way process, in which both seniors and juniors influence the outcome of their interaction.

Schwass in Olson et al (1992) stated many family firms fail because of parent-child conflict, and succession failures stem from an inability to achieve a common view across generations. Personality differences clearly play a part, but it is the process of parent-child interaction that makes them critical. The family is the environment in which social and educational skills and competencies are acquired; it is also the
arena in which competitiveness and assertiveness are developed and sometimes honed to a fine edge as the children compete for the love, attention, and approval of their parents (Kepner, 1983). The main question in the family business is: With whom will the parent bond in a special relationship? The father, who mostly carries more power in the family, is often the strongest determinant in the parent-child subsystem stakes. Kepner (1983) referred to the father’s often painful and exhausting dilemma to remain neutral and treat all his children fairly and the children’s attempts to exert influence on father as they come into the business. Furthermore, the roles and rewards conferred by the father on the children who come into the business are experienced as symbols of the father’s love, regard, and preference—which exacerbates the original sibling rivalries even further.

The parent-child subsystem is important in terms of:

- The quality of the subsystem and the conflict within the system.
- The impact this subsystem has on the family system and the meta-system.

2.5.5 In-laws

In-laws add another element to the systemic soup of the family business and more so to the farming family business, where the nature of the business creates closer everyday interaction and involvement between all the elements. Leach (2007, 26) pointed out the following contributing factors that can lead to difficulties and conflict:

- The in-law feeling like an outsider and being treated like one.
- The in-law feeling overwhelmed by the family.
- The in-law feeling under pressure to conform to the family norms.
- In-laws being seen as a threat to the status quo.
- In-laws creating relationship with the family or functioning solely through the spouse.
- The family being forced to make change to let the in-law fit in.
- The complications of divorce, children from more than one marriage and determining who is in and who is out.
• Decisions around in-laws entering the business or not.

In-laws cannot be ignored in family business and their role in the family system and the business system need to be explored, with a deeper understanding of their impact on the conflict processes described. More so in the farming family business, where in-laws are closer involved, if they want to or not.

Leach (2007, 27) said that in-laws working in the business usually find themselves in a situation where they are treated as outsiders, their deficiencies can become the focus of attention and they must be very good to be accepted. Other possible sub-systems can emerge through this treatment - or perceived treatment - of in-laws:

• In-laws standing together against the rest of the family.
• Two in-laws standing together against a third.
• In-laws standing together against a mother-in-law.
• A mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law against another daughter-in-law etc.

Marotz-Baden and Mattheis (1994, 132) said an important but often overlooked person in family dynamics is the daughter-in-law. Her stress levels are often higher than any of the other family members in a farm family; she is the most emotionally distressed person in the extended family. Daughters-in-law reported the greatest frequency of stressors on issues of equality and involvement or influence they had in the farming operation. They were more significantly stressed over issues of independence of the two generations, conflict between family and farm demands, extended family conflict over child rearing, amount of time spent together, and financial concerns. Daughters-in-law also experience high stress around issues of involvement or influence they experience concerning the farming operation. In addition, stress appears to emanate from competing demands of family and farm, financial concerns, and extended family differences about child rearing and the appropriate amount of contact time with extended family members.
Because of the very high financial cost of entry into farming, most young farmers work with or for their parents. Thus, women who marry farming husbands are likely to live near their husband's parents and become involved with his kin because of the overlap of the business and family systems. The patrilineal emphasis and the fact that farming is often facilitated by patrilocal residence, places the in-marrying bride in a weak position, possibly adding to her stress (Marotz-Baden and Mattheis, 1994). Keating and Little in Marotz-Baden and Mattheis (1994) reported on research about the transfer process of two-generation New Zealand farm families. They posited that daughters-in-law are the most stressed family members because of the ambiguity they experience about their place within the home and the business. The authors suggested that when women marry into farm families, they are faced with the two-fold challenge of fitting into the new family and finding their own niche in the family business. Such a process would inevitably be filled with many stressors, as daughters-in-law struggle to find acceptable positions within the family and business systems.

Unresolved conflict in the family may jeopardise the family and the business and unresolved tension in the daughter-in-law will have dire consequences. Divorce and division of assets have grave impacts on especially farming family businesses. The custody issues can further impact on the patrilineal expectations in the family, leading to conflict escalation in the whole system, not only the couple subsystem (Marotz-Baden and Mattheis, 1994).

2.6 CONFLICT THROUGH SYSTEMIC LENSES

2.6.1 Defining conflict

Conflict studied through systemic lenses would be seen in a social context, looking at social institutions, structures and organisations in a circular and not in a linear way. Conflict makes out part of the rules and transactions in the system and can be viewed in terms of the homeostasis in the system. The systemic approach would thus focus on the conflict as a symptom in this system. The structure of the system would be examined to institute change, with special attention to the
feedback loops. This study would seek to understand the phenomenon conflict as it presents in a specific system, within a specific time frame.

Conflict involves interaction between human beings, be it intrapersonal, person to person, or between groups or between macro groups. Deutsch (1973, 10) stated: "A conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. The incompatible actions may originate in one person, group or nation: Such conflicts are called intrapersonal, intra-group or intra-national. Or they may reflect incompatible actions of two or more persons, groups or nations”.

In systems theory it is not possible to do piece-meal analysis due to the intricate interrelationship of the parts of a system. The parts cannot be viewed or treated out of context of the whole. A phenomenon like conflict can also not be viewed and treated out of context of the whole in which that conflict occurs. Conflict between e.g. a parent and a child would thus be viewed in the context of the whole family functioning.

Leach (2007) identified two domains in the family business and placed conflict in the centre as a function of the overlap between the two domains (Annexure 1). He said that the family domain is emotion-based, emphasizing care and loyalty, while the business domain is task-based, with an emphasis on performance and results. The family business is a fusion of these two powerful systems, with emotional behaviour emerging in the business, leading to irrational and inappropriate behaviour and competency taking second place to family needs. The people involved in the business are family members, related to each other. Understanding of how the business functions will involve an awareness and knowledge of the background and unique perspectives of each of the major participants.

The rules that developed to govern the interactions cannot be readily changed in a system. If conflict makes out part of that rules and transactions in the system the conflict would also not easily be changed because of the homeostasis in the system. Woody (1972: 19) said a systemic approach would focus on the conflict as a symptom of a system that is ‘sick’. The structure of the system would be examined with special attention to the feedback loops. A look at conflict processes
would include an examination of the system and sub-systems in which the conflicts occur.

The differing purpose and priorities of these two systems produce the special tensions that exist in family firms. The business system’s intrusion into family life can be just as damaging as the overflow of emotions and irrationality from the family system into the business.

Leach’s (2007) description of the overlap and flow between the family and business systems and the resultant conflict can be seen as a systemic viewpoint. He did however not include other sub-systems impacting on the conflict. He also did not describe the systemic loop between the systems, with mutually enforcing behaviour.

A systemic look at conflict will ask the question: What is the function of the conflict in the system? In a systems approach conflict will be seen in the social context, looking at social institutions, not in a linear way but in a circular way. The system’s structure and organization would be reflected in its transactions.

2.6.2 Conflict and stress: Linked concepts in farming family research

Hedlund and others (1980, 42) defined psychological stress in farming families as conflict that affect the family relationships, the ability to achieve family goals or the ability to perform farm tasks in a dysfunctional manner. They linked conflict and stress in an interchangeable manner and reported research that stated that 30% farming families report marital stress, 30% report stress relating to intergenerational transfer of the farm, 20% report stress related to sibling rivalry, with 35% of wives experiencing stress related to their farm role. Many of the potential sources of stress are related to farming as a lifestyle and occupation and thus distinguish farm families through the unique characteristics of farming that include closeness to the land, the requirement for family members to work together and multigenerational involvement.
They identified three types of stresses or conflicts in farm families:

- Role incongruence—focusing on conflict in the marital relationship and the wives' perception of their role.
- Intergenerational transfer—focusing on the stress/conflict stemming from the demand for intergenerational continuity.
- Sibling rivalry—when the competition between brothers closes in age is destructive. (Hedlund and others, 1980: 42)

Rosenblatt and Anderson in Weigel and Weigel (1990, 449) found that the satisfaction of farm family members can be determined by how well they handle the stress of living in a two-generation farm operation. The two-generation farm family, with mother and father farming side-by-side with their adult child and spouse, must deal with many specific stressors. Unlike most other family systems, the younger and older generations receive their livelihood from the same farm operation, relationship roles between parent and adult child are confused and decision-making involvement can also be a source of stress in farm families. When family members perceive they have an influence in decisions, they experience less marital and intergenerational stress. Issues of power, control, decision making, resource allotment, and family unity can all influence the satisfaction of family members.

The overlap of work and family in two-generation farm families may create a special dilemma for family members attempting to cope with farm stress. Pearlin and Schooler in Hedlund and others (1979, 453) reported that a successful coping strategy for dealing with family-related stress is to "work together" to deal with the stress. In contrast, when stress is work related, individuals need to "retreat" from the source of stress. They asked the question: With the blurring of work and family roles, when is it appropriate for family members to retreat and when is it necessary to work together to handle a stressful situation?

Farrington (2009, 142) also referred to stressful and unacceptable behaviour in family businesses and the interrelationship with conflict. She said when the behaviour or beliefs of a team member are unacceptable to other team members,
conflict occurs. Inter-group conflict includes personal conflict, substantive conflict, and procedural conflict. Personal (relationship) conflict arises when team members simply do not like each other, and may be based on personality clashes and differences. Substantive (task) conflicts occur when a team member disagrees with another’s tasks-related analysis of the team’s problems or plans. Procedural (process) conflict occurs when team members disagree about policies and procedures and on how to work together.

2.6.3 The function of conflict in the system

The systems' attempt or way of balancing itself may sometimes result in a symptom that is unacceptable, to either the system or society, or is causing intolerable stress, either inside or outside the system. Symptom and system are connected and defined as serving one another. Conflict can be viewed as a symptom if it is unacceptable or causing intolerable stress. For the student of systems thinking it is important to define the precise nature of the reciprocity in a way that is most useful. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraft (1981: 274) described the interlinking between the system and symptom: "Conflict has an inside and outside dimension. It arises out the internal dimensions of individuals acting singly or in groups, and also out of external conditions and social structures. At all levels of analysis larger, organised aggregates of human beings affect smaller aggregates and individuals and vice versa".

Dougherty and Pfaltzgraft (1981: 181) asked if the motivation for conflict should be accepted as that which present itself on the surface or should we go beyond what is stated to the unconscious processes which drive people? They said that questions need to be asked that uncover the subconscious motivations but also the conscious motivations that are not necessarily present. Questions about function or motivation link up with exploration of the processes involved in a conflict.

Coser's (1956: 3) view of the function of conflict is fundamentally systemic, although he does not write from a systemic viewpoint. He said that because groups have process and structure they can never be entirely harmonious. He
viewed conflict as not always disruptive and pointed out the balance between harmony and disharmony and association and disassociation required in groups to build group relations. He stated that a certain degree of conflict is an essential element in group formation. Anstey (1991) also referred to functional and dysfunctional conflicts. In a systems approach, conflict would purely be seen as serving a purpose without any value attachment. Conflict serves a function in the system and is part of the circular pattern.

Anstey (1991: 4) highlighted the importance of the relationship in which the conflict takes place. He stated that conflict existed in a relationship when the parties’ belief that their aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously or perceive diversions in their values needs or interest. They purposefully employ their power in an effort to defeat or neutralize or eliminate the other party to protect or further their own interest in the interaction. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraft (1981: 274) described the interlinking between the system and symptom: "Conflict has an inside and outside dimension. It arises out the internal dimensions of individuals acting singly or in groups, and also out of external conditions and social structures. At all levels of analysis larger, organised aggregates of human beings affect smaller aggregates and individuals and vice versa." Rhodes (1996) referred to the competing value systems in organizations and the competition created by sub-cultural divisions. He described conflict as the result of the fragmented nature of the organisational goals-an organisation is seen as a network of conflict between individuals and sub-groups.

Kellermans and Eddleston (2004) researched the interrelationship between task conflict, process conflict and relationship conflict. They described the inter-relational link between these three “types of conflict” and found that the negative effects of conflict are most often rooted in relationship conflict, whereas the benefits of conflict tend to be the result of task and process conflict:

- **Task conflict** is about the ends on which tasks should be accomplished. Task conflict focuses on the discussion of goals and strategies and has been found to improve decision-making outcomes and productivity by increasing decision quality.
• **Process conflict** is characterized by disagreement on how work should or should not be accomplished and how members should be utilized. It is generally assumed that only low to moderate levels of process conflict improve performance. In contrast, extremely high levels of process conflict have been found to be detrimental to performance. Process conflict may be particularly important to family firms because of the need to effectively utilize the talents of family members and the need to share firm-specific information with family members.

• **Relationship conflict** is laden with an affective component. Relationship conflict is the perception of personal animosities and incompatibility. It can be latent or overt in nature. The co-mingling of business and family in family firms may make them especially vulnerable to the negative consequences of relationship conflict.

The assumption that the family is emotional and the business is unemotional creates an oversimplified perspective. The family and the business are interdependent in family firms and bound in a circular manner, and in the case of relationship conflict, the interaction becomes very apparent. Kellermans and Eddleston (2004) proposed a new “complexity perspective” for the family firm, whereby they argued that both task and process conflict interact with relationship conflict to impact a family firm’s performance. Their basic premise is that the performance of a family firm cannot be fully understood without taking into account the relationships among family members and argued that relationship conflict diminishes the positive effects of task and process conflict. The function of conflict need then to be understood in terms of the interrelationship between task, process and relationship factors.

**2.6.4 Transition, change and conflict**

All change in living systems involves a conflict between two opposing tendencies: the pull to remain the same and defend the status quo and the push to change its
processes and structures and move on to a new level of differentiation and integration. Maintenance of the status quo is comfortable; it is supported by well established, semi-automatic, and dependable behaviour patterns requiring minimal effort and low risk. Change, on the other hand, is energizing but challenging. Because there is always the risk of failure, change is experienced both as a danger and as an opportunity and thus is approached with ambivalence.

Some of the changes associated with the developmental life cycle of the family in relationship with the firm are first order changes—-that is, they are responses to minor fluctuations and do not require any major changes in the ground rules by which the family operates. For example, both firm and family make only minor shifts when the eldest son is employed in the firm during summer vacations. Some changes are second - order changes, requiring a major shift in orientation and expectations and the creation of new boundaries and rules (Kepner, 1983, 68).

Zimmerman and Fetsch (1994, 126) said family conflicts are particularly likely when transferring responsibilities from one generation to another, a process that can take years. At first, parents are in charge of all aspects of the farm and their children are hired hands. This "sweat-factor" apprenticeship can vary in length, depending on the readiness of the two generations. In successful transfers, eventually labour responsibilities, management decisions, and assets are discussed and shared by the generations.

This highlights the importance of looking at transition points in the family life cycle, and have implications for understanding continuity and discontinuity in family functioning (Kepner, 1983: 60).

2.6.5 Perceptions of fairness

Farrington and Venter (2010, 8) confirmed in their study that perceptions of fairness have a significant influence on the growth performance of the business, as well as on the extent to which siblings are satisfied with their work and family relationships. They said to ensure perceptions of fairness between them, siblings
should ensure equitable workloads, opportunity to voice opinions, fairness in decision-making and managerial processes, and fairness in compensation.

Lerner (1980, 1987) hypothesised that an individual's sense of fairness is based on perceived entitlement in a particular situation. This perceived entitlement, or "who" is entitled to "what" from "whom", is determined by rules of fairness. Four such rules of fairness have been identified: (a) fairness according to need, where rewards are based on needs of participants; (b) fairness according to equity, where rewards are based on contributions; (c) fairness based on equality, where rewards are distributed equally; and (d) fairness based on competition, where rewards are distributed to whoever wins.

Lerner (1980) described the closest of relationships as identity relationships. Siblings in an identity relationship would feel emotionally close. They would perceive that a distribution based on need is fair because the neediest person is entitled to the most. Less close relationships are described as unit relationships. Siblings within a unit relationship would perceive themselves as similar or equivalent in essential aspects but would lack emotional closeness. Siblings in such unit relationships would determine fairness based on equity or equality. Siblings in such relationships would be characterized by little sharing, competition, and conflict. Rosenblatt and others in Taylor and Norris (2000) referred to tension around fairness and parents rewarding offspring who had been more involved in the business by giving them a bigger share of the estate versus giving all offspring equal shares regardless of their involvement in the business.

Taylor and Norris (2000, 277) referred to literature that identified fairness concerns underlying concerns over farm transfer between adult siblings. They linked fairness with the prior relationship quality of the siblings and predicted difficulties with inheritance. Siblings with long histories of conflict would struggle over small amounts. Siblings with little history of conflict were able to negotiate large legacies and legal ambiguities with little difficulty.
2.6.6 The role of communication

Effective communication, characterised by honesty, openness and consistency, forms the basis of resolving conflicts and promoting harmony in the family as well as in the family business. The most successful family businesses invest a great deal of time and effort into learning communication skills, and find it very effective to learn these skills together (Venter, Farrington and Boshoff, 2009: 6).

Olson and Gorral in Walsh Ed. (2003, 520) termed communication a facilitating dimension and considered it critical for couples and families. Using positive communication skills enables couples and families to meet developmental and situational demands. Positive communication skills are described as listening skills (empathy and attentive listening), speaking skills (speaking for oneself and not for others), self-disclosure (sharing feelings about oneself and the relationship), continuity tracking (staying on the subject), respect and regard.

Open communication is a vital function in healthy family business functioning, particularly since the family business system has to manage more boundaries than just those within the family. Business-owning families are exposed to challenges not only in the family system and its life cycle, but also in the business system, where they are more directly sensitive to market trends and forces. Bjornberg and Nicholson (2007, 232) highlighted the importance of family members’ ability to face challenges, especially when living and working together puts a strain on the relationships involved.

Strong family businesses call for open communication about goals and a desire to resolve misunderstandings about issues that affect the achievement of those goals. The activities among a system’s subunits must be coordinated and regulated to ensure the system’s stability (specifically who does what, how resources like money and time are distributed, who has decision authority over which issues). Family businesses have crucial work/family tensions because their family and business systems are interconnected (Danes and Lee, 2004).
Venter, Farrington and Boshoff (2009: 6) referred in their study of copreneurs to the degree to which they are able to communicate openly and share all information with each other. They found that open communication is important for promoting effective teamwork among family members and also for increasing their chances of a successful team outcome.

2.6.7 Conflict in family businesses

One view of family businesses is that they are more efficient through relationships that align the goals and incentives of family owners and managers. The alternative perspective is that family firms are breeding grounds for relationships, fraught with conflict. It is indeed true that family members may have competing goals and values, which may spring from complex conflicts and family dynamics that arise from a family’s psychosocial history (Hilburt-Davis and Dyer in Dyer, 2006).

Differing views within a family about the distribution of ownership, compensation, risk, roles, and responsibilities may make the family business a battleground where family members compete with one another. Bahls referred to family farms and said when divergent goals are not properly managed, family farms are paralyzed by dissension and deadlock (1994).

The potential for conflict in family businesses can be greater than for many non-family businesses. The reason for this heightened potential for conflict is the overlap between the family and business sub-systems. The ability to manage conflict in a family business is crucial and family members frequently fight about deeper issues than the ones they claim to be annoyed about. Family feuds often simmer for years before they begin to boil over (Van der Merwe and Ellis, 2007).

2.7 FEEDBACK LOOPS AND CAUSALITY

The feedback loops in a system refers to the back and forth travel of information and behaviour in a system to provide stability or homeostasis for the system. The feedback can only be viewed from a given point in time. Causality in a system is thus seen in a circular manner, with all members in the system collaborating or
colluding to keep the pattern going. Mitchell (1981) said that different patterns emerge in different conflicts over time. He pointed to an inter-relationship, in the conflict process between the situation, the behaviour, the attitude and the perceptions:

- The attitude and the perceptions affect the behaviour.
- The situation has an impact on the attitudes and the perception.
- Experience of previous conflict situations impact on the attitude and the perceptions of current conflict situations.
- Changes in patterns of behaviour, between the parties, form an interaction pattern that continuously changes the conflict situation.

The objective of the feedback loops is to keep the system in balance or homeostasis. All systems tend towards homeostasis: meaning all systems have a tendency to seek a steady state. However, that is only true for a certain point in time. Homeostasis evolves. Each feedback affects the system and acts as an evolutionary agent. In conflict situations the groups involved in the conflict will also tend to find a balance, but each act of conflict added into the circular pattern will change the balance and add another evolutionary impact. Haley (1971: 162) said the more an individual attempts to change the system, the more he or she activates the processes which maintain the system as unchanged. Dell (1982: 34) said: "A new system is born out of the discontinuous change of the original one".

Lavee and Olson (1991) gave examples of circularity in families: Stressful events and change lead to disruptions; these transitions intensify family strain; family strain affect marital adjustment negatively; intra-family strain increase interpersonal conflicts among family members (husband and wife, parents and children, siblings). They pointed out the link between intra-family strain and strain in the marital system-both systems are affected by each other.

Mitchell (1981) referred to the cybernetic loop in conflict escalation when he said it must lead to a situation where the parties to the conflict have mutually incompatible goals and negative attitudes: The process of conflict between the
parties brings about major transformation in the structure of the dispute as well as in the system.

Heck and others (2008, 322) described the cybernetic loop between parts or subsystems within the family business: “A comparative analysis of the increasing number of frameworks would assist in bringing together multiple perspectives and update our current body of knowledge as to the family system, in particular, and how the family system affects and is affected by the business system”.

Folger, Poole and Stutman (1997) identified the perpetuating patterns of behaviour in conflict as one of the key properties of conflict interaction. They said that conflict interaction gains a momentum of or life of its own and tends towards repetitive cycles with sequences of act-response-counter response. The cycle feeds on itself, can become the basis for inflexibility and leads to uncontrolled destructive interaction.

2.8 THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON THE BUSINESS DOMAIN

Adendorf, Venter and Boshoff (2008, 28) in their study of the impact of family harmony on governance, found the more harmonious family relationships are, the more likely it is that the business will be profitable. The more harmony and trust there is in the family, the more likely it is that the family members will have a commitment to each other and the business, characterised by effective communication.

Venter, Farrington and Boshoff (2009) reviewed research that consistently showed that a good relationship between members of working teams is related to measures of team effectiveness. They found that support among team members is positively correlated with measures of team effectiveness. Spousal support has been recognised as an important source of competitive advantage, contributing to business success. Conflict between family members (including between spouses) about the business and the degree of spousal involvement in decision-making may impede business success. Conflict among family members has been found to harm business productivity and financial performance. A family business without
family harmony will find it difficult to be profitable and a failed family business does little to support the business family.

Harmonious family relationships significantly influence the degree to which family members accept their roles in the context of the family members. Family members who trust, respect, appreciate and care for each other are likely to cooperate with each other and support each other's decisions, both in the family unit itself and in the family business. The more cohesive the family, the greater the desire to share the responsibility of perpetuating the business. Venter (2003) also reported that family harmony is strongly related to agreement by family members to continue the business as a family concern. A good relationship between members of working teams is related to measures of team effectiveness. Support among team members is positively correlated with measures of team effectiveness. According to O'Connor in Venter, Farrington and Boshoff (2009) spousal support has been recognised as an important source of competitive advantage, contributing to business success.

Conflict between family members (including between spouses) about the business and the degree of spousal involvement in decision-making may impede business success and has been found to harm business productivity and financial performance. A family business without family harmony will find it difficult to be profitable and a failed family business does little to support the business family. A culture of open family communication, reinforced by structured processes, is an integral precondition to creating a successful family governance process (Venter, Farrington and Boshoff, 2009; Venter and Boshoff, 2006).

Kellermans and Eddleston (2004) also noted that family firms with high stress and tension levels are less successful and achieve fewer goals. The potentially positive effects of task and process conflict are destroyed by relationship conflict. Rather than benefiting from the synergistic utilization of family member’s capabilities, the family members spend time and energy fighting each other. When the destructive effects of relationship conflict are experienced, information exchange is limited and the potential for inertia is great; and communication is disturbed and time and energy is unnecessarily consumed. They pointed out that not all conflict is bad for
family firms and that moderate task and process conflict can have a positive performance effect. Task and process conflict ensure that key information and environmental changes are discussed and understood by the decision makers.

2.9 LITERATURE SUMMARY-KEY ELEMENTS

Keeping family separate from business is harmful, as family is the one thing that gives a family business its advantage over its non-family business rivals. A family business that is able to extract and separate the family element from the business will lose the one element that makes family businesses unique and allows them to outperform non-family businesses.

Family farming businesses have a unique culture. Farming is different from other professions, because it has its own discrete set of values, including resistance to change, traditional gender roles, strong work ethic, and self-sufficiency. The strong rural farm culture includes expectations about the business and family roles of wives and husbands (steeped in tradition and identity laden), keeping the family business viable to pass on to the next generation, with unique potential for stress due to high capital investment that creates high debt loads. Major farm stressors include economic factors, workloads, and relationship issues.

Families are open systems that depend on the environment for their survival. Adaptability is fundamental for integrating and regulating change in the family system. The family and the business are overlapping, interacting and interdependent systems. The interconnectedness of related subsystems is critical to an understanding of how the overall family business system functions. In the non-family business, these two basically incompatible systems operate independently, but in the family business they not only overlap, but are actually interdependent.

The farming family business system has even more enmeshment than other family businesses between the family sub-system and the business sub-system. Examples are the enmeshed locality of home and business, no neat separation
with clear boundaries between sub-systems and many possible sub-systems in the family subsystem.

Two-generation farm families are farm families where the fathers and mothers are still actively involved in the operation or management of the farm, together with the younger generation, consisting of mostly sons and daughters-in-law. Rather a transition phase, than transition point exists from the Controlling Owner Stage to Sibling Partnership Stage on the Ownership axis in Gersick et al's Three Dimensional Model of family businesses.

Family scripts describe the beliefs, patterns, and processes over generations in systems. Scripts in families are the families' shared expectation of how family roles are to be performed within various contexts. Family members sometimes feel they are programmed to behave in a certain way. The plot is scripted, but the cast can change. Family conflict as part of the script can often be viewed over generations where the same conflict within a family is repeated from generation to generation.

Numerous family interactions and relationships exist between the family subsystems. Examples of subsystems are the couples, the siblings, parents and children and in-laws. Each of these subsystems perform certain specialised functions for the family and each of them maintains a boundary between itself and the other subsystems. The family system involves emotional acceptance while the business system requires rationality and results.

It is worth taking a deeper look at women when exploring couples on farms. Women seem to have a very substantial, if not a dominant role in many of the relevant decision-systems.

Conflict studied through systemic lenses would be seen in a social context, looking at social institutions, structures and organisations in a circular and not in a linear way. Conflict makes out part of the rules and transactions in the system and can be viewed in terms of the homeostasis in the system. The systemic approach would thus focus on the conflict as a symptom in this system. Conflict can be
viewed as a symptom if it is unacceptable or causing intolerable stress. The function of conflict need then to be understood in terms of the interrelationship between task, process and relationship factors.

The feedback loops in a system refers to the back and forth travel of information and behaviour in a system to provide stability or homeostasis for the system. Causality in a system is thus seen in a circular manner, with all members in the system collaborating or colluding to keep the pattern going. The objective of the feedback loops is to keep the system in balance or homeostasis. But each feedback affects the system and acts as an evolutionary agent. In conflict situations each act of conflict added into the circular pattern will change the balance and add another evolutionary impact. The process of conflict between the parties brings about major transformation in the structure of the dispute as well as in the system.

The potential for conflict in family businesses can be greater than for many non-family businesses. The reason for this heightened potential for conflict is the overlap between the family and business sub-systems. The ability to manage conflict in a family business is crucial and family members frequently fight about deeper issues than the ones they claim to be annoyed about.

Perceptions of fairness have a significant influence on the growth performance of the business, as well as on the extent to which siblings are satisfied with their work and family relationships. An individual's sense of fairness is based on perceived entitlement in a particular situation. This perceived entitlement, or "who" is entitled to "what" from "whom", is determined by rules of fairness.

Open communication is important for promoting effective teamwork among family members and also for increasing their chances of a successful team outcome. Effective communication, characterised by honesty, openness and consistency, forms the basis of resolving conflicts and promoting harmony in the family as well as in the family business.
The more harmonious family relationships are, the more likely it is that the business will be profitable. Spousal support has been recognised as an important source of competitive advantage, contributing to business success. Conflict between family members (including between spouses) about the business and the degree of spousal involvement in decision-making may impede business success. Conflict among family members has been found to harm business productivity and financial performance.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This Chapter provides an overview and description of the research design and methodology employed in the study. The research procedure will be discussed, the methods of data analysis explained and the ethical concerns highlighted. The design and execution of the research will be outlined, and some reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of that approach offered.

3.1 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was qualitative and exploratory of nature. Exploratory research is done to explore relatively unknown areas in order to gain new insight and understanding into a phenomenon (Neuman, 2006). The researcher wanted to gain knowledge or insight into the phenomenon of conflict in farming family businesses and felt that not enough knowledge is available on the subject.

The overall research aim of the study was to explore the conflict processes in and between the subsystems in farming family businesses. It was achieved by exploring, through 14 in-depth interviews with the members of 2 farming family businesses:

- The family domain with its subsystems and the conflict in the supra-system.
- A systemic analysis of conflict as part of the interactional circular pattern in the family farming business as a system.

The data collected in the interviews was coded according to the following themes:

- Systemic structures and patterns in each family identified and described (The subsystems in the family domain).
- The conflict processes in and between subsystems identified and described.
• The recurring conflictual and behavioural loops between the different sub-systems in the family domain and in the business domain identified and described.

• The function of the conflict in the supra system, the family business system identified and described.

Each farming family business was analyzed as a separate case study. The analogies and differences between the case studies were highlighted and documented and the research question answered: What is the function of the conflict in the system?

3.2 SAMPLING

The nature of research determines from which population a researcher can draw a sample and what sampling method can be used (Babbie and Mouton, 2002: 166). It was not possible in this research to select a representative sample from a specific population. Probability sampling was not possible. Purposive sampling had to be used as the most appropriate method the researcher could use.

The sample of two farming family businesses were selected on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the farming family business arena in the Southern Cape. These 2 families were selected through a process of elimination. The population of farming families known to the researcher and families who are currently in the Sibling Partnership Phase are limited. Seven families were approached by the researcher in a preliminary investigation process. Of those seven families only 4 admitted that they experience conflict and only 3 families were willing to be part of the research. In the end only the current 2 families were willing to be part of the research.

3.3 THE CASE STUDIES

The two farming family businesses who were the case studies in this research seemed initially to be in the second phase of family business development, the Sibling Partnership Phase. During the research it became clear that both families
have not yet fully entered the Sibling Partnership Phase but find themselves in the world between the second and the first phase, the Controlling Owner Phase. Both these families are two-generation farming family businesses, where the siblings are fully involved in the business, starting to think about fully entering the Sibling Partnership Phase but the Owner/Founder is still the principal decision maker.

In both families the men are directly involved and the women marginally or in supportive roles.

Characteristics that could identify these businesses will be left out to protect the anonymity of the cases. Ages of family members will be given as an approximate figure and the exact nature of the farming business will not be revealed in detail.

3.3.1 Farming family business 1

Family 1 consists of a two-generation family with three couples (including the father and mother) farming together on two farms they own (one farm is 15 km away) plus land that they rent. They have a successful mixed agricultural business. The main agricultural activity is the planting and harvesting of a highly labour intensive seasonal crop. The owner is the third generation in the business who farms with his 2 married sons. His wife is involved in a supportive capacity and the one daughter-in-law is responsible for the administration and bookkeeping. The eldest son has 2 children of which the youngest child, a pre-school boy, is the fifth generation carrying the family name.

This farming family business is in the process of transferring the business operation side to a company with the brothers the members of the company. Decision making is still strongly in the hands of the owner.

3.3.2 Farming family business 2

Family 2 is also a two-generation family with four couples farming four farms as one business. They are mainly involved in animal husbandry with daily high labour intensive demands. The owner/founder, who is now in his seventies, is still active
in all areas of the farming business. The family has four sons of which three sons
and their wives lives on the farm-each couple lives on a separate farm. Two of the
wives were for a period involved in the administration and bookkeeping. The other
wife is temporarily doing some office tasks while the business is looking for an
administrative person to appoint in the office. The owner-founder’s wife is not
involved in the business anymore.

In this farming family business two of the farms belong to a family trust of which
the owner-founder and his wife are the trustees and the business operations, as
well as the other two farms, are vested in another trust of which the three sons are
also trustees.

3.4 The data collection process

assessment is deciding which parts of the family need to be assessed. They also
referred to the predominant methods of doing farm research by interviewing only
the farmer and said that one person cannot capture the complexity of farm family
relationships. Fisher in Taylor and Norris (2000, 279) referred to the literature
reviewed and argued that most family research is based on data produced by
individual family members, with no reference to the perceptions of other members.
It produces analysis at the individual, not the family, level.

Fourteen in-depth interviews were conducted with all the parties directly and
indirectly involved in the two farming family business. Directly involved were the
family members directly involved in the business system and the farming.
Indirectly involved were the wives or partners of the farmers or retired members.

3.4.1 Setting up the research

Consent for participation in the research was obtained from the family
representative of each family. Personal contact was made with the senior partners
or executive trustees in each family business. The researcher explained verbally
the following:
• The background to the research.
• The research methods.
• Potential impacts, negative and positive.
• Ethical considerations like confidentiality and anonymity and reporting back.

After permission was obtained from the families, the consent letter for the ethics committee was signed (Annexure 3). Appointments for interviews were made randomly and depended largely on the availability of interviewees. The researcher did not interview members in a specific order or according to a specific preference. The researcher attempted even from the setup stage to be true to the intention of unstructured interviewing:
• To allow the participants to feel free to give their opinions and viewpoints without having to fit into a preconceived idea.
• The researcher to come to each session with an open mind, starting fresh with each narrative.

Most of the interviews were done at the workplace, the family farm. One interview was held at the family members’ workplace and three interviews were done by choice at the researcher’s office because the interviewees requested so—they felt they would have more opportunity to talk without interference. In Family 1 all the interviewees were interviewed separately. In Family 2 two couples chose to be interviewed together in two interviews per couple.

3.4.2 The interviews

Interviews were unstructured, using a minimally scripted question guideline with open-ended questions to allow interviewees the opportunity to speak widely regarding his/her unique meaning, perceived or real story of the family and the business, focusing on the interactions between persons and groups and the conflict processes in the different systems and the unique meaning the interviewees attach to their lives in and around the family business.
Interviews started with the interviewee filling in the informed consent form (Annexure 4). The discussion about the potential impact on the individual, family and business opened the arena for discussion.

The researcher gave interviewees the opportunity to start at any point in their story and give information they thought was relevant. They started from different points in time: Some started 3 generations back with the history of the farm, some started at an incident that happened the day before. Questions or probing statements were added, or questions changed, as the picture of each family unfolded. Two interviewees from Family A said they did not know where to start. The researcher shared the picture of the two domains in family businesses with them (Annexure 1) and that started the conversation about their own family business.

As the interviewees became more comfortable they shared more information later in the interviews, often going back to a subject they had covered, going deeper by sharing emotions, not only facts. This helped the researcher uncover deeper shades of the family dynamics, revealing not only conscious but also subconscious processes.

Information-seeking was guided by asking open-ended questions about the following if it was not covered in the interviewee’s narrative (Not necessarily in this order):

a) Family structure and sub-systems, indicating alliances in family and business domains.

b) Family harmony: Mutual respect, trust, support, having concern for each other's welfare and appreciation that family members have for each other.

c) Conflictual behaviour in the family domain—animosity, stress, anxiety, hostile behaviours and the perception that others have antagonistic or sinister motives:
   • Individual perceptions of personal animosities and incompatibility.
   • Conflict in the marital dyads.
   • The partners’ perception of their role in the family.
   • Sibling rivalry.
d) Conflictual behaviour in the business domain:

- Individual perceptions of personal animosities and incompatibility.
- The partners’ perception of their role in the business.
- Sibling rivalry.
- Inter-generational conflict.
- How work should be accomplished and how members should be utilized.

e) How the differing needs and values of the different sub-systems in the family domain contribute to the conflict.

f) The interactional dynamics between sub-systems. (Describe the systemic loops).

g) The impact of conflict in the family domain on the business and conflict in the business domain on the family (Describe the systemic loops).

Questions were formulated in such a manner to leave space for own interpretation:

- Tell me in your own words about........
- How would you describe..................?
- What is your experience of.................?
- Can you give me examples of.............?
- The more/less...........the more/less....... (To uncover the systemic loops).

The researcher planned to use a recorder but stopped asking after the fourth interviewee indicated that they felt uncomfortable with the idea of being taped. Copious notes were made during interviews, writing down exact words as far as possible (After more than twenty-five years in a counselling practice the researcher is used to writing fast and accurately). No interviewee had a problem with the note-taking: They stated so after being asked directly and in 6 interviews
the interviewees reminded the researcher to make a note of some point they mentioned.

The researcher added to the notes her observations about facial and body language, tone of voice and her own impressions that came to mind. Also observations about interactions between family members. Most impressions were added directly after interviews. The researcher also took note of the physical domain of the farming family business: The houses, gardens, signs of farming activity close to the house, distance form animal pens, problems mentioned by interviewees etc.

As the interviews progressed and the family picture sharpened in focus, the researcher asked more questions to clarify points and obtain a clearer view of the system. The second interviews with the couples in Family 2 presented an opportunity to clarify points and explore deeper family dynamics.

All the interviews took from thirty minutes to an hour longer than was indicated at the start. The overall impression was that interviewees were hungry to talk about their family and their concerns.

Genograms and drawings were used in an interactive manner. The researcher did the initial drawing, with interviewees adding or changing data, making suggestions to give a clearer picture, especially of the subgroups and conflict within and between the subgroups.

Kets de Vries (1996: 6) mentioned that an investigator cannot avoid being affected by the subject of investigation. He went as far as saying that doing research without bias is an illusion - there is always something happening between the researcher and the subjects. The transference and counter transference will always play a role. The researcher was actively aware of this and consciously put herself in an objective, researching state of mind to be able to stay neutral and open-minded. Words and concepts were paraphrased to check understanding and accuracy.
All the interviewees were pleased that they would get feedback and a report. The researcher was mindful that the report would also add to the validity of the research.

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 The research aim and themes

De Vos in de Vos and others (2005: 335) said that research, data collection and data analysis in the qualitative approach are not done in isolation from each other but instead form an inseparable unit. This process entails that the empirical data is analyzed as it is gathered. The result of this process is the effective collection of rich data. For the purpose of this study the empirical data was analyzed in an inductive manner. Inductive reasoning entails the observation of a sample and the subsequent drawing of conclusions about the population from which the sample was taken based on the observation.

The research aim was to explore the conflict processes in and between the sub-systems in the family domain in each of the farming family businesses that formed the study population and to do a systemic analysis of the conflict as part of the interactional circular pattern in the family farming business as a system.

Data was analyzed according to the specified themes:

3.5.2 Field notes, observations and drawings

Interviews were recorded by hand written notes and drawings of genograms and family structures during the interviews. The researcher’s observations made out part of the field notes.

The genograms were compiled from the data provided by all the members of a family (Figures 1 and 4).
### 3.5.3 Coding

Codes were given to subsystems, themes and sub-themes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>SUB-THEMES</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Subsystems</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Couple</td>
<td></td>
<td>SS-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Siblings</td>
<td></td>
<td>SS-S</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Parent-child</td>
<td></td>
<td>SS-PC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 In-laws plus</td>
<td></td>
<td>SS-IN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Conflict in subsystems</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Couple</td>
<td></td>
<td>CI-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Siblings</td>
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<td>CI-S</td>
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<td>2.3 Parent-child</td>
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<td>CI-PC</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4 In-laws plus</td>
<td></td>
<td>CI-IN</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5 Conflict theme: Scripts</td>
<td></td>
<td>CI-Script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Conflict theme: Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>CI-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Conflict theme: Fairness</td>
<td></td>
<td>CI-F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Conflict between subsystems</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 List between which subsystems conflict occurs</td>
<td></td>
<td>Detail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Conflict theme: Scripts</td>
<td></td>
<td>CB- SCRIPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Conflict theme: Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>CB-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Conflict theme: Fairness</td>
<td></td>
<td>CB-F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.4 Identification and description of family structures, patterns and processes

The family structures that emerged, specifically the subsystems in each family system were represented graphically and documented according to the data collated from the interviews, observations and the researcher's interpretations (Figures 2 and 5).

The conflict in and between subgroups were described and graphically represented (Figures 3 and 6). Each family system was separately described and analysed.

The feedback loops in each family domain and in the meta-system, the farming family business were described in systemic language, reflecting the circularity and conflict escalation themes: The more/less.............. the more/less..................

The central themes that emerged, as well as themes regarding the function of the conflict in each family domain and the impact on the broader family business system were interpreted with literature control and documented.

Analogies and differences between the 2 case studies were analyzed and highlighted.

3.6 Recommendations and feedback to the families

Babbie and Mouton (2003: 27) said: “....the fundamental rule of social research is that it must bring no harm to research subjects”. The feedback of the research findings and presentation of the research report is an important part of the ethical considerations and contribute to the validity of the research. When the research report has been approved by all parties a copy will be given to each family. A special meeting will be arranged to discuss the research findings and recommendations. Although interviewees stated that they do not have a problem with the fact that the research process and findings might bring out facts and feelings they are not aware of, it is the researcher's personal experience that
people can say before an intervention that they agree with it but might experience strong feelings when the reality comes to the fore.

Time will be set aside for a thorough debriefing of all family members and referral to experts where required.

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CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will present and discuss the research findings. It will also introduce additional themes that emerged during the research.

4.1 THE FAMILY STORIES

4.1.1 Farming family business 1

Family 1 consists of a two-generation family with three couples farming together. They farm on two farms they own (one farm is 15 km’s from the other) plus another piece of land that they rent. They have a mixed agricultural business with the main activity planting and harvesting a labour intensive high demand seasonal crop.

The owner is the third generation in the business, with his two sons and their wives who are both on the farm. He is still active in the business. The owner was the only son of three sons who wanted to farm. He farmed for many years with his father with very little income while his brothers received substantial pay-outs for their part of the inheritance. They would, even after the pay-outs, still receive handouts from the farm, even money and they still use the family beach house while the owner pays the costs. This is an important point as it creates two trans-generational scripts whereby the next generation lives or feels they have to live to:

- **Script 1:** How can we ask for something we feel we deserve if my father did not ask from his father and is still providing for his brothers without asking anything from them? That is how it is in our family. If they did it that way, we can’t change it.
- **Script 2:** My father worked extra hard, day and night, that is how we should also live and work.

The eldest son and his wife have two children of beginning school going age. The eldest child, a boy, is the fifth generation who is carrying the family name. The
The younger son is newly married and has been on the farm for five years. Him and his wife are currently living in a part of the eldest son's house while plans are being made to renovate the house on the farm 15 km away for their use. The eldest son's wife does the financial and administrative work on the farm and receives remuneration for it while the younger son's wife works in town.

The mother is not directly active on the farm but her house is the meeting place for the family and all the men eat breakfast and lunch there every day.

The father and sons are in the process of transferring ownership of the properties to a company of which the father, mother and sons will be the members. This company will buy the land from the owner (the father). The business operation will be vested in another company with the sons in a 50/50 partnership. The family has not yet discussed how they will implement this in practice, how they will make financial decisions and what the father's role will be in the new dispensation. He is currently the main decision maker. The family do not have decision making or
other policies in place. They also do not hold family meetings or farm business meetings with minutes and agendas.

Daughter-in-law 1 gave up a well-paying job to be with the children on the farm. During the years that she worked, the couple were able to use their own money to renovate their house. They now expect the youngest son and his wife to do the same. Deep emotional feelings were voiced by daughter-in-law 1 about the fact that their needs around house and furniture were not recognized when they were newly married but the father is now prepared to pay for the youngest son and daughter-in-law 2’s house. She feels this is unfair. A new script is emerging:

- **Script 3**: If we had to pay to renovate our house, you should do the same. If we worked frugally with our money, you should too. What goes for us, should also go for you—that is only fair.

This script does not differ a lot from script 1—it is still about not changing the way things are done. All these are happening under the radar—nobody talks openly to the others about what is going on, says openly how they feel. The eldest son and his wife have developed serious conflict in the couple subsystem about (as she sees it) his reluctance to talk to his father about his brother’s perceived lack of responsibility and the unfairness in the family. Script 1 governs the eldest son’s interpretation and he can’t talk to his father about this: His father is after all still paying for his own brothers. He also does not agree with his brother’s life and work style and feels he should work longer hours and be more available for the business (Script 2).

The more conflict there is in the couple subsystem, the more irritated the eldest brother becomes with his younger brother. But he can’t say it and can’t talk about it. The youngest brother and his wife is starting to pick up that there is something going on but they are newly married and feel they contribute what they should and are entitled to enjoy their lives.

Mother tried very hard to stay neutral but has expressed in the interview that she kept quiet in the face of problems with her in-laws because she knew it was easier
that way for her husband. Why can't her son and daughter-in-law not do the same? That ties in with Script 1 and the premise that you must keep quiet and not ask.

4.1.2 Farming family business 2

Family 2 is also a two-generation family with four couples farming four farms as one business.

They are mainly involved in animal husbandry with daily high labour intensive demands. The father, who is now in his seventies, is still active in all the areas of the farming business. He is especially watchful over financial expenditure and income. He bought the first farm himself as a young man but continued working in another industry. He would return home on weekends to farm while his wife and later his four sons farmed in the week. He worked and still works frugally with money and always found ways to cut costs, improvise and do the task himself if
possible. That was how he built up a successful farming business that now owns four farms and he plans to buy another farm.

For many years, the father and mother spent money first on farming, then on the house and private expenses. The mother is held up as an example of how she accepted that farming expenses comes first. This contributes to the family script about spending money and is linked to the conflict in the family:

- **Script 1**: If something can be done to save money, that route must be taken.
- **Script 2**: If mother could cope with her house, why can’t the daughters-in-law do the same?

Linked to the above scripts a third script emerged about having different opinions or disagreeing with the father:

- **Script 3**: We have too much respect for our father and how hard he worked, we cannot disagree with him, it will hurt him too much if we go against him.

The family has four sons. The second son at times farmed with the father and at times on his own but after severe conflict and disputes about money, he left and is currently living overseas. He has broken contact with his parents and the family, a painful event. His “ghost” is still present in the next family script:

- **Script 4**: Everything must be done to preserve the peace so that no one will leave and cause more heartache to the parents.

The three sons remaining in the business (no’s 1, 3 and 4) are married - two of them for the second time. Each couple lives on a separate farm, but they farm as one business with different roles and responsibilities allocated to each of them.

The farming properties have been in trusts for a while (2 farms in a trust with father and mother the trustees and 2 farms in another trust with father and the 3 sons as trustees). Final decision making still lies with the father although some consultation takes place.
Daughters-in-law 1 and 4 were involved in the farm office and the bookkeeping till a conflict about money erupted between father and daughter-in-law 1. Son 3 was triangled in—he felt he had to protect father and several subsystems developed:

- Father and son 3 in a subsystems.
- Son 1 and son 4 in a subsystems.
- Daughter-in-law 1 and daughter-in-law 4 in a subsystems.
- Mother and daughters-in-law 3 in a subsystem.

Conflict escalated as son 1 and 3 protected their spouses and felt threatened because father would discuss and make decisions with son 3. Long festering feelings in the couple subsystems about money fed into the conflict: Couples 1 and 4 felt father spend money on son 3’s house, made payments, buy farm equipment he wants etc. and they struggle to make ends meet. Son 3’s emotional outbursts and aggressive style of communicative escalated the conflict and fed into the conflict loop. Sons 1 and 4 decided to leave the farming business and asked to be paid out. This escalated the sibling conflict more as son 3 saw it as a repeat of the betrayal of son 2.

The family script of evading conflict and saving money blocks direct and open communication and decision making. The family domain does not hold family meetings. The business domain does also not hold business meetings and or keep minutes and agendas. They have no decision making or any other business policies. Important decisions like salary increases or buying big equipment are taken in informal settings, often with only some members present.

4.2 ADDITIONAL THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE RESEARCH

Strauss and Corbin in Babbie and Mouton (2002, 498) stated about qualitative research: “...One does not begin with a theory then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge”. Four concepts emerged from the interviews that could not be ignored:
• The relevance of the two-generation family, a stage between the Controlling-Owner stage and the Sibling Partnership Stage in Gersick’s Three Dimensional Model.
• The relevance of family scripts.
• The role of communication in the two farming family systems.
• The impact of perceptions of fairness on the conflict especially between subsystems.

4.2.1 The two generation family

The transition from Founder Phase to Sibling Phase is not a neat process, with clear ends and beginnings. There is a gradual cross-over with lessening influence and decision making from the Controlling Owner. The Sibling Phase starts in the heads of the siblings long before it really starts. They start positioning themselves, start thinking about it and start agonising about it.

In Family 1, the family members have nearly completed a process wherein the farming family business will be transferred to a company with equal ownership by the two sons. The property, the farms, will also be transferred to a company with father, mother and sons as the shareholders. This family has been functioning as a two-generation farming family business for more than fifteen years when the eldest son joined the business (the youngest son joined the business five years ago). The farms (the property) belonged to the father as the Controlling-Owner. In practical terms, the owner had now lessened his ownership and control and the family business is moving to the Sibling Partnership Stage. In emotional and practical terms, the transition is not as advanced as the legal and financial processes. The father said they (him and his sons) do not have problems with decision-making, decisions are made through a joint consultation process. The sons however, are aware of the emotional value the farming business has for the father. Their perception is that he wants to stay involved and make decisions and they don’t want to challenge, oppose or hurt him. But at the same time both of them want a more businesslike approach to planning and decision-making. They can’t see how they are going to implement it, even though the new legal status will move the business to the Sibling Partnership Stage.
In Family 2, the farms in the family business are registered in two family trusts, with the father and sons trustees of the one trust and the father, mother and sons the trustees of the other trust. Financial and other important decisions are still being made by the father, especially decisions about what to spend money on. That is contributing to conflict. This family business is a two-generation family but in terms of financial decisions it also functions as a business that is in the Controlling-Ownership Stage.

The stories of these two farming families highlight the importance of looking at transition points in the family life cycle and the implications they have for understanding continuity and discontinuity. Changes can arise at any level of the family system and a change at one level can stimulate further change in the individual's relationships and in the whole family (Cox and Paley, 2003: 2).

Both these families are in change but the legal changes and the emotional changes are not synchronised. In Family 1 they will, from the beginning of 2012, technically be in the Sibling Partnership Phase, but they do not have plans to stop functioning as a two-generation family business. In Family 2, they are technically and legally functioning as a two-generational family but emotionally, especially in terms of finances, this business is still in the Controlling-Owner Stage.

Eddleston and others (2008) pointed out that conflict is a recurring phenomenon that diminishes the performance of family firms, particularly during the growth cycles of the family firm development. They suggested that conflict management strategies should be contingent among generational ownership disbursement and that two-generational ownership families should utilise conflict management strategies so as to ensure higher levels of cognitive conflict. Greater participation in decision-making will not only result in higher quality decisions and facilitated implementation but will also enhance the recognition of opportunities and facilitate cross-generational sustainability.
4.2.2 Family scripts

Family scripts emerged as strong themes that fed into the feedback loop in the system. They are powerful forces in families and in individual lives. They are often conscious forces and can only be dealt with when they are made conscious.

The family scripts in **Family 1** are:

- **Script 1**: How can we ask for something we feel we deserve if my father did not ask from his father and is still providing for his brothers without asking anything from them? That is how it is in our family.
- **Script 2**: My father worked extra hard, day and night, that is how we should also live and work.
- **Script 3**: If we had to pay to renovate our house, you should do the same. If we worked frugally with our money, you should too. What goes for us, should also go for you—that is only fair.

The family scripts in **Family 2** are:

- **Script 1**: If something can be done to save money, that route must be taken.
- **Script 2**: If mother could cope with her house, why can’t the daughters-in-law do the same?
- **Script 3**: We have too much respect for our father and how hard he worked, we cannot disagree with him, it will hurt him too much if we go against him.
- **Script 4**: Everything must be done to preserve the peace so that no one will leave and cause more heartache to the parents.

In both these families these scripts act as the unwritten blueprint of the family, governing the interpersonal transactions. The unsaid intention is good, but the impact is negative, blocking open and direct communication, preventing problem solving, perpetuating perceptions that can’t be checked and leading to conflict within and between subsystems.
Kepner (1983) said farming family businesses often maintain an image of cohesiveness and may suppress family conflict. The interdependence between family and business make it difficult to tell each other when needs are not met. The sense of powerlessness, in especially the daughters-in-law and the sons who wanted to leave, struck the researcher. They were not consciously aware of how they are buying into the scripts. They have a deep concern that nothing would change.

4.2.3 Communication

The lack of communication, or rather the resistance to communicate anything that can elicit painful or even uncomfortable feelings and lead to conflict were a glaring theme in both families. It could not be ignored. It would seem that most of the unsaid family issues in Family 1 are being said in the couple subsystem of the eldest son. In Family 2, Son 3 does the talking on behalf of the system, but often in an uncontrolled and aggressive communication style. Adendorf, Venter and Boshoff (2008, 28) in their study of the impact on family harmony on governance found “... the more harmony and trust there is in the family, the more likely it is that the family members will have commitment to each other and the business, characterised by effective communication”.

Within a family and business it is essential for the interests of the family to be known, communicated to all concerned. A viable family governance process cannot survive in an atmosphere of ignorance and distrust. Hedlund and others (1998) also said that families with open communication and shared decision-making were able to avoid stress more often than those with poor communication and authoritarian decision-making style and short-sighted planning.

In both these families, negative feelings and harmful perceptions are ‘underground’. Family members do not know how the others feel and how deep feelings like rejection go. Problem solving have virtually come to a standstill because the communication is not real, direct and open. The family members’ communication is paralysed by beliefs and scripts that are mostly subconscious. Both of the fathers do not know how their sons feel about their decision-making
styles. They think the sons are satisfied with their lives while the sons are not satisfied and do not know how to express it without causing damages.

4.2.4 Perception of fairness

Perceptions of fairness, or rather unfairness in both families contribute to conflict. James in Ward (1987) said the dual financial needs of the firm and the family is one of the greatest challenges and lead often to intense conflict over strategic decisions. In both these families, the sense of unfairness resided most strongly in the daughters-in-law, the ones who, according to the literature, are the members of the farming family business with the least power and the highest stress levels. Perceptions of unfairness centred around perceived benefits: Others receive more and the distribution is unfair. All the couples in both the families (parents excluded) are struggling to make ends meet. As a result they watch every cent, every movement of money, who gets what and interpret it in terms of their perceptions of fairness. Numerous examples were given by the parents of the wrongful ideas especially the daughters-in-law have about fairness and distribution.

4.3 FAMILY 1: Subsystems and conflict

4.3.1 The Family Subsystems

The couple subsystems: Three couple subsystems were identified in this family. All three couples reported that they are involved in emotionally close relationships although conflict occurs in the couple subsystem of the eldest son and his wife.

The parent child subsystems: It can be argued that the parent child subsystem, consisting of father and his sons, are part of the business system-they after all work together. However, as pointed out in research, the boundaries in farming family businesses are diffused between the family and the business. These three men do their talking, planning, fighting, eating in the family domain. They get together in the mother’s house every day for breakfast and lunch and do all their planning in an informal manner around the family dining table. The researcher is of the opinion that a case can be made to include this subsystem in the family domain as it straddles the boundaries of both family and business domain.
A parent-child subsystem also exists between the mother the eldest son. They form a partnership at times to negotiate with the father to convince him of alternative ideas than his own when they feel it is required.
4.3.2 Conflict in and between the subsystems

Conflict occurs in two of the subsystems:

a) In the couple subsystem-between the eldest son and his spouse;
b) In the parent child subsystem-between the father and sons.

Conflict also occurs between the couple subsystems of the 2 sons. The conflict between the eldest son and his spouse centres around the fairness issue in the family and his ‘frozenness’, his struggle to openly state his case to his father and his brother. The fairness issue has to do with the youngest son and his wife staying in a part of the eldest son’s house, not making attempts to renovate the house designated for the couple on the farm 15 km away. The youngest son’s argument is that they don’t have the money and they wait until the farm has the money. The eldest son and his wife, over the years, used their own money to renovate their house and every time the youngest son and his wife use money for their own pleasure (buy something, go away for a weekend), it escalated the feelings of resentment in especially Daughter-in-law 1. She felt they could have
started using their own money to build their own house. They did it (older brother and wife), why can’t the younger ones? (Script 3).

The fairness issue is something that has not been openly discussed in the family. The misconceptions are mainly about what has the father paid for the eldest son house what has he paid for the younger son or is willing to pay for. Only open and direct communication can address misconceptions and lead to constructive problem-solving.

The feelings (and perceptions) in the older brother and his wife are escalating (Why don’t they use their own money? Why are they buying xyz when they can use the money on their house?) while the younger two are largely unaware of what is going on. They are starting to pick up that something is going on because they are withdrawing more from communal times with the eldest brother and his wife and they are spending less time with them.

There is also conflict between the subsystem of the eldest brother and the parent subsystem. They feel the parents must take action and talk to the younger ones. The parents feel they are old enough to sort out their own problems and are starting to feel resentful with the eldest son and his wife. These resentful feelings are mostly voiced by the mother who feels that when she was newly married, she did not complain when her husband’s siblings got more than they required and she felt she could not take that out on her husband: She had to support him (Script 1).

The conflict in the parent-child subsystem is being made light of by all three persons involved, father and sons:

- “We flare up, storm off and feel better after a while”.
- “It is only about smaller things: should we irrigate first or spray first? We can talk about bigger issues”.

In spite of this minimising, the father became emotional when talking about the conflict between the three of them and said he finds the conflict very hard. The eldest son feels easily slighted and father and mother both expressed that they are
cautious in approaching him. They described him as sensitive and that he easily becomes defensive and very upset. The youngest son says he does not get upset easily, he goes his own way but his spouse reported that the conflict affects him and he does not talk about it easily.

The conflicts in the family subsystem are both relationship conflicts (based on needs and feelings) as well as process conflicts (having to do with disagreements about procedures and how to work things out). The lack of communication and the strong script prevent conflict resolution.

4.3.3 The feedback loops in the system

The feedback loop with circular patterning links all three couples’ subsystems. A feedback loop is exactly that – a loop - with no start or end point. It cannot be said for real where it started or end. Only for illustration was a starting point identified. This loop has three phases as described by the participants:

In phase one:

- the more daughter-in-law 1 feels she and her family comes second in the eyes of her in-laws (Step 1),
- the more there is conflict between her and her spouse (the eldest son) because he doesn’t tackle the problem,
- the more the eldest son (husband) becomes aware of areas in which the younger brother does not work and live in the same manner as he does,
- the more he feels his brother is not prepared to put in what he himself had put in so far and they as a couple are left with the uncomfortable living situation.
- the less he knows what to do about it,
- the more daughter-in-law 1 feels she and her family comes second (Back to step 1).
In the second phase:

- the more he feels irritated with his spouse—she does not appreciate what they have,
- the more there is conflict in their subsystem,
- the more angry he gets with his brother.

At the time of the interviews, the third phase was emerging:

- the more resentful the older sibling and his spouse feels with the younger ones,
- the more angry they become with the parents,
- the more the older brother feels resentful about the business setup, especially in the light of the new legal business setup that will kick in 2012,
- the less he can have analytical and progressive discussions about the business with his father and brother.

Dougherty and Pfaltzgraf (1991: 181) asked if the motivation for conflict should be accepted as it represents itself on the surface or should we go beyond what is stated to the unconscious processes that drive people. It became clear in this case that a conflict that looks irrelevant and small—about who pays for house renovations or not—is in fact about much, much more. It is about perceptions of fairness, inclusion, communication and change. It has the potential to escalate to a serious conflict that can do irreparable harm to relationships and business.

4.4 FAMILY 2

4.4.1 The family subsystems

Four child subsystems, one parent child subsystem, one sibling subsystem and two subsystems with in-laws emerged in this family system.
The four couple subsystems: There is stability in the couple subsystems of the father and mother and son 4 and his spouse with minimum reported conflict. Although there is conflict in the couple systems of son 1 and son 3, emotional closeness was reported in all 4 the couple systems. Four of the interviews with partners were also attended by the other partner. The researcher did not get the impression it was to check up on each other or to edit what was being said in the interviews. It was more a way of supporting each other, adding information, filling in what the partners left out (like old married couples do!). Minimal reference was made to the previous marriages.

The parent child subsystem consists of the father and son 3. This subsystem developed as a result of the conflict between father and daughters-in-law 1 and 3 (especially daughter-in-law 1) and the formation of the sibling subsystem containing sons 1 and 4. Father spends more time with son 3, trusts him more,
discuss problems with him and together they make decisions in which the others are not included.

The sibling subsystem, containing Sons 1 and 4 is a new development in the family and a direct result of the conflict. There were previous other sibling subsystems, namely one with son 1 and son 3 in it. The family members relate that sibling rivalry influences the rising and falling of sibling subsystems in this family. This subsystem strengthens as the parent child subsystem strengthens. It exists as a result of that subsystem, just as the parent child subsystem continues to exist, mostly as a result of the sibling subsystem.

The mother and daughter-in-law 3 subsystem: They have a close relationship. Mother is especially close to daughter-in-law 3’s twins. Her closeness to daughter-in-law 3 (or the lesser closeness to them and their children) is a cause of pain to the other sons and daughters-in-law: They want the same for their children and for themselves. There is more contact and more time is spent by mother and father with the couples system of son 3.

Daughters – in – law subsystem: The perceived neglect from mother and father and the conflict between father and daughters-in-law 1 and 4 pushed these two daughters – law together in a loose- knitted alliance. They are also mainly in this subsystem due to their husbands’ alliance.

4.4.2 Conflict in and between the subsystems

Conflict exists in the couples' subsystem of son 1 and daughter-in-law 1. It is linked to the conflict between her and the father, the conflict between her and son 3 and the perceptions of unfairness. She feels excluded and treated unfairly by father and mother and humiliated by the way son 3 spoke to her. She expects her husband to do something about this and to make changes in the ways the business is run, especially in financial matters. The couple is struggling financially. But son 1 struggles with assertiveness and the family scripts hold him back to confront his father. He will rather keep quiet and express himself through the
sibling subsystem where his brother, son 4 is more assertive. This conflict in the couple subsystem is relational but also about processes.

The conflict in the couple system of Son 3 revolves around marriage problems and personality differences. Son 3’s aggressive communication style plays a role in the conflict, as it does in the conflict with his brothers and his sister-in-law.

The conflict between the parent-child subsystems (father and Son 3) and sibling subsystem (Sons 1 and 4) are caught in a recurring systemic loop. Both these subsystems are fairly new developments where the boundaries are becoming more entrenched and closing up as each subsystem takes the next incremental step in the conflict escalation pattern. Sons 1 and 4 felt there cannot be a future for them, especially with father ‘in Son 3’s pocket’. They and their families are struggling financially and they felt they have no power to implement steps that can make the business more profitable so that they can draw more money. They looked at other farming options and approached father and Son 3 to buy them out. This escalated the conflict and the distrust. The “ghost” of Son 2 was awakened, with Son 3 intensely aware of his parents’ pain around being rejected by their children. Son 3 also expressed his fear of what will happen to him if his father dies and he is left alone against his brothers.

The scripts of not giving out money, making do with what you have and ‘if it was good for mother, it can be good for the daughters-in-law’ caused ambivalence in all the subsystems and especially in Sons 1 and 4 as individuals. They described how one part of them doesn’t want to disappoint father and be seen as wastrels, while another part of them wants to provide for their families and the future of their children and must make other plans.
4.4.3 The feedback loops in the system

The dominant feedback loop in this family system is between the parent child subsystem and the sibling subsystem, pulling in all the other subsystems. There are two phases or interlinking feedback loops in this conflict.

Phase 1 is:

- the more father and son 3 spend time together and take decisions together (Step 1),
- the more excluded and fearful for their future son 1 and 4 feels.
- the less sons 1 and 4 trust that they can have a future on the farm,
- the more sons 1 and 4 look for other options and want to get out of the family business.
- the more father and son 3 distrust son 1 and 4 and,
- (Back to step 1: the more father and son 3 spend time together and take decisions together.)
In phase 2, the other subsystems are sucked into the interactional loop:

- the more time son 3 and daughter-in-law 3 spend with the parents,
- the more the other children and in-laws feel left out and not part of belonging and decision making,
- the less anything changes in the system and the hope dwindles that a better future can be created,
- the more the conflict escalates in the couples system of son 1,
- the more negative son 1 and daughter-in-law 1,
- the view of especially father and mother becomes of and so the cycle can go on and on ...

The research was a snapshot of this family conflict at a certain point in time-describing the patterns at that point. Next steps and the next step’s outcomes can only be hypothesised but the researcher is certain that the feedback loops will continue its circular patterning, escalating the conflict in and between the subsystems.

4.4.4 The function of the conflict in the system

This was exploratory research. The researcher can at best hypothesise about the function of the conflict in the two family systems.

The conflicts are mostly relational. There is also a strong process element, being about what should be done in the business domain that will provide a better life in the family domain. Eddleston and others (2008) link process conflict only to the business domain, but the researcher is of the opinion that the process issues in the business domain of this farming family business cannot be separated form the family domain: The literature shows the interrelationship between the family and the business, especially in farming family businesses.

It can be hypothesised that the function of conflict in these family systems are to move the families to new definitions of what is adequate, to break free from scripts of the past that dictate making do with less and doing things the old way. In both
systems there is a sense of being unbalanced. Unfairness is after all a sense of unbalance. The escalating conflicts are attempts of the systems to reach equilibrium. It is significant in the researcher’s opinion that both families are at transition points, moving from the safe, known environment where ‘father knows best’ to a new life where they will have to fully take on the responsibility, the good and the bad of being the final decision-makers in their respective businesses. In their personal lives they will become the fathers and mothers of the next generation and will soon not be able to lean on father anymore. Conflict can be an energizing force that helps the families break free from the fear of change.

Both these families will require professional help to ‘dissolve’ the parent child subsystem and the sibling subsystem and form a new subsystem, an effective Sibling Partnership. This Sibling Partnership will have to take these farming family businesses to the next level of excellence.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings are summarised in this chapter and linked with the research aims. Recommendations are made for further research and possible steps that the farming family businesses can take in conflict resolution.

5.1 The research aim:

The research question was: What is the function of the conflict in the system? Two themes were explored:

- The theme of subsystems in the family domain in farming family businesses.
- The conflict theme, viewing conflict as a symptom in the system and exploring conflict in and between subsystems.

Additional themes emerged, namely:

- The developmental stage of two generation farm family businesses.
- The impact of family scripts on conflict in farming family businesses.
- The role of communication.
- The role of perceptions of fairness.

5.1.1 Systemic structures and patterns: Subsystems in the family domain

The research aim of exploring the existence of subsystems in the family system in farming family businesses was answered affirmatively. Four types of subsystems were identified in both the cases:

- Couples subsystems.
- Parent child subsystems.
- Sibling subsystems.
- In-law subsystems or subsystems of which at least one member is an in-law.
The researcher contends that it is too narrow a description of farming family businesses to just draw a family system and a business system. The subsystems in the family domain play determining roles in the functioning of farming family businesses and will be worth a deeper look in future research.

5.1.2 Conflict processes: The interactional conflict patterns and the function of the conflict in the system

The research aim was to explore the circular patterns in the two cases as systems and to uncover the function of the conflict in these systems. In both cases, circular conflict patterns came to the fore with the subsystems part of the feedback loops. The conflict escalation happened in and between the subsystems as elements and the conflict paths were circular, not linear.

The function of the conflict in both systems could only be hypothesised due to the exploratory nature of the research. The researcher firmly believes that a true picture of the function of the conflict can only be developed over time in descriptive and participative research where the family members are fully involved over a period of time in exploring the function of the conflict.

The researcher’s hypotheses re the function of the conflict in the systems centred around conflict as an attempt in the system to shake loose from entrenched restricting family scripts. Those scripts block family satisfaction and growth in both farming family businesses. A systems’ attempt of balancing itself may sometimes result in a symptom that is unacceptable. Symptom and system are connected and defined as serving one another. The conflict as symptom serves the system and helps it to attain balance. The researcher contends that the conflict is an energising force in these systems to move out of an unbalanced situation and out of the paralysing fear of change to new ways of existing and functioning.
5.1.3 Emerging themes

Important themes emerged during the research that were not included in the initial research planning. These themes presented as part of the systemic patterning in both the cases:

a) Two-generation farming families:

A clearly drawn stage presents itself between the Controlling Owner Stage and the Sibling Partnership Stage in both cases. This family business stage has definite characteristics that impact on the farming family business and should be recognised as a definite developmental stage in family businesses that can last for years before the family business reach the Sibling Partnership Stage.

b) Family scripts:

Family scripts can be so entrenched in a system that they can become part of the structure of a family business, especially in farming family businesses with their intergenerational dynamics. The scripts in these two cases governed the transactions between the individuals and the subsystems and cannot be left out of the equation when their functioning is examined. In these two cases, family scripts blocked growth and the system’s adaptability to change.

c) Communication:

Communication is a form of energy that leads to reduction of uncertainty and growth. Uncertainty is a breeding ground for assumptions, projections, manoeuvres and conflict. The evasion of communication in both the cases and the over-emphasising of family harmony achieved the opposite of what the families wanted. In both cases the evasion of communication lead to conflict escalation.
d) Perceptions of fairness:

Perceptions of fairness or rather unfairness feed into the conflict loop. Rewards and compensation are sensitive matters in all families. The more there are perceptions of unfairness in a system and the more entrenched that belief becomes, the more unbalanced a system becomes and the conflict in the system escalates. This results in bigger emotional distances between the assumed recipients of benefits and those who feel they have been treated unfairly. Lerner’s (1980) description of identity relationships (emotionally close) and unit relationships (emotionally distanced) pointed out that emotionally distanced relationships between siblings are characterized by conflict.

5.2 Analogies and differences between the cases

The researcher has a profound appreciation for the singularity and uniqueness of all families and also of these two families. It would be too simplistic to just compare them with each other and assume they are the same. Wise men said: All happy families are alike, every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way (Contributed to the author Tolstoy). Or said in another way: All happy families are more or less dissimilar; all unhappy families are more or less alike. (Contributed to the author Nabokov).

The analogies and differences that did emerge are:

- In both cases there are several subsystems that exist in the family domain. In Family 1 (a smaller family) there are only two types of subsystems: Couple and parent child subsystems. In Family 2 there are four types of subsystems: Couple, parent child, sibling and in-law subsystem.
- In both cases, family scripts emerged and played a determining role in blocking the farming family business from making the transitions that will lead to family satisfaction and more profitable business functioning.
- Both cases emerged in the research as two-generation farming family businesses.
In both cases, the lack of communication, especially between fathers and sons lead to misrepresentation and frustration about unmet needs. It contributed to the conflict escalation cycle and the conflict that emerged in the couple systems.

In Family 1, four out of the five subsystems are sucked into the interactional conflict patterns. In Family 2, seven out of the eight subsystems are part of the interactional conflict pattern.

5.3 Feedback to the participating families and ethical concerns

The outcome of this research will come as a surprise to some of the family members. The researcher is concerned about the impact on especially the fathers in both families: Both of them are not fully aware of their sons’ feelings. In Family 1, the younger son and his wife are also not fully aware of how the elder brother and his wife feel. None of the family members have clear insight into the important role of the family scripts in their family and business lives and the unconscious processes both within individuals and in the subgroups.

The researcher contracted with all the family members to give feedback on the outcomes of the research. Each family will be provided with a report and recommendations. Sharing the research findings of the families will have to be done in a supportive and explanatory manner, assisting the families with assimilating the data in a helpful manner. Olson and Gorral in Walsh (2003) pointed out that positive communication skills help family systems with cohesion and flexibility, especially in periods of change and situational stress. Open communication facilitate conflict resolution – Taylor and Norris (2000) pointed out the link between rational thinking and conflict resolution. The researcher is of the opinion that reporting back and discussing the research findings will also start the cognitive process of communication, rational thinking and conflict resolution.

The feedback will be done face-to-face. Subsystems, like couple subsystems who needs help; will be given feedback in separate sessions, addressing their specific issues that emerged from the research. They will be referred to suitable professionals for help. The sessions with subsystems will be followed up with a
family meeting with each family where the report will be presented and recommendations for the family discussed.

The researcher is mindful of the fact that these feedback sessions will not only be purely informational but might also require a debriefing or therapeutic element – the feedback will in all probability elicit strong feelings. However, the researcher is of the strong opinion that it would be unethical to just give the facts and not handle the feelings.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Recommendations to the farming families

a) Family 1:

The researcher recommends that the siblings in this family make use of professional help to facilitate open communication between them. The Sibling Partnership will exist long after the parents are absent from the business and their relationship will determine the success of the business. If they can start the process of open and direct constructive communication, it will filter through to the rest of the family and be the first step towards constructive business communication. Both siblings expressed their disbelief about the possibility of comfortable communication. The sibling subsystem will need a skilled and neutral facilitator to help them start the process. The researcher will discuss this with them in the feedback session and refer them to professionals.

If the siblings are able to communicate with each other, also on a feeling level, they will find it easier to start the process of communicating with the father about plans and procedures for the business to enter the next stage of development – this business that he worked so hard to build up.

The eldest son will benefit greatly from professional help to get to the root of his defensiveness. It blocks his own growth and successful communication. The eldest son and his spouse have on all accounts a good marriage. They will
however benefit from some professional help to improve their joint problem solving.

This business needs to move to a more constructive mode of decision-making. I recommend that they hold regular formal business meetings with minutes and agendas.

The family will benefit from setting up a family council and having periodical family meetings. As soon as the siblings are able to talk constructively to each other and really hear each other, the issue of the houses can be discussed in the family forum. It will be helpful to have a facilitator in the first meeting.

b) Family 2:

It is the researcher’s opinion that everything possible should be done to assist this family to overcome their difficulties. This successful business is a testimony to the drive and hard work of all the parties so far and it would indeed be sad to see a growing, successful agricultural business that provides work to many people broken up. All the family members are willing to work on a solution for their problems. The researcher recommends that this family engage a skilled facilitator, or more than professional person, to assist them. These professionals should be experienced in the fields of marital and family therapy, business development and conflict management. They require assistance with:

- Implementing constructive communication skills.
- Mapping the needs of all the family members and developing a long term plan for the way forward to give hope to all the parties.
- Put good governance steps, like meetings, minutes, agendas, policies and procedures in place.
- Strategic planning
- Debrief the trauma of the recent escalating conflict and build the Sibling Partnership through family therapy sessions with the siblings.
- Marital therapy for the couples.
• Engage with the father and mother to ensure equitable distribution of their time and attention between all the children, in-laws and grand children.
• Create ongoing awareness and watchfulness against the forming of camps.

5.4.2 Generic recommendations for farming families

Farms ensure food security for the country and provide jobs and development in rural areas. Agricultural activities are increasingly in recent years described by economists and agricultural organizations as business concerns. Farming families can only benefit from thinking about their farm as a business. Effective business practices like strategic planning, weekly business meetings with minutes and agendas and policies and procedures that govern the activities of the business will definitely minimize conflict and help develop more sustainable business ventures over generations.

The literature research showed a preference for articles and research that focus on the business domain, with very little knowledge and skills transferred to farming families about how to handle family problems and dynamics. Trans generational scripts and destructive communication patterns are the biggest block in terms of family satisfaction and sustainability in especially two-generational farm families. Gender and generational roles are entrenched in farming families and many families will benefit from professional input to help them with effective communication and conflict management. It is the researcher’s experience that the younger generation, also on farms, are more used to seeking help, not viewing it anymore as a shameful occurrence.

Unfortunately skilled professionals are scarce in rural areas and their services are costly. Agricultural cooperatives and organizations can contribute to the sustainability of their clients by organizing workshops and talks, not only about developing the business domain but especially about tackling problems in the family domain. In this manner they will help remove the stigma of marital and family therapy that might still exist. They can also make a database of professionals available for their clients.
5.5 Limitations and future research

This was an exploratory study, using non-probability purposive sampling. The limitations must be considered. As such the specific findings cannot be generalised to the general farming family business population. This research however attempted to make a contribution to the body of knowledge on conflict in farming family businesses, making the voices and stories of two farming families known. From their stories, themes emerged that are worth taking note of, themes that probably exist in most farming families and are worthy of follow-up research with farming family business. This research highlighted the following:

- The existence and importance of subsystems in the family domain. The meta-system, the family business, cannot be narrowly drawn in just 2 subsystems - family and business. Taking note of the subsystems in a family business provides a detailed picture of the family business and can contribute to effective conflict management.

- Conflictual behaviour in and between subsystems are linked in feedback loops, leading to conflict escalation. Conflict patterns are not linear, but circular, linking the subsystems in the loops. Conflict management and transformation will also have to be circular, involving all the subsystems.

- These two-generation farming family businesses showed that the transition from Controlling Owner Stage to Sibling Partnership Stage is not a specific point but rather a stage that can last for many years. Strategies to work with farming family businesses need to keep this unique feature in mind, involving both generations and their aspirations.

- Cross-generational scripts provide the unspoken rules of engagement in the family business and can be important contributors to conflict and conflict escalation. Family businesses will mostly need professional help to make scripts conscious before they can be addressed.

Future studies can investigate and explore the areas that emerged in this research. Based on the outcome of this study, the following avenues for future research can be suggested:
• Exploring and describing the characteristics and functioning of two-generation farming family businesses.
• Exploring and describing the subsystems in a more representative sample of farming family businesses
• Exploring and describing the scripts in South African farming families, finding out which scripts block satisfactory family farming and threatens the sustainability of a family farm.
• More comprehensive and in-depth qualitative research with a bigger sample to understand the function of conflict in farming family business.

Family farms are becoming a dying breed in many parts of the world, with factory farms - big commercial enterprises – dominating the agricultural scene. The agricultural picture in South Africa is still closely linked with family businesses. The land reform process, giving farming opportunities to previously disadvantaged persons, also shows a prevalence of extended families starting to farm.

Successful farming family business are the long term sustainable businesses of the future, creating jobs in rural areas, developing the local economy and transferring skills and knowledge to new generations that are not taught in colleges. These businesses can be the mentors for the upcoming farmers, contributing to political stability. The familiness of the farming family business helps to create more successful business enterprise than mere commercial enterprises and ensure long term sustainability.

The researcher believe working with and developing farming family businesses is worth the investment, not only for the families involved but also for their employees, neighbours, community and for the country who depend on them for food security.
6 REFERENCES


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7. ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1

OVERLAPPING SYSTEMS

Family Businesses The Essentials - Peter Leach p 39 *Family business dynamics

ANNEXURE 2

GERSICK’S THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL

Figure 2.6 The three-dimensional model
ANNEXURE 3
PERMISSION FORM

Vir aandag:
Die Voorsitter
XXX Boerdery
XXX
George 6530
Suid Afrika

TOESTEMMING VIR:
1. ONDERHOUDE VOER MET LEDE VAN FAMILIE BESIGHEID EN HUL EGGENOTES VIR NAVORSINGS DOELEINDES
2. RESULTATE VAN NAVORSING GEBRUIK IN NAVORSINGS VERSLAG VIR MAGISTER SKRIPSIE

Beste mnr xxxxxxxxxxxxx

My naam is Marna Kleynhans en ek is ‘n Magister student aan die Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Universiteit (NMMU) in Port Elizabeth. Ek wil navorsing doen vir my Magister skripsie oor familie besighede in die boerdery bedryf en die rol van konflik. Hierdie navorsings projek sal plaasvind onder die leiding van Dr Lyn Snodgrass (NMMU, Suid Afrika).

Hiermee vra ek u toestemming om individuele onderhoude te voer met uself, die ander familielede betrokke by die boerdery en hul eggenotes. Alle onderhoude sal geskied per afspraak op tye wat moontlik is vir die betrokkenes. Ek onderneem om inligting wat ek bekom konfidensieel te hanteer en die resultate van die navorsing so te boekstaaf dat u en u familie se identiteit beskerm word.

U sal voorsien word van ‘n kopie van die finale skripsie sodra dit goedgekeur is deur die Universiteit. Ek onderneem ook om terugvoering te gee aan u familie oor die spesifieke resultate wat van toepassing is op u familie besigheid.
U is welkom om my enige tyd tydens die navorsing te kontak indien u of enige familie lid navrae het of enige literatuur oor familie besighede wil bekom.
Kontak my gerus by:
Kantoor: 044-8747028
Sel: 0824948162
Epos: marna@intekom.co.za

U is enige tyd welkom om ook navrae oor hierdie navorsing te rig aan Die Etiese Komitee, Department of Research Capacity Development, Posbus 77000, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Universiteit, Port Elizabeth, 6031.

U samewerking en tyd word waardeer. Ek heg die toestemmings brief aan vir u kennisname en handtekening.

Beste wense,

**Marna Kleynhans**
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Hiermee gee ek aan Marna Kleynhans toestemming om kontak te maak met ons familie besigheid, onderhoude te voer met die lede en die inligting wat sy bekom te gebruik vir navorsing vir 'n M. Phil graad in Conflict Transformation and Management.

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XXXXXXXX
# ANNEXURE 4
## TOESTEMMINGS VORM

**NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

**INLIGTING EN TOESTEMMINGS VORM**

### A. BESONDERHEDE VAN NAVORSER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Titel van projek</th>
<th>Through systemic lenses - An exploration of conflict in farming family businesses in the Southern Cape, South Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navorser</td>
<td>Marna Kleynhans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adres</td>
<td>Posbus 1965 George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poskode</td>
<td>6530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telefoonnommer</td>
<td>044-874 7028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. VERKLARING VAN DEELNEMER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ek, die ondergetekende</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID nommer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **VERKLAAR DIE VOLGENDE:**

Ek is uitgenooi om deel te neem aan die bogenoemde navorsing wat deur Marna Kleynhans van die Departement Politieke en Regerings Studies van die Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University onderneem word

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Initial</th>
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2. **DIE VOLGENDE IS AAN MY VERDUIDELIK:**

2.1 **Doel van navorsing:**

Die navorser bestudeer boerdery familie besighede en die impak van konflik op die funksionering van boerdery familiebesighede.

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<th>Initial</th>
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</table>

2.2 **Prosedures:**

Ek begryp dat ek my mening en weergawe van ons familie besigheid sal gee in gesprek met die navorser. Ek begryp ook dat daar gefokus sal word op die verhoudings en konflik in die familie en die besigheid.

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<th>Initial</th>
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</thead>
</table>

2.3 **Nadele en voordele:**

Ek begryp dat daar nie betekenisvolle risikos is vir my of ons besigheid deur hieraan deel te neem nie, maar dat dit moontlik emocionele gevoelens na vore kan bring by my en/of ander lede van ons familie. Ek begryp ook dat my deelname aan die navorsing voordelig kan wees vir ons besigheid deur die terugvoering van die resultate beter insig in ons funksionering as `n familie besigheid en die gevolglike groei en ontwikkeling van ons besigheid. Ek verstaan dat ek die name en kontakbesonderhede kan kry van professioneel persone wat familiebesighede bystaan indien ek of my familie dit benodig.

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<th>Initial</th>
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</table>

2.4 **Konfidensialiteit:**

My naam en ons familie se naam en ons besigheid se identiteit sal op geen manier deur besprekings of beskrywing of enige publikasie bekend gemaak word. Alle verwysings na ons familie in die finale verslag sal so hanteer word dat ons familie besigheid nie uitgekeen kan

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<tr>
<th>Initial</th>
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</thead>
</table>
### 2.5 Rekord van onderhoude

Ek verstaan dat daar notas geneem sal word tydens die onderhoude. Ek stem ook toe dat daar ’n bandopname tydens die onderhoud gemaak kan word vir rekord doeleindes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JA</th>
<th>NEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 2.6 Toegang tot die bevindings:

Enige nuwe inligting of gevolgtrekking van die navorsing sal tydens en na die navorsing aan my en my familieledes wat deelneem bekend gemaak word. ’n Kopie van die navorsingsverslag sal ook aan ons beskikbaar gestel word.

### 2.7 Vrywillige deelname:

My deelname is vrywillig

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JA</th>
<th>NEE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 3. DIE BOGENOEEMDE INLIGTING IS AAN MY VERDUIDEKLIK:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Afrikaans</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Xhosa</th>
<th>Ander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Ek is die kans gegee om vrae te vra en het bevredigende antwoorde gekry

### 4. Geen druk is op my geplaas om deel te neem en ek verstaan dat ek mag onttrek as ek wil

### 5. EK STEM HIERMEE VRYWILLIG TOE OM DEEL TE WEE VAN HIERDIE NAVORSING:

Geteken te op 2011

Handtekening van getuie:

Naam van getuie:

### C. VERKLARING DEUR NAVORSER:

Ek, Maria, Magdalena Kleynhans verklaar Hiermee dat ek .............................................................. genoegsame kans gegee het om vrae te vra nadat ek die doel en procedure van die navorsing verduidelik het. Die gesprek is gevoer in die deelnemer se huistaal, Afrikaans.

Ek het Aanhangsel A en B aan die deelnemer oorhandig

Geteken te op 2011

Handtekening van getuie:

Naam van getuie:
**D. AANHANGSEL A**

Geagte deelnemer aan navorsingprojek,

Baie dankie vir u berydwilligheid om deel te neem aan hierdie studie.

Indien enige vrae, probleme of krisis as gevolg van hierdie navorsing ontstaan of indien u enige verdere inligting benodig is u baie welkom om my te kontak:

**Marna Kleynhans**

Telefoonnommer: 044-874 7028  
Faksnommer: 086 690 7259  
Epos: marna@intekom.co.za