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Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Department of Economics

How can being engaged in an alternative marketing network support small scale, rural food entrepreneurs?

- A case study of Bondens Egen Marknad in Halland

Ingrid Carlsson Lervik

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Abstract

Rural entrepreneurship is promoted as part of current efforts made to sustain rural development, at the same time research on the topic is relatively limited and more knowledge is needed. It is the aim of this thesis to attempt to identify ways in which an alternative marketing network may support small scale, rural food entrepreneurs. The farmer's market Bondens Egen Marknad is an alternative marketing network for small scale, rural food entrepreneurs and was found to be a suitable case for studying rural entrepreneurship in keeping with the aim of this study. The phenomenon of rural entrepreneurship is complex and shaped by human socio-economic transactions and needs to be studied as such, a phenomenological constructionist approach was thus considered suitable. The findings in this thesis suggests that alternative marketing networks may support rural entrepreneurship in several ways, directly by offering an important sales and marketing channel and indirectly by embedding the member entrepreneurs in the local structure and thereby providing access to additional resources such as knowledge and comradeship. By offering insights into how alternative marketing networks may support rural entrepreneurship, it is hoped that the results presented here may further enhance our knowledge about entrepreneurship in rural settings.

Sammanfattning

Företagande och entreprenörskap på landsbygden främjas för hållbar landsbygdsutveckling, samtidigt är forskning inom ämnet relativt begränsad och behöver vidareutvecklas. Syftet med detta arbete är att försöka identifiera hur ett alternativt marknadsföringsnätverk kan bidra till att upprätthålla denna typ av företagande. Bondens Egen Marknad är ett marknadsföringsnätverk för småskaliga livsmedelsföretagare på landsbygden och befanns vara ett lämpligt fall för att studera företagande i lantlig miljö enligt syftet med denna studie. Fenomenet med företagande på landsbygden är komplex och formas av socioekonomiska transaktioner, därför ansågs en fenomen-konstruktionistisk ram vara lämplig. Detta arbete visar att ett alternativt marknadsföringsnätverk kan bidra till att upprätthålla företagande på landsbygden på flera sätt, direkt genom att erbjuda en viktig försäljnings och marknadsföringskanal och indirekt genom att inbädda medlemmarna i nätverket i den lokala strukturen, vilket ger tillgång till ytterligare resurser såsom kunskap och kamratskap. Genom att erbjuda en inblick i hur ett alternativt marknadsföringsnätverk kan vara med på att stötta företagande på landsbygden, är förhoppningen att detta arbete kan bidra till ökad förståelse av entreprenörskap i lantlig miljö.

Sammendrag

Entreprenørskap fremheves ofte som et virkemiddel for å opprettholde en holdbar bygdeutvikling, samtidig er forskningen på området relativt begrenset og det er behov for mer kunnskap om entreprenørskap i denne type miljø. Formålet med denne masteroppgaven er å prøve og identifisere hvordan et alternativt markedsføringsnettverk kan være med på å opprettholde denne typen av entreprenørskap. Bondens Egen Marknad er et alternativt markedsføringsnettverk og ble valgt som case da nettverket ble funnet passende for formålet med oppgaven. Fenomenet entreprenørskap på landsbygden består av sammensatte sosiale og samfunnsøkonomiske forhold og bør derfor utforskes som dette, en fenomenologisk-konstruksjonistisk ramme ble derfor valgt. Denne oppgaven konkluderer med at et alternativt markedsføringsnettverk kan bidra til å opprettholde entreprenørskap på landsbygden på flere måter, direkte ved å tilby en viktig salgs-og markedsføringskanal, og indirekte ved å inkludere medlems-entreprenørene i den lokale strukturen, og dermed gi tilgang til andre viktige resurser som kunnskap og kameratskap. Ved å bidra med innsikt i hvordan et alternativt markedsføringsnettverk kan være med på å opprettholde entreprenørskap på landsbygden, er det å håpe at denne oppgaven kan bidra til økt forståelse av landsbygdsentreprenørskap og holdbar bygdeutvikling.

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1 Introduction

The introduction chapter will provide a background description of the study. Furthermore, the aim, objective and research questions will be presented and explained as well as delimitations. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a thesis outline.

1.1 Problem background

A new rural paradigm is emerging, answering the call for new responses to economic development in lagging rural areas to meet the new opportunities and threats that are surfacing in the wake of globalisation and the resulting changes in the global economy (www, OECD, 1, 2014). Member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are placing increasing importance on local embeddedness and less importance on subsidies and are challenging old policies and models to refuel rural economy (ibid).

Changing rural conditions in Europe are expected to influence job opportunities and escalate dependence on welfare-support in rural areas (Stathopoulou et al., 2004). Entrepreneurship is thus promoted as part of rural development strategy in efforts to rejuvenate rural economic space. These efforts risks being edgeless or even counter-productive, however, if entrepreneurs in rural areas are seen as one homogenous group with the same needs (Alsos et al., 2003; Avermate et al., 2004). This calls for a differentiated view on entrepreneurship-intelligence, both in factual and intellectual meaning.

Rural entrepreneurship is shaped by numerous factors; “Location, natural resources and the landscape, social capital, rural governance, business and social networks, as well as information and communication technologies, exert dynamic and complex influences on entrepreneurial activity in rural areas” (Stathopoulou et al., 2004:404). It is a complex phenomenon, at the same time rural entrepreneurship research is relatively limited, and more knowledge is needed on the mechanisms that are promoting or inhibiting entrepreneurship in rural settings to enhance our current understanding (Stathopoulou et al., 2004). Studies investigating rural entrepreneurship in its own context or setting, rather than in a “conventional” entrepreneurial context, may facilitate a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Müller et al., 2013) and thus contribute in a pragmatic way to the intelligence needed to be able to launch efforts aimed at clear targets for sustainable development of rural areas.

By becoming locally embedded, or included in the local structure, entrepreneurs that are operating in a rural setting can gain access to several benefits, and according to Jack and Anderson (2002) engaging in a network may facilitate local embeddedness and thereby provide rural entrepreneurs with access to social capital and valuable resources such as support, contacts and information. The farmer's market network Bondens Egen Marknad has in the past decade emerged as an alternative for small scale, rural food entrepreneurs in Sweden to market and sell their produce directly to the consumers (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014). This thesis will focus on economic aspects and attempt to address the role being engaged in Bondens Egen Marknad as an alternative marketing network may play in supporting small scale, rural food entrepreneurs and in this way contribute to further enhance our context-based knowledge about rural entrepreneurship.

1.2 Problem

Farmer's markets are an example of the alternative food systems, or networks, that have emerged in the recent decades which are challenging the conventional food systems by "re-spatializing" and "re-socialising" food, in other words; reconnecting food to its "social, cultural and environmental context" by insisting on all produce being local and by facilitating direct producer-consumer contact (Kirwan, 2004:396). These alternative market places are consumer and producer led responses to the globalisation and industrialisation of the conventional food systems (ibid). The farmer's market Bondens Egen Marknad is a marketing network for small scale, rural food entrepreneurs with an identity that is strongly connected to small scale production and distribution of "local" food and is an important and affordable marketing channel for its member entrepreneurs (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014). Important intangible transactions are taking place between the producers and consumers at farmer's markets, in addition to the transactions of produce changing hands, e.g. exchanges of esteem or "regard", which illustrates the higher dimension of complexity of alternative food systems (Sage, 2003: Kirwan, 2004). Bondens Egen Marknad, modelled after the original Farmer's Market in the US and the National Farmer's market Association in the UK, has existed in Sweden for more than 10 years and is a well-known and appreciated alternative to shopping food from conventional food systems such as super markets for an increasing group of consumers (ibid).

When realising the complexity of rural entrepreneurship and the intangible dimension of alternative food systems, it becomes clear that viewing these concepts from one angle only, is too simplistic. Combining concepts from rural entrepreneurship theory and alternative food systems theory may not be new, but by applying the concepts to a case study about small scale food

producers' lived experience of being rural entrepreneurs and of being engaged in a network, it is hoped that a contribution can be made to further enhance our current knowledge about small scale, food entrepreneurship in rural settings. Not only about rural entrepreneurship as a phenomenon, but also about the potential role engaging in an alternative marketing network may have in supporting rural entrepreneurs. This may be valuable knowledge for policy makers and regional development agencies when developing strategies for economically sustainable rural development, but also for scholars, rural food entrepreneurs, the consumers, the organisation Bondens Egen Marknad, media and other stakeholders.

After an initial interview with the treasurer of Bondens Egen Marknad and suggestions from my thesis supervisor, Johan Gaddefors, the idea for this study was developed. After having consulted the literature on rural entrepreneurship and alternative food systems, the following problem was formed:

How can engaging in an alternative marketing network support small scale, rural food entrepreneurs?

1.3 Aim and delimitations

As mentioned already, and as identified in the literature, it is necessary to further develop our knowledge about rural entrepreneurship and to study rural entrepreneurs in their own particular (rural) setting with individual traits and needs. Once one has established that more knowledge is needed (Stathopoulou et al., 2004) and that understanding entrepreneurial activity in its relevant context is important (Müller et al., 2013), investigating what motivates rural entrepreneurs to start their businesses and the attributes of rural entrepreneurs becomes relevant. Investigating ways in which an alternative marketing network may support small scale, rural food entrepreneurs is hoped to offer further contributions to context-based knowledge about rural entrepreneurship.

Hence, the aim of this thesis is to attempt to identify ways in which engaging in an alternative marketing network may support small-scale rural food entrepreneurs. The objective is to contribute to enhance our knowledge about the phenomenon of rural entrepreneurship by investigating it in its own context rather than in the context of conventional entrepreneurship. To fulfill the aim and objective, a network of small-scale, rural food entrepreneurs will be examined and by drawing on concepts from rural entrepreneurship- and alternative food systems- theory, the following research questions will be addressed:

What attributes do small scale, rural food entrepreneurs have in common and what motivates their decision to become entrepreneurs?

In what ways can engaging in an alternative marketing network support small scale, rural food entrepreneurs?

The frames for the scope of the study were set according to the following reasoning; the attributes and motivations of small scale, rural food entrepreneurs may be many, and attempting to identify and include them all in one study would be a massive task, if at all possible. What will be discussed here are attributes of the entrepreneurs that were identified in keeping with the methodology of the interpretative phenomenological analysis of a case study of some of the entrepreneurs that are engaged in the alternative marketing network Bondens Egen Marknad. Furthermore, there may be numerous ways engaging in an alternative marketing network may support small scale, rural food entrepreneurs, the ways found to be significant for the entrepreneurs participating in this study was thus selected to be included.

The findings will be discussed according to the emerging themes that were identified by the qualitative analysis of the data, grounded in the relevant theoretical concepts in accordance with the interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology that was selected for the study. Not all aspects and themes will be discussed, the choices related to which aspects to be included were made based on the reasoning of one researcher; another researcher might have chosen to focus on other themes. This is also in keeping with the interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology, which will be explained in more detail in chapter 2. The research questions above will be used to sum up and present the main findings of this study in chapter 4.

For practical reasons a separate research question will be used to guide the literature search, as recommended by Randolph (2009) and can be seen in chapter 2.2. The literature research question must not to be confused with the actual research questions mentioned in this chapter, however, and was thus not mentioned here.

1.4 Outline

Chapter 1 Introduction

The background, aim, objective and research questions for the thesis will be presented and explained as well as delimitations.

Chapter 2 Method

In this chapter the methodological choices made for the study will be presented and motivated.

Chapter 3 Theoretical concepts

This chapter will offer a theoretical perspective of the topics under study through a review of relevant literature and the chapter will be concluded with a theoretical summary.

Chapter 4 Empirical findings and discussion

The case of Bondens Egen Marknad will be described and a statistical overview of small-scale entrepreneurship will be presented to provide a backdrop for the discussion. Furthermore, the empirical findings identified by the interpretative phenomenological analysis based on the literature review and interviews will be presented and discussed.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and suggestions for further research

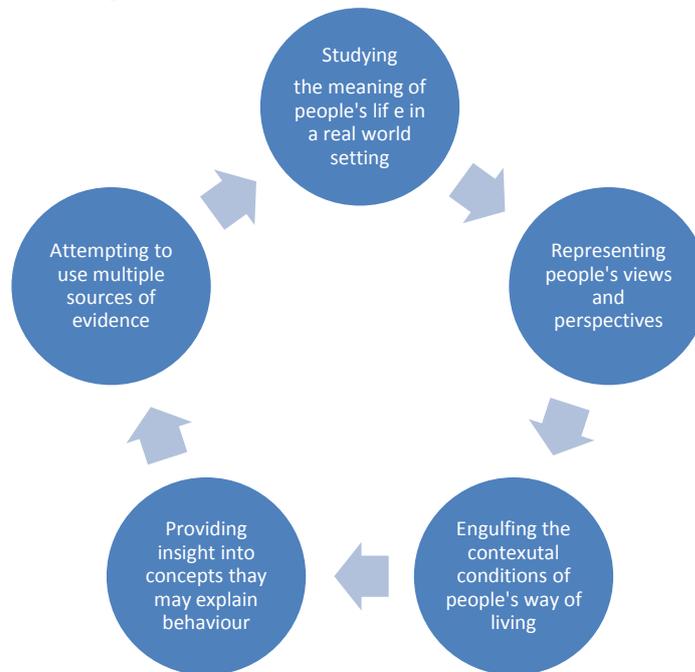
This chapter will present the conclusions of the study and provide suggestions for further lines of inquiry on the topic.

2 Method

The aim of this chapter is to present and motivate the methodological choices made for this thesis and to discuss the potential weaknesses of the chosen methods and design. Furthermore, it will account for the integrity, validity and reliability measures taken during the study. Special attention is given to the interpretative phenomenological analysis-methodology that was chosen for the empirical analysis and discussion in chapter 4.

2.1 Qualitative research

Academic research can be divided into two major approaches; the qualitative and the quantitative (e.g. Stake, 1995; Robson, 2011; Yin, 2011). The qualitative approach is concerned with non-numerical and non-statistical analysis of a subjective nature aimed at understanding contextual, human settings (Robson, 2011). According to Yin (2011), instead of trying to encompass qualitative research in one definition, one may consider the approach to be built up by five elements. These five elements may be summarised the following way; examining the meaning of individual's lives in a real world context and representing the views of these individuals in the study, providing insights to existing knowledge and thus contributing to explaining human behaviour while "striving to use multiple sources of evidence" (Yin, 2011:7). The five elements of qualitative research are summarised in figure 1 below.



*Figure 1. The five elements of a qualitative research study.
Source: Yin (2011:7), own illustration.*

Stake (1995) points out that although the nature of an inquiry determines its approach, the difference is not so much related to the nature of the data but rather the nature of what outcomes one are seeking, or as he puts it “a differences in searching for causes versus searching for happenings” (Stake, 1995:37). The quantitative approach is concerned with applying the principles of natural science research and quantifying the data into numbers for objective statistical analysis (Robson, 2011). The quantitative approach has been criticised in social research for removing the situation under investigation from its real world setting, e.g. due to this method’s tendency to decontextualize and generalize and for producing statistical and numerical results which some believe is unsuitable for explaining human phenomena (ibid). As seen in the theoretical concepts chapter of this thesis, entrepreneurship in a rural context involves complex social and economic transactions and interactions, which suggest that a quantitative approach may be unsuitable if the aim is to gain insight in this phenomenon which one can argue is highly human. A qualitative approach was thus selected.

2.1.1 Case study

Case study is a flexible design approach to qualitative social research which can be applied to a number of different areas of study and the word strategy instead of method may be better suited to describe it, as case studies of different nature will have different methodological approaches (Robson, 2011). The characteristics of case study is that it concentrates on one distinct case or a smaller collection of cases and that it involves empirically researching that particular case in a specific setting or context by applying evidence and data from several sources (ibid).

Stake (1995) advices to select the case in a case study based on what will enable the researcher to learn the most about the topic under investigation and Flyvbjerg (2006:242) advocates that “Good social science is problem driven and not methodology driven in the sense that it employs those methods, that for a given problematic, best help answer the research question at hand”. This was kept in mind when choosing to do a case study of Bondens Egen Marknad and it was held that the entrepreneurs of Bondens Egen Marknad would provide such a learning opportunity. It was also considered critical to select a case that would produce participants willing to share their thoughts, which is not always easy for student work. Initial contact was thus established with the treasurer of Bondens Egen Marknad to find out if the entrepreneurs would be positive to participate in the study.

Flyvbjerg (2006) makes some important points about why the use of case study research when learning about topics in social science is appropriate; research on how humans learn has shown that context-dependent knowledge is necessary in order to move from beginners- to expert-level knowledge in all learning processes. The term “expert” can be applied to numerous skills ranging from trivial skills that most people are capable of, such as riding a bike or giving a gift, to more advanced skills not all are capable of, such as flying a plane and the point here is that all these different level expert skills are carried out based on the knowledge and experience that has been gained from numerous of learning lessons, or cases, about each skill (ibid). Flyvbjerg (2006) calls this context-dependent knowledge and argue that this knowledge lies at the core of every expert skill, trivial or advanced, and that it is only through case study, one can move from beginners to expert-level. Context-independent knowledge, exemplified by textbooks or computers, will only facilitate beginners-level knowledge and it is first when this knowledge is applied to practical cases one can move on to expert-level knowledge (ibid). Two advantages of the detailed, close-up view case study research provides to real world scenarios, are that first of all it facilitates a refined view on real world events, but it is also important for the learning process of the researcher, reading about case study research is one thing, learning about it by doing it, or turning context-independent knowledge about case study research into context-dependent knowledge about case study research, is another (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

According to Yin (2011) starting with some initial fieldwork, or data collection, to aid the arrival at preliminary research questions and design, may be appropriate for qualitative studies as the goal is to gain insights into real world phenomena and the people who are experiencing it. Initial fieldwork may enable the researcher to get familiar with relevant perspectives (ibid). In this study, initial fieldwork was carried out in the form a personal meeting and short open-ended interview with the treasurer of Riksföreningen Bondens Egen Marknad, which highlighted certain areas that helped form the design of the project, see appendix 2.

2.1.3 Interviews

Interviews are often used in qualitative research and are commonly classified as unstructured, structured and semi-structured, depending on what type of answers the researcher is after and of what depth (Robson, 2011). Semi-structured interviews follow an interview guide with a list of topics and questions that should be covered during the interview, but are otherwise relatively flexible and the questions may be modified during the interview (ibid). A phenomenological approach was considered appropriate for this study due to its nature and objectives; the choice of approach will be

discussed in more detail in 2.4. In phenomenology, the goal is to discover the essence of a lived experience by studying a phenomenon in its social context and according to Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), semi-structured interviews is a data collection method suitable for phenomenological studies. This was also suggested by Wertz (1985) who said that semi structured, but open-ended interviews are appropriate in phenomenology since the goal is to obtain data of the participant's experience of the lived phenomenon at a level of the highest possible detail.

Since the phenomenological approach is not concerned with statistics, generalisation is not an option and the sampling can be purposive (Robson, 2011). Purposive sampling means intentionally choosing the samples that one believe will deliver the most relevant and detailed data relative to the study (Yin, 2011). For the purpose of this study it was deemed appropriate to choose samples from a network that has existed for some time and samples that had been part of the network for some time. This was considered a prerequisite to be able to reflect on the influence participating in the network may have had on the participants and their enterprises.

Since this study's empirical data collection method to a large extent consisted of semi-structured interviews, a manuscript containing a list of the topics that should be covered and suggestions to questions was prepared before the interviews (see appendix 1) in keeping with recommendations in the literature (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This allowed the interviewees to elaborate rather freely on the topics, which is important in phenomenology (ibid). All the interviews in this study were recorded using the interviewer's iPhone 4 and all the interview audio files were saved and have been stored for validity measures. The interviews were translated directly from Swedish to English during the transcription process. This was deliberate as it was considered an unnecessary risk of loss of meaning to first transcribe the interview in Swedish and then translating this into English. Since the interview was not filmed, implicit meaning via facial expressions and body language was lost. Slang language and verbal hesitations such as "eeh", "mmm", "yes" was transcribed to limit further loss of implicit meaning in the transcription process, in keeping with interpretative phenomenological thought of obtaining as much detail from the interviews as possible (Wertz, 1985) Comments in square brackets were added to the transcripts for clarity during the transcription process and names of persons/places mentioned by the interviewee were replaced by (...) for integrity purposes.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:174) "A good interview rests upon the craftsmanship of the researcher, which goes beyond a mastery of questioning techniques to encompass knowledge of the research topic,

sensitivity to the social relation of an interviewer and interviewee, and an awareness of epistemological and ethical aspects of research interviewing”. This suggests that the interview process is a complex interaction between individuals that requires good interpersonal skills in addition to good interviewing skills and theoretical knowledge about the topic under investigation.

Alvesson (2003) goes further and warns against a naive view on the use of interviews in empiric inquiry and argue that a more reflexive approach to the use of interviews is needed. Researchers must critically evaluate the outcomes and results it is realistic to achieve through interviews, recognise that it is a deeply complex social interaction and rigorously question if the method is suitable for the aim of the study (ibid). A theoretical understanding of the scope of research interviews will equip the researcher with an understanding of how the interviewee’s views may be affected by the physical setting of the interview, the personality traits of the interviewee, her/his political views and a number of other factors and that the interviewee’s language may (consciously or unconsciously) stimulate the interviewer’s interpretation of what is said in the interview (Alvesson, 2003). In this study it was considered that the phenomenological approach chosen would partly redeem the shortcomings mentioned above due to its thorough methodology and focus on detailed extraction and analysis of data, nevertheless Alvesson’s (2003) call for caution was kept in mind during the interview and data analysis processes.

2.2 Literature review

According to Randolph (2009) the aim of a literature review is to demonstrate one’s knowledge about a subject. The literature review generates a framework, which enables linking any new findings with existing or old findings in the discussion part of a thesis (ibid). Yin (2011) recommends constructing a selective literature review in the early stages of a research project to gain insight in studies that are of similar nature to one’s own in topic, method and data collection methods (later on in the process, a more comprehensive review is needed). In this thesis the PhD dissertation of Müller (2013) was drawn upon initially as it provided a very good overview of the state-of-the-art literature on the topic of rural entrepreneurship.

Randolph (2009) suggests following the same approach as one would in primary research when conducting a literature review (secondary research), which means organising the literature review according to what can be said to be the standard format of a thesis or dissertation; problem formulation, data collection, data evaluation, data analysis and interpretation and presentation of results.

To gain in-depth theoretical understanding of the central topics under investigation in this thesis, the following qualitative “research problem” for the literature review was formulated:

Which central theoretical concepts have been used in the literature to describe rural entrepreneurship and alternative (food) marketing networks?

To ensure choosing the most relevant pieces of literature with the highest possible level of reliability for the review, the following criteria for inclusion was selected: peer-reviewed articles and other literature of recent date, literature written in English or one of the Scandinavian languages and articles available online in reputable electronic databases and information from official websites.

The approach to search for and find articles that were relevant for the main theoretical platforms of this thesis can be described as follows: An electronic database search was conducted with the literature research question in mind and taking into account the inclusion criteria described above. The search was conducted via the SLU Library accessed via a VPN-connection and the following electronic databases were primarily used: Sage, Elsevier, Science Direct and ProQuest. The search engine Google Scholar was also used and relevant literature (books) was retrieved via the library at Högskolan i Halmstad. Randolph (2009) suggests that only about 10% of the available articles that are relevant for a study are revealed directly via electronic database searches. He thus recommends searching through the bibliography of the retrieved articles one finds relevant for more relevant articles; repeat this procedure with the bibliography of these articles and continuing downwards with the same procedure until no more relevant articles are obtained (ibid). This advice was followed to some extent during the literature search. Furthermore, my supervisor, Johan Gaddefors, was consulted for recommendations of relevant literature on the theoretical platforms of the study.

The final stage of the literature review should involve a synthesis of the data that has been extracted from the literature (Randolph, 2009). In this case a recap of the relevant theoretical concepts used to describe rural entrepreneurship and alternative marketing networks was presented in a theoretical summary which can be found in chapter 3.3.

2.3 Interpretative phenomenological analysis

The phenomenological approach is a qualitative research method stressing hermeneutic analysis of unique events, which means that it is interpretative in nature (Yin, 2011). It has been described as experiential learning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Modern phenomenology has its roots in the philosophy fathered by Edmund Husserl in the beginning of the 1900s and further developed by Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Phenomenological philosophy assumes that “the world and the objects we perceive exist to us through the meanings we give to them, through an act of interpretation” (Berglund, 2007:77). Phenomenology “involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essence of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994:3). In other words; the goal is to extract the essential parts of a lived experience or phenomenon (ibid).

According to Berglund (2007), a positivist (quantitative) approach to entrepreneurial research may cause researchers to miss important points as it risks removing entrepreneurship from its real world context. It may be difficult to describe (rural) entrepreneurship (ibid) as will be seen later in this thesis report. Being a small scale, rural food entrepreneur is arguably a highly “lived” experience. Given that entrepreneurship is a rather young academic field and there still are uncertainties and debate surrounding how it should be conceptualised, hence studied, a phenomenological, or constructionist, approach may be a productive and structured investigation methodology for entrepreneurial studies (Berglund, 2007). O’Donnell and Cummins (1999) and Gilmore et al. (2001) argue that marketing network activities of small firms, also a rather new field in research which to a large extent have been researched with quantitative methods, needs to be investigated more as a phenomenon in a social context to project a more holistic picture. They thus suggest a phenomenological approach to researching the activities of such networks if the aim is to explain and understand the phenomena (ibid).

Initially, a grounded theory approach was considered, for this study. The principle of this approach is to construct a theory, which is grounded in the research of one’s study via theoretical sampling, a process which requires constant comparison and coding of data in several steps, which can take time (Robson, 2011). The time consuming data analysis and coding process of this design caused it to be considered unfit for this study due to the time

constraints of this thesis project. It could certainly be interesting to apply this design to a future study, however.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (hereafter IPA) concentrates on the capacity of individuals to contemplate on and make sense of their lived experiences related to the topic of a study, a method which is suitable for studies where the aim is to gain insight in the views of the participants by identifying common issues or themes (Dallos & Vetere, 2005). It assumes that meaning is achieved via the participant's and researcher's interpretation processes that takes place during a study and that it is shaped by language and context (ibid). According to IPA thought, people's perceptions are more or less constant and may be accessed and explored e.g. via interviews or focus groups (Dallos & Vetere, 2005). The results of an IPA are presented in common themes that have been identified from the analysis of the interview transcripts (ibid).

For a novice researcher, it is tempting to choose a method with a clear and detailed approach; it is of course also crucial that the chosen method is scientifically suitable for the aim of the study. In addition to its suitable design for gaining insights in the participant's lived experiences of a phenomenon, an interpretative phenomenological approach can be an appropriate choice if the researcher's objective is to link the themes of the study with existing literature, if the sample size and the study in itself is small and theoretical sampling is not an option (Dallos & Vetere, 2005), as was the case for this study. Although it provided the desired structure for the data analysis and was appropriate for the aim of the study, the approach did feel somewhat restraining during the course of the thesis project, however. This was felt mostly due to the fact that it limited the analysis to the emerging themes and interesting observations, which were not substantial enough to be considered a theme had to be abandoned. In hindsight, it may have been better to choose a different approach that would have allowed for these observations to be included, e.g. by including more participants in the study. Then again this could have resulted in large amounts of data, which could have been difficult to discuss and analyse properly within the scope of the thesis.

A common critical argument against phenomenological approaches to research is the method's strong emphasis on interpretation of the individual's experience (Berglund, 2007). Although it is true that phenomenological studies are strongly based on interpretation, it may be argued that this is the case for quantitative methods as well, e.g. in choices related to variables and indicators to be used in a study or in analysing and interpreting statistical results (ibid). However, interpretation is a prerequisite

to be able to make sense of any lived experience and is therefore inseparable from social or human studies (Berglund, 2007).

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the quality and validity of research is related to the diversity of the research process and the description of method and analysis. It was thus decided to provide a detailed description of each step of the analytical method used in this thesis as can be seen below.

Once the interviews with the participants of the study had been carried out and recorded, they were transcribed and translated to English. The IPA is, as mentioned earlier, a method, which follows a detailed procedure carried out in six steps (Dallos & Vetere, 2005). The steps are described in the table below according to Dallos and Vetere (2005), followed by an explanation of how the steps were applied to the empirical analysis in this particular study. Although Dallos and Vetere are scholars of psychology, their work on IPA was selected as a source due to their pragmatic account of the methodology.

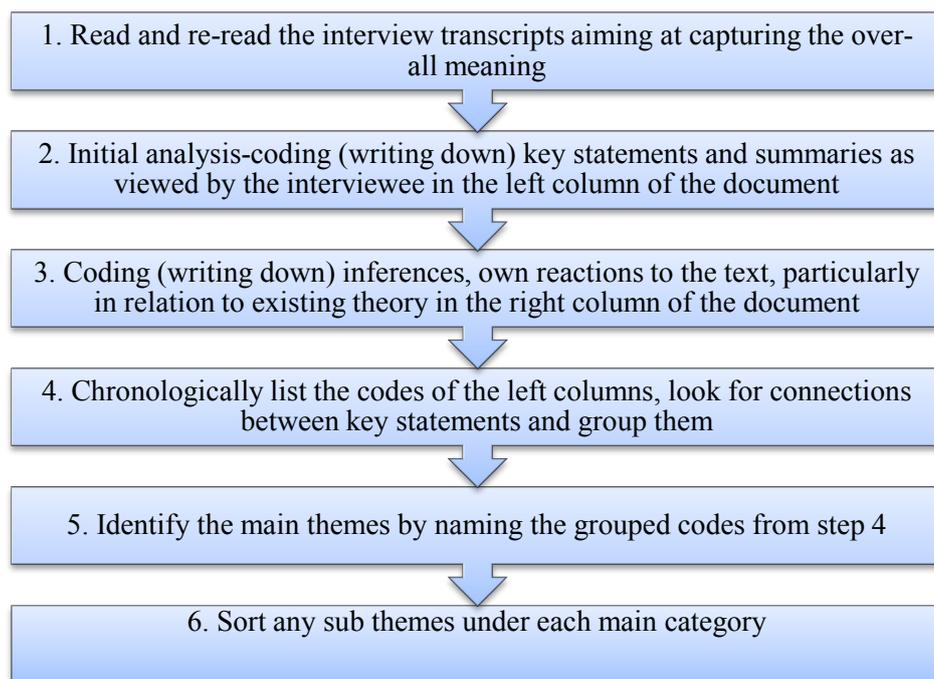


Figure 2. The six steps of the interpretative phenomenological analysis. Source: Dallos & Vetere (2005:59), own illustration.

Step 1: Read and re-read

In the first step of the IPA of this study, each interview, which had been transcribed and translated to English, was read several times. The aim of this step was to look for overall meaning and noting any reflections and thoughts that came up during this process (Dallos & Vetere, 2005).

Step 2: Initial analysis and search for themes

Each document was coded using the left and right hand margin to make notes. As the key statements of the interviewees related to the theories and reactions to the text seemed to be evolving at the same time when the material was worked through, it was decided to perform step 2 and 3 as described by Dallos and Vetere (2005) simultaneously, to ease the information flow and thus the interpretation of the material. For each interview document, key statements in the text were highlighted with the aim of extracting structural meanings and to identify initial findings in the left column (ibid). According to Dallos & Vetere (2005), coding the text line by line is not required; it is up to the researcher to decide the size of the key statements, or pieces of the text, to be analysed further.

Step 3: Write down inferences and own reactions to the text

In the right column, reflections and references to existing theories based on the key statements in the left column were noted in keeping with the explicit instructions of IPA (Dallos & Vetere, 2005).

Step 4: Chronologically list the codes of the left columns and search for connections between the key statements

The codes from the left hand column were grouped in keeping with the existing theories and assisted by the notes from the right hand column (Dallos & Vetere, 2005).

Step 5: Identify the main themes by naming the grouped codes from step 4

After having completed step 1-4 for all the interview documents, the groups of key statements were named and the key themes or findings, identified (Dallos & Vetere, 2005).

Step 6: Sort any sub themes under each main category

According to Dallos and Vetere (2005), each key theme category can be grouped again into sub themes, a process that can be repeated as many times as the researcher see fit, but for every re-grouping of the key statements, one move further away from the original transcript, which may increase the risk of losing the meaning of the original statements. With this in mind, repeated sub-grouping was avoided for this study.

2.4 Ethical considerations

2.4.1 Integrity

According to Yin (2011), researcher integrity is particularly important in qualitative studies due to their potentially more flexible nature which may lead to wants for reassurance that the researcher has taken every step needed to guarantee trustworthy results. Research integrity is demonstrated via the choices of methods, conduct and actions made throughout the study (ibid).

2.4.2 Informed consent and confidentiality

Involving people in a study without their consent or knowledge about the purpose can be dubious (Robson, 2011). This was considered when participants were selected for this study. Consent to contact members of the marketing network was first sought and granted from the person in charge of organisation at Bondens Egen Marknad in Halmstad. An e-mail, which included a description of the nature of the study, was subsequently sent to the members asking if they would be interested in taking part (see appendix 3). Out of 8 entrepreneurs asked, 5 agreed to participate. The participants' agreeing to participate (by replying to the e-mail) was considered as a letter of consent. Furthermore, before each interview started, the interviewees were explicitly asked for their consent to the recording of the interviews and were informed that the recordings were to be used for the purpose of this study only and were to be kept for validity measures. The interviewee's consent to recording the interview was also recorded, but was not transcribed in the interview transcriptions as it was not considered to be part of the actual interview.

Some of the interviewees disclosed personal information that could be of sensitive character to them, e.g. regarding unemployment. This was considered when transcribing the interviews; all names and places or other information, which can lead to recognition, was thus left out. This is in keeping with principles of good practise and integrity in research (Robson, 2011).

2.5 Trustworthiness

According to Yin (2011:19) trustworthiness in qualitative research can be achieved by striving to fulfill three objectives; ensuring transparency, being methodic and adhering to evidence. The objectives of transparency and "methodic-ness" can be achieved by making sure the research procedures

are accounted for and described in such a way that the reader may be able to understand how the research was carried out and examine it thoroughly and by following a methodological procedure to avoid carelessness (ibid). In this chapter it has been attempted to describe the procedures and methods used in this thesis at a level of such detail. The phenomenological procedure, also described in detail in this chapter, was selected for its explicit methodology.

In phenomenological research where the aim is “to account for all data in its comprehension” (Wertz, 1985:162), including all interviews of a study in completion would be ultimate as this would allow the reader to check the rigourousity of the data analysis. This was not possible due to the space constraints of this thesis, parts of one of the interview transcripts were included, however, and can be seen in appendix 4. Also, copies of all the interview transcripts were kept by the author as well as the audio files of the interview recordings, for validity measures.

3 Theoretical concepts

The aim of this chapter is to make a literature review and present the theoretical framework to be used in the identification of the main themes in the interpretative phenomenological analysis and which also will be the structural backbone in the discussion of the empirical findings. The chapter will end with a theoretical summary.

3.1 Rural entrepreneurship

At first glance, rural entrepreneurship may seem quite self-explanatory, people doing business in the countryside or similar explanations come to mind. But once one starts to break it apart and consider the separate meaning of each word it becomes clear that it perhaps is not so self-explanatory after all. Try explaining entrepreneurship in a comprehensible way to a child? And rural, to most people it is obviously the word for an area outside an urban area, but what else?

3.1.1 Entrepreneurship and rurality as an entrepreneurial environment

According to Müller et al., (2013:89), the term rural entrepreneurship suggests that it is “entrepreneurship and something extra: a “value-added” that has to do with the socio-spatial category of the rural”. As mentioned in the introduction, Müller et al., (2013) suggests that it may be productive to study rural entrepreneurship as a concept of its own, rather than as part of general entrepreneurial theory since it is perceived different from other types of entrepreneurship. Stathopoulou et al., (2004) propose that the main difference between a rural and urban entrepreneur is the effect rurality may have on entrepreneurship undertaken in rural areas and argue that rural entrepreneurship thus should be considered as a resource with its own particular possibilities and constraints, shaped by the economic, social and institutional conditions of the surroundings. Stathopoulou et al., (2004) suggests a framework to enhance the understanding of how the “rural entrepreneurial milieu” is affecting the different stages in the entrepreneurial process; the entrepreneurial conception, realisation and operation. Their framework can be seen in figure 1 and illustrates that the physical, social and economic environment of rurality shape the entrepreneurs ability to realise an entrepreneurial idea or economic opportunity, the ability to act on the opportunity and the actual objectives of the opportunity (ibid).

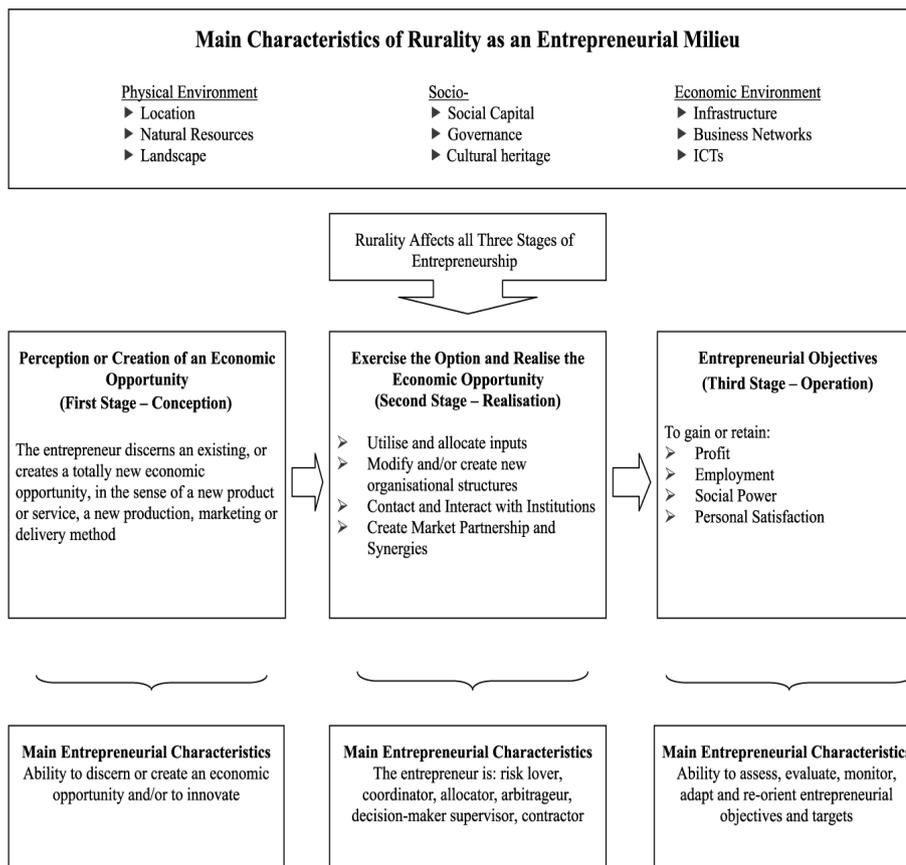


Figure 3. “Main characteristics of rurality as an entrepreneurial milieu”.
 Source: Stathopoulou et al., (2004:413).

According to Johnstone & Lionais (2004) the rural entrepreneurship literature distinguishes between place and space and when investigating the topic it soon becomes clear that defining a rural area also is not as straight forward as one may think, as the rural can be seen as both a space and a place. The space as a location is first given full meaning when the social interactions and transactions occurring there that are turning it into a place of importance for and by the people who inhabit it are considered (Hudson, 2001). To provide insight in rural entrepreneurship it is thus useful to first explain the concept of rurality in placial and spacial terms and the difference between the two. But before that, some attention must be given to the concept of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship as an academic research field of its own is relatively new and first emerged in the 1980s (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991; Bygrave, 2007). Before this time, entrepreneurship was usually researched within the context of other disciplines such as organisational theory, finance or management (ibid).

Stevenson (1983) argued that historically, attempts to define entrepreneurship had been dominated by two schools of entrepreneurial thought, either as an economic function (functional entrepreneurship) or a personality attribute, but that these attempts had failed to come up with a universal definition. Stevenson (1983) proposed that entrepreneurship should be seen as a managerial approach, rather than a personality trait or economic function. In 1991 Bygrave and Hofer (1991:20) wrote, “There is little likelihood of an entrepreneurial model ever being developed that will meet our ideal specifications”. Klein (2008:175) suggest that today, although there seem to be a general understanding in the literature that entrepreneurship is important, there is no clear universal agreement as to how “the entrepreneurial role should be modelled and incorporated into economics and strategy”, highlighting the fact that all these years later, scholars are still struggling to come to terms with the theoretical concept of entrepreneurship. It is clear that entrepreneurship is not that simple to explain after all.

Johnstone and Lionais (2004) distinguish between what they refer to as community business entrepreneurship and traditional entrepreneurship and argue that the former may be utilised to replenish economic value in depleted areas. Community business entrepreneurship, they argue, is similar yet different to that of conventional entrepreneurship, it make use of the community feeling or spirit that often can be found in depleted areas to gain access to social capital which can be transformed to economic capital (ibid).

Community business entrepreneurship values wealth with regards to the gain of the community as opposed to wealth for the stakeholders of a company or a person only, which is the perspective of conventional entrepreneurship (Johnstone & Lionais, 2004). In other words, community entrepreneurs wish to generate gain for the greater good of the local community and the economic goal of the conventional entrepreneur is to generate personal or stakeholder gain (ibid). Community business entrepreneurship can be confused with social entrepreneurship, which also concerns the creation of societal gain (Johnstone & Lionais, 2004). According to Austin et al. (2006:2), social entrepreneurship has been defined in broader and narrower terms by different authors, and offers what they call a broader explanation of the term; social entrepreneurship is “innovative, social value creating activity that can occur within or across the non-profit, business or government sectors”. Johnston & Lionaise (2004) argue that social entrepreneurship is different from community business entrepreneurship in that the latter concerns developing enterprises that are lodged in the market and concentrates on business ventures as opposed to the former which are centred on social enterprises and charities. It seems challenging to clearly distinguish between the ideas of community business

entrepreneurship from those of social entrepreneurship, nevertheless, Johnstone & Lionaise (2004) argues that community business entrepreneurship is different as it utilises the methods of conventional entrepreneurship, but share the goals of social entrepreneurship, which place it somewhere in between conventional and social entrepreneurship.

Where does this place Bondens Egen Marknad? The local organisation is run as a non-profit organisation, and two major aims are to provide a marketplace for the small scale rural food entrepreneurs in the local area (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014), to facilitate direct consumer-producer contact to spread knowledge about food production and to promote buying local food from shorter supply chains, in keeping with the aims of the national organisation (www, Bondens Egen Marknad, 1, 2014). The former aim fits more with that of conventional entrepreneurship and the latter with social entrepreneurship, it thus seems reasonable to argue that the organisation fits in the category of community business entrepreneurship. How about the entrepreneurs of Bondens Egen Marknad then? The entrepreneurs are selling their produce for profit, but they are also the ones sharing their knowledge and promoting local produce on market days in accordance with the societal aims of the organisation. This suggests that by choosing to engage in the marketing network Bondens Egen Marknad, the entrepreneurs are becoming community business entrepreneurs, regardless if their motives for joining the network are purely profit-related.

By now, we have established that rural entrepreneurship is a complex subject with both social and economic dimensions and Müller et al., (2013) propose that it is vital to understand the meaning of space and place to be able to grasp the phenomenon of rural entrepreneurship. A brief overview of the socio-economic concepts of space and place will thus be provided next to help explain the phenomenon further.

3.1.2 Rural areas as spaces and a places

The Swedish Ministry of Agriculture (2008) defines a rural area as being the area “outside an urban area with a population of at least 3,000 inhabitants” (translated from Swedish) and according to this definition 24 % of the Swedish population live in a rural area. The figure of 3,000 inhabitants was chosen as it was considered to be the critical population mass of a community in order to have the capability of self-sustained development (ibid).

The Swedish Ministry of Agriculture (2008) further separates rural areas from sparsely populated areas (more than 45 minutes by car from the nearest area with more than 3,000 inhabitants) in which only 2% of the population lives.

In short this may be summarised the following way:

A rural area is any area outside a densely populated area with a population of more than 3,000 souls. Rural areas can be further divided into urban-rural (5-45 minutes by car to the nearest densely populated area) and remote-rural (more than 45 minutes by car to the nearest densely populated area).

This definition is summarised in the figure below.

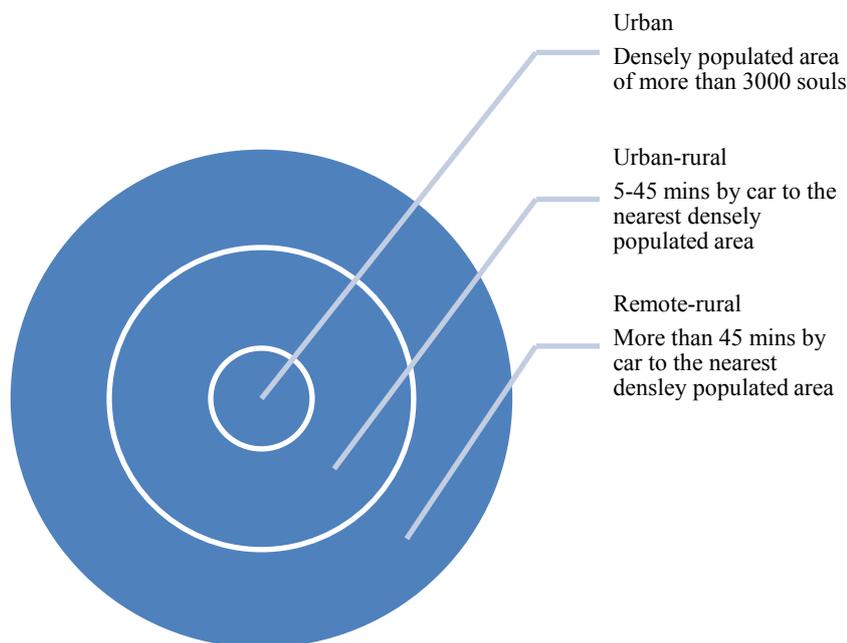


Figure 4. Spacial definition of a rural area.

Source: The Swedish Ministry of Agriculture (2008:9), own illustration.

The definition above may be practical when defining what is rural in terms of distance from more or less urban areas, it is however too simplistic as it only accounts for the “spacial” or capitalistic (economic) meaning of rural areas (Hudson, 2001). According to Hudson (2001), space is the capitalistic value assigned to a location for its presumed potential for creating economic return and can be seen in relation to place, which is the social meaning of a location or as put by Anderson (2000); the “peripheral”, or rural, is a much wider concept than mere space, which is given meaning by its social utility (Anderson, 2000).

Müller et al., (2013) offers a very useful theory about what they call ideal entrepreneurial types for linking the notions of space and place to rural entrepreneurship by distinguishing between “entrepreneurship in the rural”

and “rural entrepreneurship”. By *entrepreneurship in the rural* Müller et al., (2013) is referring to entrepreneurial activity that is taking place in a rural location, for many different reasons e.g. government incentives or cheaper land than in more densely populated areas, but with the main purpose of creating economic profit. *Rural entrepreneurship*, they claim, means engaging with “a location as place, thus a location of meaningfulness and social life” (Müller et al., 2013:97). Rural entrepreneurship combines the intangible resources that are lodged in the social and cultural genuinity of a particular place with its material resources to create new combinations of added value (ibid). Since no place is identical to another, all being made up of a unique set of social, cultural and material resources, this may create unique advantages. Müller et al., (2013) draws on an example from Goodman (2003) to illustrate: the recent years’ increasing demand for locally produced food of higher quality with traceable links to its origins can be seen as an example of rural entrepreneurs bringing together these spacial rural resources to generate “good” in terms of profit for the entrepreneurs but also for the local society, for example in terms of pride in what is local to them.

From the examples given above, it is clear that an all encompassing and firm, theoretical definition of rural entrepreneurship is difficult to pin down (e.g. Johnstone & Lionais, 2004; Müller et al., 2013). It is not an objective of this thesis to resolve definition issues, however. The objective here is, to explore rural entrepreneurship, not to define it. It is thus useful to put forward an explanation of what meaning is given to the term “rural entrepreneurship” in this thesis. Anderson (2000:92) describes what he calls peripheral entrepreneurship as a process; “the creation and extraction of value from an environment”. This description sums up a trait which perhaps is distinct for successful rural entrepreneurs; the ability to recognise potential value in the rural environment, add this value to an existing product or create a new product from it, and to communicate this added value to the (right) consumers who perceive this added value as important and thus are willing to pay for it (ibid). This may be exemplified by a food entrepreneur selling his fresh tomatoes at Bondens Egen Marknad; the entrepreneur creates and extracts, the value of locality to add a higher value to his fresh tomatoes; they are fresh but also grown locally, which is important to the consumers choosing to buy tomatoes at Bondens Egen Marknad instead of at a conventional supermarket, something they are willing to go out of their way to get and, perhaps more importantly, pay for.

3.1.3 Local embeddedness and the social capital of networks

Local embeddedness can be described as “the nature, depth and extent of an individual’s ties into the environment” (Jack & Anderson, 2002:483) and for

rural entrepreneurs this concerns becoming part of the local “structure” or context (environment) in which he or she operates.. As mentioned earlier, the meaning of the term that has been adopted in this thesis is that rural entrepreneurship can be seen as the extraction of value from the local environment of which an entrepreneur is situated. Local embeddedness is important for the rural entrepreneurial process as it may affect how enterprises are initiated and managed; to be able to identify an opportunity an entrepreneur must understand the local context (ibid). Local embeddedness can thus be seen as a necessity for being able to realise potential opportunities in the local environment as it may provide important knowledge about the local structure.

Becoming locally embedded can be achieved in different ways, however Jack and Anderson (2002) suggest that networks may facilitate local embeddedness and thus provide “intimate knowledge, contacts, sources of advice, resources, information and support” to the entrepreneur (Jack & Anderson, 2002:481). As will be discussed later in chapter 4, several of the entrepreneurs participating in this study reported that Bondens Egen Marknad provided them with resources such as knowledge and support.

Figure 2 illustrates that by being embedded in the local structure; a rural entrepreneur extracts value when drawing on resources from the local context for the development and maintaining of his enterprise, but also creates and adds value to the local context, or environment, by doing this.

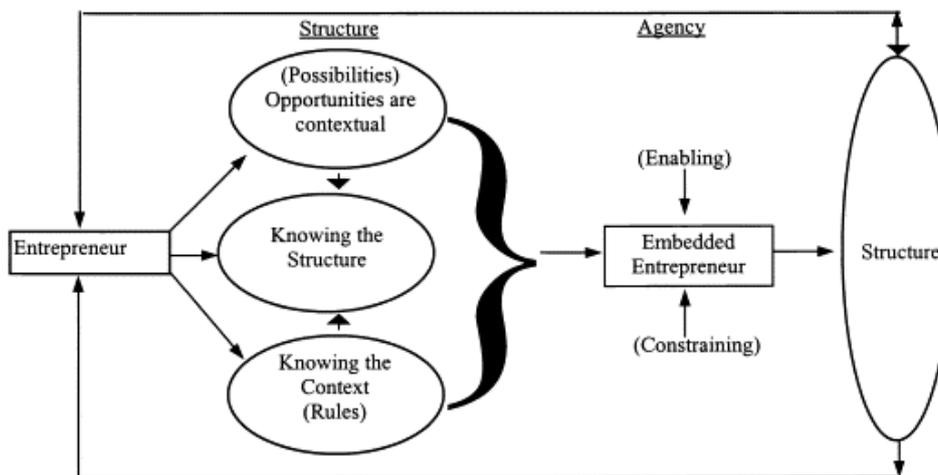


Figure 5. “The structuration of entrepreneurship: structure and agency in a dynamic relationship”. Source: Jack & Anderson (2002:485).

Social capital can be defined as “the resources embedded in entrepreneurs’ personal networks” and is important for small firm performance (Stam et al., 2014:152). In their meta-analytical study of the connection between the

personal networks of entrepreneurs and the performance of small companies (Stam et al., 2014) found a significant link and held that establishing this link is important as it suggests that the resource-consuming task of maintaining personal networks is worth the efforts for the small scale entrepreneur.

Gilmore et al. (2001) found that SME entrepreneurs communicate more with their competitors than what is suggested in the literature, that they often seek help and advice from their competitors and see it as important to maintain a good relationship with competitors.

Anderson and Jack (2002) argues that social capital should be seen as an interpersonal relational process, which enables transferring resources and information between the individuals of a network and draws an illustrative analogy between the process of building social capital and building bridges. Networks can be seen as bridges of different structural dimensions, all needing different degrees of maintenance, all with different capabilities of transferring resources (ibid). Anderson and Jack (2002) concluded that investing in building social capital by nurturing networks, or in other words; carrying out regular bridge maintenance, may be beneficial in the long term since social capital, if nourished, may last longer than other investments.

3.1.4 Drivers of entrepreneurship and attributes of rural entrepreneurs

Amit and Muller (1995) discussed push and pull factors as drivers for people to choose to become entrepreneurs and suggested that “pull-entrepreneurs” are more successful than “push-entrepreneurs”. Push factors are motivational reasons other than one’s entrepreneurial capabilities and more related to external factors such as unemployment or job dissatisfaction, whereas pull factors are associated with factors such as the appeal of a business idea or the personal significance and gain of running one’s own business (ibid).

In their study of what triggers the development of new entrepreneurial initiatives among farm-based entrepreneurs, Alsos et al., (2003) identifies three forms of farm-based entrepreneurs; the pluriactive, the resource exploiting and the portfolio entrepreneur. Pluriactive entrepreneurial behaviour is according to Eikeland and Lie (1999) concerned with income generation from more than one economic source. The new entrepreneurial activities started by pluriactive farm-entrepreneurs often springs from motivations such as a desire to continuing with farming as a life-style or out of a feeling of duty to do so (Van der Ploeg et al., 2000; Alsos et al., 2003).

The motives for the resource exploiting- and portfolio- entrepreneur, respectively, are to take advantage of one's own resources and to utilise new entrepreneurial ideas (ibid). The pluriactive farm-entrepreneurs seek new entrepreneurial opportunities in attempts to be able to sustain the farming activities and way of life and at the same time increase the household income, thus, activities are often set within the current activities on the farm and rarely operated as separate entities (Alsos et al., 2003). The entrepreneurial activities of the pluriactive entrepreneurs are based on the entrepreneur's work effort and capability of using the spare resources on the farm and/or an inclination to work for less, factors that can give these types of entrepreneurial activities a competitive edge (ibid).

Van der Ploeg et al., (2000) argue that pluriactivity in fact is reshaping the relationship between urban and rural areas in a new way and that it allows the transfer of resources from urban to rural economy. Additional income generation from other sources than just farming allow farmers to carry on with their farming activities which may not have been economically viable otherwise and the idea of combining entrepreneurial activities at the farm with a job in a nearby city is making rural areas attractive to many people who wish for that kind of lifestyle (ibid). With pluriactivity keeping people in rural areas and attracting newcomers, a synergy effect is created; public service in rural areas is sustained and local economy is nourished (Van der Ploeg et al., 2000).

It is clear that there are diverse reasons and motives behind people's decisions to become entrepreneurs, but what makes entrepreneurs engage in networks? And marketing networks such as Bondens Egen Marknad in particular? Are the reasons behind this decision also diverse or is the outlook of a sales and marketing channel the only reason? According Marsden and Smith (2005:442) local networks may bring together "local human capital-knowledge, skills, creativity, motivation and commitment to community" and create valuable relationships between entrepreneurs and consumers but also suppliers, suggesting that networks can play a multiple role for the parties involved. The following chapter will consider aspects of alternative food systems and marketing networks.

3.2 Alternative food systems and marketing networks

It is commonly known that the industrialisation and globalisation of the agro food industries has resulted in the supply chains being dominated by giants (e.g. Kirwan, 2004; O’Rielly & Haines, 2004). However, this economic behaviour has increasingly been challenged in the past three decades, a development which has been called the ‘post-productivist transition’ and is recognised by a production trend towards foods of higher quality, down-scaling in agricultural output, efforts to remove agricultural subsidiaries and to bring about an agricultural system of higher sustainability (O’Rielly & Haines, 2004). It has also been called the post-modern era (ibid).

This post-productivist transition has brought on an increasing number of alternative food systems which can be defined as “newly emerging networks of producers, consumers and other actors that embody alternatives to the more standardised food supply” (Murdoch et al., 2000; Renting et al., 2003:394).

3.2.1 The background of the development of alternative food systems

As mentioned above there is a consumer perspective to the reasons behind the recent development of alternative food systems, or networks, which is related to changing consumer perceptions of food quality and farming, linked to lack of trust in conventional food systems in the aftermath of food scandals and outbreaks of food related disease in recent years and increased concerns for the environment, health and labourer and animal welfare (Renting et al., 2003). This has resulted in a demand for food products with quality traits such as for example being organically grown or locally produced.

There is also a producer perspective to the reasons behind the recent decade’s alternative food systems emergence, which is related to the elevated pressure or “squeeze ” on farm income that started to occur towards the end of the 20th century (ibid). The “agricultural squeeze” was according to Van der Ploeg et al., (2000) the result of a series of macro-economic and political events taking place from the 1950s up until the 1990s. Summarised in short; gross value of production (GVP) was increasing until it stabilised in the 1990s, due to several different factors such as falling wheat prices, the introduction of the milk quota system, lack of land to serve the ever increasing demand for output and new countries joining the EU, being some examples (ibid). At the same time, production costs started to rise due to new demands for technological modernisation and “growing use of external inputs” and in the 1990s costs increased further due to heightened concerns,

hence heightened costs, for the environment, food safety and animal welfare (Van der Ploeg et al., 2000:395). The agricultural “squeeze” is illustrated in figure 6 below.

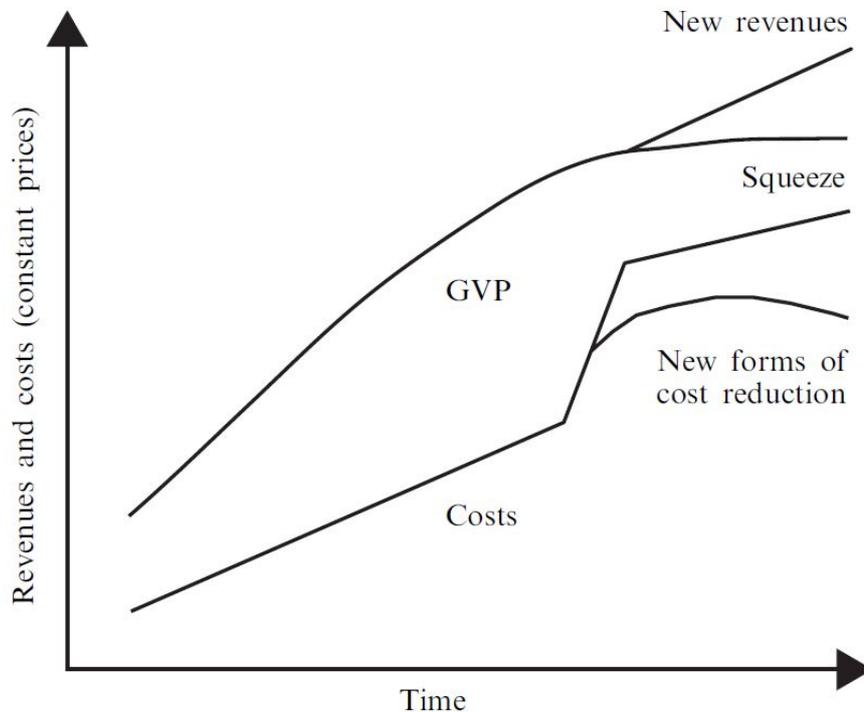


Figure 6. “Post-war agricultural development and the contours of rural development”. Source: Van der Ploeg et al. (2000:395).

According to Renting et al., (2003) increasing costs were, and still are, also imposed on the farmers by food industry and retailer demands for product specifications, and market access is increasingly subject to conditions such as “good-practise” labels and certificates, design specifications and flexible delivery. For the reasons mentioned above, agro food producers have increasingly been struggling to cope with conventional farming, pluriactivity thus becomes an attractive alternative and famers are willing to try alternative marketing channels (ibid).

3.2.2 Alternative marketing networks

Farmer’s markets are one example of the alternative or local food systems that has emerged in the past decades in response to the de-embeddedness of the food systems that has been described in the previous section (Kirwan, 2004: Feagan & Morris, 2009). Farmer’s markets are challenging the conventional food systems by “re-spatialising” and “re-socialising” food, in other words; reconnecting food to its “social, cultural and environmental context” by insisting on all produce being local and facilitating direct producer-consumer contact (Kirwan, 2004:396).

Bondens Egen Marknad is a marketing network that facilitates a sales and marketing channel for its member entrepreneurs (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014). According to Piercy and Cravens (1995:) marketing networks involve relationships that can be shaped between businesses, organisations or entrepreneurs and be horizontal or vertical; Bondens Egen Marknad can be said to be horizontal as it is a network between competitors (ibid). Hence, for the purpose of this study, the term alternative marketing network is adopted as Bondens Egen Marknad is both an alternative food system (Kirwan, 2004), and a marketing network (Piercy and Cravens, 1995).

According to Gilmore et al. (2001) small to medium size enterprises (SMEs) do not fit in with the marketing characteristics of conventional marketing theory, often describing the characteristics of larger companies, instead their marketing is shaped by the characteristics of the entrepreneur and constraints such as time, finance and lack of marketing knowledge. For entrepreneurs of SMEs, networking is an intrinsic trait of marketing that occurs through all activities undertaken by the entrepreneur, social as well as business and trade related, marketing is thus an ongoing task between the entrepreneur and his/hers competitors and potential customers (ibid).

3.3 Theoretical summary

As mentioned in 1.3, the objective of this study is to contribute to enhance our knowledge about the phenomenon of rural entrepreneurship by investigating it in its own context rather than in the context of conventional entrepreneurship. Figure 7 attempts to illustrate a summary of the relevant theoretical tools that has been applied in this thesis and the theoretical framework it was considered necessary to provide to achieve the study's objective. Moreover, it was assumed critical to provide this theoretical framework to guide the reader with the necessary context about rural entrepreneurship and alternative marketing networks to be able to understand the aim of the study; attempting to identify how engaging in an alternative marketing network may support small-scale, rural food entrepreneurs, and ultimately, to understand the study's outcome.

Farmer's markets are an example of alternative food systems, or the term that has been adopted in this thesis; alternative marketing networks. These are consumer and producer-led responses to the increasing market dominance by conventional food systems and which facilitates direct contact between small, scale rural food entrepreneurs and the consumers, thus re-spatialising and re-socialising food (Kirwan, 2004). Rural entrepreneurs operate in rural space, but draw on the notions of rural place to create added value to their products (Anderson, 2000) which are offered

to the consumers at farmer's markets. Alternative marketing networks utilise social capital (Anderson & Jack, 2002) and create value for the entrepreneurs that are engaged in a network, by being engaged in such a network, rural food entrepreneurs can become embedded in the local context and thereby gain access to numerous resources, which may be important for the realisation of new entrepreneurial opportunities (Jack & Anderson, 2002). Based on the theoretical framework it is in this thesis assumed that by facilitating a marketing network for the rural entrepreneurs, Bonden's Egen Marknad is embedding the food entrepreneurs in the local environment, thus providing access to various resources and that this in turn may help support small, scale rural food entrepreneurship in several ways. This will be discussed further and in more detail in chapter 4.

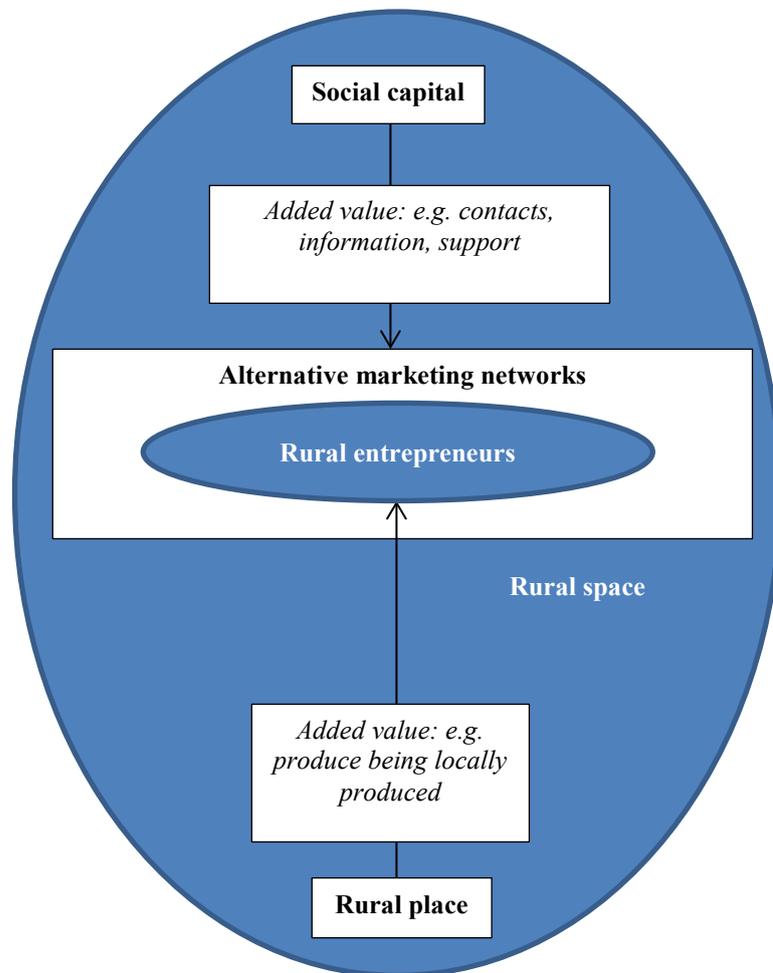


Figure 7. Theoretical concepts illustration.
Own illustration.

4 Empirical findings and discussion

This chapter will provide a statistical overview of small-scale entrepreneurship in Sweden and a background description of the case study. Furthermore, it will present the main empirical findings from the IPA. The research questions presented in 1.3 will be discussed and the themes identified by the IPA will be presented.

4.1 A statistical overview of small-scale entrepreneurship in Sweden

When exploring rural entrepreneurship it is interesting and relevant to consider some statistics on the national “state of affairs” for small-scale entrepreneurs in Sweden. According to a survey carried out by Nutek (2008:21) (what is today known as Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth), 72 % of the entrepreneurs asked reported that they had started their own enterprise themselves or together with others and 85 % said they own more than 76% of their enterprises together with close members of their family.

46 % of the entrepreneurs asked reported that they were able to earn a “good living” from their enterprise, 38 % said they were able to earn a living but only just barely and 16 % reported that they could not sustain a living from their enterprise alone (ibid).

When asked if they were engaging in any networks or clusters, 26 % of the entrepreneurs asked said yes and out of these, 48 % reported that the networks or clusters they were engaged in were local or regional (Nutek, 2008:21). 34 % of the entrepreneurs reported that they did not engage in any networks or clusters and 39 % chose not to reply (ibid).

When asked about how laws and government regulations affected their enterprises in terms of development and growth, 32 % of the entrepreneurs reported that growth and development was not a hinder at all, 39 % said laws and government regulations slightly hindered growth and development and 30 % reported that laws and government regulations largely hindered growth and development (Nutek, 2008:21).

It is important to keep in mind that these figures show overall trends and do not separate entrepreneurs of urban and rural enterprises. The figures do imply, however, that overall a substantial portion of small-scale entrepreneurs in Sweden find it challenging to earn a living from their enterprises alone. As will be seen later in this chapter, these implications

were partly confirmed by the entrepreneurs who participated in this study. The figures also imply that growth and development in small entrepreneurial enterprises to a certain degree can be said to be hindered by laws and government regulations. As will be seen later in this chapter, this could not be confirmed in this study.

In addition to varying conditions for entrepreneurship between rural and densely populated areas, there is a clear north-south issue in Sweden where the conditions for the entrepreneurs in the northern parts in several respects can be said to be less favourable (ibid). These are conditions such as poorer access to capital for entrepreneurial start-ups and development, long distance to market resulting in long and costly transportations of goods and people and difficulties in hiring skilled staff (The National Rural Development Agency, 2006). These issues are less prominent in the south, which may partly be explained by a tighter integration between rural and densely populated areas in these parts of the country (ibid).

A typical, overall trait of a Swedish rural enterprise is that it is a micro company of 1-9 employees and often a solo enterprise (The National Rural Development Agency, 2006). The attitude towards growth is significantly positive among rural entrepreneurs, both in the north and south, but if growth is associated with a need for employment of additional staff, the attitudes are less positive, particularly for the micro companies, due to the increased responsibilities and costs associated with employment (ibid). These implications were also suggested by some of the entrepreneurs participating in this study, as one of the participants in the study put it "...We have been doubtful for quite some time about employing someone, partly because there has not been enough to do, but those rules and regulations [about employment], there I feel a bit uneasy..." (Interviewee 1, 2014.04.22). It was not possible to establish a valid result on this point in the analysis of the interview data, however, which will be further explained in 4.3.

4.2 Case study background Bondens Egen Marknad

Bondens Egen Marknad was founded based on the idea of the original Farmer's Market that started in Los Angeles in 1934 and of National Farmer's market Association in the UK and the first market was held in Stockholm in 2000 (www, Bondens Egen Marknad, 1, 2014). Today, there are 23 local markets spread across the country of which members are all part of Riksföreningen Bondens Egen Marknad, a non-profit umbrella organisation (www, Bondens Egen Marknad, 2, 2014). Every local market

is run by a local organisation, either a non-profit or economic entity, in the form of a network, project group or association, which are organised according to the rules and regulations, set out by Riksföreningen Bondens Egen Marknad (ibid).

Two major rules are that the member entrepreneurs must have produced all produce that is sold at the market, and that the produce may not have travelled longer than 250 km from the production site to the market (www, Bondens Egen Marknad, 1, 2014). These are the same objectives as for the National Farmer's Market Association in the UK, which is to create change in the food system, achieved by "re-spatialising food through insisting that is locally produced and re-socialising food by ensuring there is direct contact between the producers and consumers concerned" (Kirwan, 2004: 396). According to the statutes of Riksföreningen Bondens Egen Marknad in Sweden, these objectives are aimed to be achieved by being committed to the statutes displayed in figure 8:

- 
- Assist in the creation of market places for small scale, local production where the operation has a connection to rural areas
 - Develop an entrepreneurial, business and marketing mind set among the members to strengthen their position in a competitive way in the long term
 - Assist in the facilitation of long term sales and marketing channels for small scale producers within farming, forestry, fishing and gardening.
 - Spread knowledge about the interaction between food and environment in production of foodstuffs and to build bridges between the cities and the countryside and thus assist in the creation of a positive attitude towards locally produced raw materials, food and gardening products.
 - Facilitate contact between producers and consumers
 - Own and develop the content of the organisation's brand and associated concepts
 - Engage with the agreed and described activities

Figure 8. Statutes of Riksföreningen Bondens Egen Marknad.

Source: www, Bondens Egen Marknad (2014:3), own illustration.

Bondens Egen Marknad in Halmstad was started in 2003, initiated by a member of the market in Gothenburg and initial financial support was sought from LRF- the Federation of Swedish Farmers and Jordbruksverket- and Swedish Board of Agriculture (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014). The local organisation was run as a project for the first three years, but is now operating as an association (ibid). Bondens Egen Marknad Halmstad today

has about 20-25 member entrepreneurs and 8 market days per year on a central location in the square in front of the town's castle. The main function of the local organisation is to facilitate marketing, direct via the market days and via the organisation's website, and to give the producers an opportunity to interact with the consumers which may otherwise be difficult for a small-scale producer (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014).

4.3 Presentation of the main empirical findings

The IPA of this study, of which approach was explained in chapter 2, was as mentioned earlier guided by the research questions:

What attributes do small scale, rural food entrepreneurs have in common and what motivates their decision to become entrepreneurs?

In what ways can engaging in an alternative marketing network support small scale, rural food entrepreneurs?

The research questions are discussed in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.

The IPA resulted in the following main themes, or findings, which are discussed in 4.3.3- 4.3.5.

Both "Push and pull factors" are motivational drivers of entrepreneurship. Access to a low cost sales and marketing channel was the major reason for engaging in the network.

Comradeship, knowledge exchange and direct consumer contact are major benefits from being engaged in the network.

The findings presented represent three prominent themes that emerged from the first grouping of the data that were derived from one semi-structured interview with each of the interviewees; the questions that guided the interviews can be seen in appendix 1. Although questions regarding the effects of rules and regulations were included in the interviews, the IPA did not identify any strong common theme standing out on this topic. Also, when reviewing the interviews it was held that the interview questions on this topic could be considered leading. It was thus determined to leave the topic of rules and regulations out of the study.

The common themes that were identified do not exhaustively cover all aspects of the interviewees' lived experiences of being small scale rural food entrepreneurs and being engaged in an alternative marketing network, as the scope of this thesis project would not allow such a detailed analysis

and this would have required longer interviews with a larger number of participants. However, the themes do offer some insights in the phenomenon, in keeping with the objective of the study.

4.3.1 What attributes do small scale, rural food entrepreneurs have in common and what motivates their decision to become entrepreneurs?

From the empirical findings in the data from the interviews, which can be seen in 4.3.3 below, three major motivational drivers behind entrepreneurial start-ups could be identified among the participants in this study. One push-driver stood out; unemployment, as well as two pull drivers; the prospect of fulfilling personal goals and raw material surplus. Also, the entrepreneurs can be said to be pluriactive or resource exploiting business community entrepreneurs.

Another interesting observation, although not a driver, that was noted when the interviewees were talking about what made them start their enterprises was that several of the participants contemplated over the fact that they had not been prepared for the amount of work it would involve to run a business;

“...I don’t think I understood what I went into...I think I was a bit naive at first and I thought that it would be quite cozy, the idea was that only I should work with this and part time...But as it turned out we are both working full time with it...” (Interviewee 2, 2014.05.22).

And; “...if I knew, what I know now, I don’t think I would have gone into this. I think a lot of people don’t know what they are doing when they start...” (Interviewee 5, 2014.04.29).

4.3.2 How is engaging in an alternative marketing network supporting small scale, rural food entrepreneurs?

According to the theoretical summary in chapter 3.3, “By facilitating a marketing network for the entrepreneurs, Bonden’s Egen Marknad is embedding the food entrepreneurs in the local environment by providing access to various resources which may help sustain small, scale rural food entrepreneurship in several ways”. As identified in the discussion of the empirical findings (themes) below, Bondens Egen Marknad is first and foremost providing the entrepreneurs with a sales and marketing channel (4.3.4), but also with other important resources by embedding the entrepreneurs in the local structure (4.3.5). This suggests that the alternative marketing network Bondens Egen Marknad is supporting entrepreneurial

activity among small scale, rural food entrepreneurs directly; by providing an important and affordable sales and marketing channel and indirectly; by embedding the member entrepreneurs in the local structure, thus providing access to resources such as comradeship and knowledge, resources that were reported as important by the participants in this study.

The statistics from Nutek (2008) suggest that only 26 % of small-scale entrepreneurs in Sweden are engaged in a network or cluster. The findings of this thesis indicate that it may be fruitful to do so for small scale, rural entrepreneurs. Although the statistics from Nutek does not separate rural from urban entrepreneurs, they suggest that there is a potential for more small, scale entrepreneurs to gain access to important resources by choosing to engage in a network.

Although this study does provide some insight in rural entrepreneurship and the world of rural entrepreneurs, in keeping with the aim and objectives, it must be stressed that the findings here are based on the analysis of data gathered from the members of one alternative marketing network of rural entrepreneurs in one rural area. These findings cannot be generalised and it is likely that similar studies in other rural areas will produce different results.

A core feature of Bondens Egen Marknad is locally produced goods and as mentioned in the case description, each of the markets enforces strict rules regulating how far produce is allowed to travel from the production site to the marketplace and the allowed distance may vary between markets (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014). A small scale cheese maker in Southern Sweden is most likely living within relatively close proximity of the nearest market town, but for a flatbread entrepreneur in the interior woodlands of Northern Sweden for example, a much more sparsely populated area, chances are that he will have to travel much longer to reach the closest market. It would thus not make sense to impose the same regulations for all markets (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014). Although it is easy to see the practical sense in this, Kirwan (2004) warns against “bending the rules”, particularly the rules that are regulating the foundation and core values of an alternative food system, such as the allowed distance to market from the production sites, as this may lead to the loss of their associated advantages. Produce is not so local anymore if it has to travel 500 km’s to reach its nearest market and if Bondens Egen Marknad starts cannibalising on its core value of offering local produce it may undermine the network’s credibility and customers may choose other alternatives. According to Percy and Cravens (1995) marketing networks must be consumer driven to be successful and remain flexible towards the desires of the consumers and although Bondens

Egen Marknad may fill other intangible functions, the bottom line purpose is still the marketing of products for profit.

4.3.3 Both “Push and pull factors” are main motivational drivers of rural entrepreneurship

As mentioned in chapter 2, Amit and Muller (1995) introduced the theory that entrepreneurs are driven and motivated by “push or pull factors”. According to this theory push factors can be unemployment or job dissatisfaction and the prospect of being one’s own boss or the attraction of a business idea, can be pull factors (ibid). The interviewees reported different motivational drivers behind their decision to become entrepreneurs, and a combination of push and pull factors were mentioned by several of the interviewees.

Some of the entrepreneurs were “pushed” into entrepreneurship as a result of being unable to find work or being unhappy with their job arrangements. As referred to by one of the interviewees “...we started in 2006 with (...) and then, we moved here from (...) and I couldn’t get a job, so then we decided to expand the (...) and try to get some sort of income from it...” (Interviewee 1, 2014.04.22).

Another interviewee described it the following way “...so (...) had taken a leave of absence [from work] and when (...) returned (...) was told (...) position didn’t exist anymore, but they offered (...) another position, which (...) didn’t want to take. So we said, let’s continue (...) and so we did. And then we simply had to crank things up a bit since we were two people who were going to work with this...” (Interviewee 2, 2014.05.22).

Several of the entrepreneurs reported that “pull factors” also were influential when they decided to become entrepreneurs. One of the interviewees explained that “... I was of course interested in my job, too, and it was important to us, the jobs we had. But you were never able to lead a process completely and be fully in charge, right, you never had full responsibility. And that is something you have here...” (Interviewee 3, 2014.04.23). The same entrepreneur explained that another motivational factor was a keen interest in growing (ibid).

Personal interest seemed to be a pull factor for other entrepreneurs as well; “...I’m more into product development and I like to work with food...” one entrepreneur said (Interviewee 2, 2014.05.22)

Most of the entrepreneurs participating in the study can be said to be pluriactive, or a combination of pluriactive and resource exploiting (Eikeland & Lie, 1999). This means that their entrepreneurial activities are combined with other work or farm-based activities, that the entrepreneurial activities were started to earn extra income to support the household, and that some had a surplus of raw material that they wanted to utilise (ibid). As described by three of the interviewees:

“...I do have a job as well, as a nursing assistant at a retirement home...” (Interviewee 1, 2014.04.22).

“...We also have some forestry production...” (Interviewee 3, 2014.04.23).

“...I have a game abattoir and I slaughter moose, elk and wild boar mostly and then I have my farm shop...I also have a forestry business and then we have a house that we rent out...” (Interviewee 5, 2014.04.29).

Also, on this subject several of the participants reported that they are unable to make a living of their enterprise alone and that they depend on additional sources of income.

“...I’m not able to live from this only, right, I do have a job as well, as a nursing assistant at a retirement home...” (Interviewee 1, 2014.04.22).

“...economy wise it is not sustainable. I have to work elsewhere from time to time to earn money...” (Interviewee 3, 2014.04.23).

“...I can’t live on it, though, I have other smaller jobs as well...” (Interviewee 4, 2014.04.22).

Raw material surplus was reported by two interviewees to be major reasons for why they decided to start their enterprises; “...when we started back around the end of the 80’s and beginning of the 90’s we had a lot of deer around, we would shoot 30-40 just here on our little piece of land, and we thought, what shall we do with all this meat, we can’t eat it all, so we decided to start selling, so I contacted a buyer and that is how it started...” (Interviewee 5, 2014.04.29). Similarly it was reported by another participant; “...You couldn’t eat all the honey yourself, so I thought, if I can get some sort of income from it that would be really great...” (Interviewee 4, 2014.04.22).

4.3.4 The prospect of a low cost sales and marketing channel main reason for choosing to engage in the network

Several of the participants said that the main reason for choosing to engage in Bondens Egen Marknad was to gain access to a low cost sales and marketing channel, which was not surprising as this function is one of the main purposes of the network.

“...Since our farm shop is so small, we are quite dependent on markets as well at certain times of the year. We prefer the hand craft markets and Bondens Egen Marknad, and not knick-knack markets, we have tried it and it didn't work, there are all sorts of different fairs but it is not our niche...we joined the network in 2008 and back then I saw it as a way to be able to sell our produce...”(Interviewee 2, 2014.05.22).

“...it was an opportunity to sell the products, I had no idea where I was going to sell them otherwise...It became some sort of a paid marketing survey, target market analysis and all that, you got an idea about that from the people who were shopping...” (Interviewee 3, 2014.04.23).

“...I knew about Bondens from Stockholm and I knew it was that market I wanted to participate in and also I saw this opportunity in that they have a website. We thought Bondens as a marketing idea was really good...then there is the fact that this market is relatively cheap to participate in, many other markets charge a lot of money and that simply doesn't work economically, I can't afford the losses...”(Interviewee 1, 2014.04.22).

As mentioned earlier the marketing of SMEs is shaped by the traits of the entrepreneur and by constraints such as time, finance and lack of marketing knowledge and marketing is an ongoing task occurring via all the social, business and trade related activities of the entrepreneurs (Gilmore et al., 2001). As can be seen in the statutes of Riksföreningen Bondens Egen Marknad (figure 8) and as reported by the entrepreneurs themselves (above), the network provides its members with an affordable marketing channel, consumer contact and marketing knowledge and is thus a suitable marketing alternative.

4.3.5 Comradeship and knowledge exchange are major benefits from being engaged in the network

As mentioned in chapter 3.1.2, being engaged in a network may embed entrepreneurs in the local environment and thereby provide access to numerous resources such as access to “knowledge, contacts, and sources of advice, resources, information and support” (Jack & Anderson, 2002:481). Several of the participants of this study reported similar benefits:

“...And then you get really good contact with the producers there [at Bondens Egen Marknad], really nice actually, it is a very nice group of people, you get a lot of tips about how to handle things...you learn so much from each other, you are able to discuss things...how to handle social media, how to market your products with limited funds and so on...” (Interviewee 3, 2014.04.23).

“...And another thing one notice when standing at that market, there is a really pleasant atmosphere, between the producers, you get an enormous sense of comradeship...there is something special about the Bonden’s people, the community feeling is really good and we miss each other when someone miss a market day...” (Interviewee 1, 2014.04.22).

The comradeship and knowledge exchange benefits were also mentioned by the treasurer in the initial interview (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014).

5 Conclusion and suggestions for future studies

The alternative marketing network Bondens Egen Marknad brings together the food entrepreneurs who want, or need, to sell their produce outside of the conventional food systems and the consumers who are interested in buying local produce directly from the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs generate economic income from selling their products on market days, moreover they generate and add value to their products from their local, placial, setting for which the consumers are willing to pay premium prices and go out of their way to buy.

The main purpose of Bondens Egen Marknad is to provide a market place for the food entrepreneurs (pers.com, Hamilton, 2014), an aspect which has been confirmed as important by the entrepreneurs participating in this study and to facilitate direct producer-consumer contact, aspects which may be considered a vital part of supporting small scale, rural food entrepreneurship. And perhaps is Bondens Egen Marknad's greatest contribution to supporting small scale, rural food entrepreneurship the network's ability to successfully streamline and maintain a sales and marketing channel for a highly diverse group of rural entrepreneurs at minimal cost. Some of the findings here also suggest, however, that the network fills other important functions for the food entrepreneurs, such as providing knowledge exchange and feelings of comradeship. These are functions which although they may not generate any direct income, may be factors that make it worthwhile for the entrepreneurs to carry on with their businesses in the long run and can thus be said to support small scale, rural food entrepreneurship in their own, indirect way.

As seen in this thesis it may be argued that Bondens Egen Marknad is embedding its member entrepreneurs in the local environment; but could one also argue that they are embedding the consumers by facilitating the option of buying and learning about local food directly from the producers? During the work with this thesis it became clear that the consumers at Bondens Egen Marknad are a crucial dimension in understanding the full picture. Goodman and DuPuis (2002) warns against separating consumer and producer perspectives when researching alternative food systems such as farmer's markets, as it is ultimately the successful interaction between the customers and the entrepreneurs that makes farmer's markets flourish. Clearly, it would be interesting to include the consumer dimension in a project with a broader scope, which illuminates a potential path for future study. During the interviews several of the participants study pointed out

that they felt that organisation and structure were important factors in keeping the network going. This suggests that another possible lane for further inquiry may be the importance of a formal organisational structure for maintaining alternative marketing networks.

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Personal communication

Hamilton, Anna-Karin.
Treasurer, Riksföreningen Bondens Egen Marknad.
Personal meeting, 2014.03.24

Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview questions that were used to guide the interviews with the members of the network.

Part 1 The enterprise

Tell me about your enterprise

What is the size of your enterprise?

When did you start your enterprise?

Part 2 Entrepreneurship

What made you decide to become an entrepreneur?

Tell me about being a food entrepreneur in a rural area

How are you as an entrepreneur affected by rules and regulations?

Part 3 The network

How long have you been a member of the network?

Tell me about why you decided to join the network

Tell me about what it is like to be a member of the network

What is it that makes the network work, in your opinion?

What could be done differently?

Appendix 2

Interview questions used to guide the initial interview with the treasurer of the organisation.

Tell me about how Bondens Egen Marknad started in Sweden

What is the organisation's purpose?

How is it organised?

Tell me about the local organisation in Halland?

Tell me about what it is like to be a small scale food entrepreneur in rural Sweden? (and Halland?)

Appendix 3

Initial e- mail sent to the participants to ask them to participate in the study.

Hej!

Jag läser masterprogrammet Food Innovation & Market vid Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet och skriver för närvarande mitt examensarbete om vilken roll marknadsföringsnätverk spelar för småföretagare inom produktion av livsmedel på landsbygden och jag hoppas kunna göra en fallstudie av Bondens egen marknad som ett sådant nätverk. För att kunna göra en fallstudie skulle jag behöva intervjua några av medlemmarna i nätverket.

Jag har varit i kontakt med (...) som tyckte jag borde kontakta er och jag undrar nu om ni skulle kunna tänka er att ställa upp på en intervju under vecka 16, alternativt vecka 17? Intervjun skulle handla om hur ni som företag påverkas av att vara medlem i Bondens Egen Marknad och skulle max ta 45 minuter.

Om ni så önskar, kommer ni självklart kunna ta del av och använda mina resultat i eget syfte när arbetet är klart.

Jag skulle bli mycket tacksam om ni kunde tänka er att hjälpa mig med detta!

Med vänliga hälsningar,

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Appendix 4

Example of interview transcript (first part of interview 1 out of 5)

The interviewee had been informed via e-mail about the nature of the project before agreeing to participate; an initial recap of the purpose of the study was given before proceeding with the interview. The interview was recorded using the interviewer's iPhone. The interviewee's consent to recording the interview was also recorded, but was not transcribed as it was not considered to be part of the actual interview.

Comments in brackets were added for clarity during the transcription process and names of persons/places mentioned by the interviewee were replaced by (...). The interview was translated directly from Swedish to English during the transcription process. This was deliberate as it was considered an unnecessary risk of loss of meaning to first transcribe the interview in Swedish and then translating this into English. Since the interview was not filmed, implicit meaning via facial expressions and body language was lost. Slang language and verbal hesitations such as "eeh", "mmm", "yes" was transcribed to limit further loss of implicit meaning in the transcription process.

2014.04.22- Length of the interview: 0:23:46

IE: Interviewee

I: Interviewer

1. I: Eeh, ok, yes, perhaps we could start by you telling me a little about your enterprise, what is it that you do?
2. IE: Mmm, we started in 2006 with beekeeping, two hives for our own fruit trees, and then, we moved here from Stockholm in 2005 and I couldn't get a job so then we decided to expand the beekeeping and then we were going to try to get some sort of income from it from more honey and such.
3. IE: Eeh, in 2007, I took a course at Eldrimner up in Ås outside of Östersund and I was super-inspired, so I refine the honey further nowadays, now it is the marmalades that are in focus, marmalades with fruit, a lot from our own but even from other local suppliers, organic and such.
4. I: Mm
5. IE: Eeh, and then it turned out so that, we started here with the local beekeeping association, and there we found out that we could sell via different channels and then we thought that Bondens Egen Marknad was the most suitable. It was big in Stockholm, right, and we were familiar with it from there, so we went browsing the local market here down by the quay a little bit, and we actually thought it was a bit dorky at first. Anyway, we made contact with (...) and asked if it was ok to join and it was of course, so it was there it stared for us, completely. That was the first market we participated in, Bondens.

6. IE: And then we heard that there were other types of markets, Christmas markets and such, right, and similar stuff, right, but the base in the whole thing has been Bondens Egen Marknad in Halmstad, and we are still trying to participate on as many market days as possible, can we participate in all, it is great. Now the daughter is also car-borne so she usually stands there [on the market] and I'm usually out there [points to the beekeeping yard outside the house].
7. IE: What is also fun with Bondens is that, after all these years, there are many who see that side and see who it is that participates [IE's mobile phone rings, IE answers].
8. IE: Eeh, right. Yes, thanks to Bondens and the website, and it is (...) who takes care of all this, right, and I have noticed that there one have made contacts in the beginning and then one makes more contacts by standing there at the market days. Mmm, yes, Bondens is really good, actually.
9. I: I see. But is it yourself who work in the company?
10. IE: Yes, it's me who is (...), right.
11. I: You don't have any employees?
12. IE: No, the daughter has been helping out quite a lot, she is really good at extracting honey, and she helps out in the beekeeping yard, lifting heavy carts and stuff. We even have pollen nowadays, and she has been designing the website for that, and stuff like that, but she is not formally employed as such, but she gets paid for the work she does.
13. I: Mmm, I see. Right, let's see, I have some questions about entrepreneurship, eeh, what made you decide to become an entrepreneur?
14. IE: Mmm, yes. First of all, I have worked as an employee for many years, then in '98 I resigned and started as a freelancer, journalist originally, and I have worked a lot with proofreading and stuff, and worked with that basically until 2005, when we decided to move.
15. I: Yes.
16. IE: The thing was that my father passed away in 2004, and we had formally assigned this house to me, but since my parents took care of the house it had been very easy for us, we just came down on vacation, but then it all of a sudden became ours entirely, so then we said do we sell or do we move? So we moved in 2005, around midsummer, and, eeh, then it turned out the way it did.
17. IE: I turned 50 the same year, it was really difficult to find something reasonable to do, so then we decided to do this. And, then, I should add, thanks to that course at Eldrimner, it was tremendously good, (...) is an unparalleled enthusiast, I must say, and the persons she has succeeded to involve are fantastic too, so that was really fun! And then I thought, this suits me, standing here boiling my marmalades and fixing these things.
18. IE: And then there is of course this that you get to be outside a lot, and then of course there is a lot of lonely work, and that is a downside. I have no colleges; but, on the other hand, this time of the year I'm out on the markets a lot. I get to meet the customers.

End of transcript example.