

DRIVERS OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

—
Entrepreneurs in Sjuhäradsmat

Author:

Anna Haraldson
Sallerupsvägen 9
21218 Malmö
Sweden
Phone: +4640939760
E-mail: Anna.Haraldson@gmail.com

Supervisor:

Christina Scholten
Fil.dr, Forskare
Department of Technology and Society
Malmö University
205 06 Malmö
Sweden
Phone: +4670-685 85
E-mail: Christina.Scolten@ts.mah.se

**Submitted for partial fulfilment of the requirements of LUMES, Lund
University International Master of Environmental Science and Sustainable
Development**

Abstract

DRIVERS OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurs in Sjuhäradsmat

The rural areas of the European Union are in a transition as the agricultural policies are reformed to meet future challenges and a more intense competition¹. Local initiatives have played a central and motivating role in generating and establishing sustainability in rural spaces within the EU, through *organic farming* and *local food production*².

The thesis looks into the drivers of the producers in an economic network, Sjuhäradsmat, in the countryside of Sweden, and relates it to the debate on rural development. The overall aim of the paper is to examine the driving factors of a micro case, the producers of Sjuhäradsmat. The thesis will discuss these drivers and how the producers perceive the preconditions for their businesses. Moreover it discusses the meaning of the political structures in relation to the micro level, and the political framing of the enterprisers and the conditions for the people on the local level. The empirical material is based on qualitative semi-open interviews with the producers and a qualitative text analysis of policy documents.

The producers are entrepreneurs where the lifestyle is the main driver. They generate social capital through their role as entrepreneurs as well as citizens, which is of importance to local development. They perceive themselves as outside the official paradigm of development and traditional business and struggle to change the picture and present alternative possibilities for rural development. The policies are enhancing growth-oriented businesses and apply a too narrow definition of entrepreneurship for the producers to fit in. If sustainable rural development is to be achieved must the drivers be recognised: both driving factors and the producers. The producers generate social capital, which is fundamental for development. By recognising the importance of the producers would the social capital generated by them and Sjuhäradsmat also profit society.

Keywords: *Sweden, entrepreneurs, social capital, regional development policies, sustainable rural development*

¹ Landsbygdsprogrammet, 2006, p 22

² Marsden; Smith, 2005, p 441

1 INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 AIM.....	3
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
2 METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 METHODS.....	4
2.1 CASE STUDY: SJUHÄRADSMAT	5
DATA COLLECTION	5
QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS.....	5
THE INTERVIEW SITUATION	6
CHALLENGES	7
2.2 METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION	8
QUALITATIVE TEXT ANALYSIS	8
MATERIAL DISCUSSION	8
LIMITATIONS	9
METHOD OF ANALYSIS	9
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	11
3.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL	11
DEFINING SOCIAL CAPITAL	13
3.2 PLACE ATTACHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.....	14
3.3 THE ENTREPRENEUR	15
3.4 POWER AND HEGEMONY	16
3.5 LIFE-MODE ANALYSIS	17
3.6 CONCLUSIONS.....	18
4 “EN LEVANDE LANDSBYGD”	18
4.1 THE LOCATION – SJUHÄRAD	20
4.2 POLITICAL CONTEXT	20
REGIONAL & RURAL DEVELOPMENT	21
SWEDEN AND LEADER+.....	23
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.....	24
4.6 SJUHÄRADSMAT.....	25
4.6 CONCLUSIONS.....	26
5 THE GRASSROOTS OF SJUHÄRADSMAT	27
5.1 THE PRODUCERS IN SJUHÄRADSMAT	27
SELF-EMPLOYED.....	27
SOCIAL RELATIONS, SPACE & SOCIAL CAPITAL	29
SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT	33
OUTSIDE THE OFFICIAL PARADIGM	34
5.2 AUTHORITIES’ PERSPECTIVES.....	36

THE RURAL AREA PROGRAM.....	37
REGIONAL POLICIES.....	39
SJUHÄRADS BYGDEN	40
5.3 CONCLUSION	42
<u>6 CONCLUSIONS.....</u>	<u>42</u>
SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT	43
<u>7 FINAL DISCUSSION AND FURTHER IDEAS</u>	<u>44</u>
<u>8 LITERATURE.....</u>	<u>45</u>

1 INTRODUCTION

“It is only the development that is locally anchored that has the prerequisites to be sustainable.”¹

The rural areas of the European Union are in a transition as the agricultural policies are reformed to meet future challenges and a more intense competition². Today is different from Europe 50 years ago where the policy was needed to rebuild the continent. New challenges have come about and one of these is *Sustainable Rural Development*³. Whilst the new agricultural reform of 2003 will be fully implemented (2008)⁴ is there a lot of action taking place on the local level⁵. Local initiatives have played a central and motivating role in generating and establishing sustainability in rural spaces within the EU, through *organic farming* and *local food production*⁶. Cooperation and networks are considered as key ingredients for their success as new arrangements over borders are settled⁷. Also NGO's have a role and are affecting the political agenda and frames, *the Federation of Swedish Farmers* (LRF) and *Hushållningssällskapet* etc. are examples of this.

Sustainable development has to be locally anchored and function on the local level, which is the very condition for the concept as a whole. Therefore the local level is the point of departure for this thesis, and explores a case of local food producers organised in an economic network, Sjuhäradsmat, situated in Västra Götaland, Sweden. If sustainable rural development is strived for, the micro level must be fully comprehended and incorporated.

1.1 Aim

The overall aim of the paper is to examine the driving factors of a micro case, the producers of Sjuhäradsmat. The thesis will discuss these drivers and how the producers perceive the preconditions for their businesses. Moreover it discusses the meaning of the political structures in relation to the micro level, and the political framing of the enterprisers and the conditions for the people on the local level.

1.2 Research questions

1. *What is driving the producers?*
2. *How do the macro level correspond to these drivers and perceptions?*

¹ Johannesson, 2004, p 38

² Landsbygdsprogrammet, 2006, p 22

³ Pugliese, 2001, p 113

⁴ Schmid; Sinabell, 2007, p 333

⁵ Marsden *et al*, 2001, p 75

⁶ Marsden; Smith, 2005, p 441

⁷ Murdoch, 2000, p 408

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Methods

The research questions have set the choice of methodology. This chapter will discuss the research process and reason about important aspects that should be considered throughout the study.

In order to answer the research questions are two methods used: *qualitative interviews* and *qualitative text analysis*. This is in order to present the two perspectives that are needed: the producers of Sjuhäradsmat and the authorities' perspective. The first is a case study of the producers in Sjuhäradsmat and the second is a general discussion of the conclusions from the case study in a political context. The focus is set on the producers within Sjuhäradsmat, it is their driving forces that will be analysed and the consequences will presently be related to the meso- and macro political structures. The approach of this study is hence bottom-up⁸. The first research question concerning the driving factors of the producers will be based on qualitative interviews with the producers. The second research question will be based on the policy documents that are representing the political structures and analysing how these correspond to the case and results from the first question. The policy documents are official, which makes the process easier. The perspective is especially important for sustainable development, as it cannot function on a macro level if not integrated and working at the micro level⁹. It is the producers and people that live in the area that are the basis for development, of any kind. The bottom-up perspective is a way to attack "*is not a theory but a way to tackle that tells us how empirical collection of data and the analysis should be done*"¹⁰. The study is hence inductive, as the empirical material will later be theorised¹¹.

Throughout the thesis the *micro level* is the local community, the network. The *macro level* is the region of Västra Götaland, Sweden and the European Union; it incorporates the national arena, as the function of the region is to implement the national policies. The European level is important to address, even though the thesis does not intend to discuss this level in detail. The macro actors are important, as they constitute the structural reality in which the network operates, hence is the discussion interesting as the micro level gives meaning to the structures and policies.

The case study seeks to *exemplify* patterns and relate these to the political framing of them on the macro level. The local conditions are different and what might work extraordinary somewhere may be more problematic somewhere else¹². But there are of course lessons that should be spread and either avoided or implemented in other areas and levels¹³. Murdoch (2000) concludes that networks and their potential are

⁸ Olsson, 2005, 29 f

⁹ Pettersson, 2005, p 52 f

¹⁰ Olsson, 2005, p 24

¹¹ Thurén, 1991, p 23 f

¹² Olsson, 2005, p 25

¹³ Ibid, p 25

varying and depending on the preconditions of the rural area. There is no one fits all solutions to rural development as the geographical, political, social, cultural, environmental context varies. There are several levels of generality though, and conclusions might be applicable in other situations and in other areas¹⁴. The problems that these producers recognise, not in their production process but as enterprisers, might very well correspond to producers in other areas.

2.1 Case study: Sjuhäradsmat

DATA COLLECTION

The empirical material for the first research question will be drawn from qualitative interviews with the producers of Sjuhäradsmat. A representative number of the producers in Sjuhäradsmat are selected. But in order to obtain the information needed to make this selection a key informant has been important, this person has not been involved in the selection part though. Sjuhäradsmat is a rather small economic network with approximately 40 members. It consists of: women and men, groups of people and individuals, bigger and smaller businesses, full-time and part-time, conventional and organic producers, various kinds of products, people that have moved to the area and people that are born in the area etc. Out of these are around five fulltime farmers or producers; the other members are running their businesses along side with other jobs.¹⁵ Out of all the producers 7 informants were selected, representing the broad spectrum of producers.

Yin (2003) discusses the importance of *multiple sources of evidence* as they sometimes can reveal different perceptions of the same phenomena. *Data triangulation* is addressing potential problems of construct validity. This also increases the reliability and the quality of the case.¹⁶ The main empirical material needed to analyse the producers' drivers are the qualitative interviews. Their answers and perceptions are the foundation for the thesis analysis and are the only source of information, a part from observations that can serve to get an idea of the informant and function as a complement.

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

The qualitative research interview acquires qualitative descriptions of the life of the interviewed. It seeks to present their reality¹⁷. An interview guide with specific themes is a tool for the conversation between the informant and the interviewer¹⁸. It sets the themes of the study and the order¹⁹. It worked as a reminder for me, in order to cover the essential areas during the interview. It was also helpful as the amount of time was limited and pushed the interviews to follow some structure. The guide has only been a guide that has been put aside if new interesting information and paths have come up during the interview. Throughout the interviews, people have been

¹⁴ Alvesson, Sköldberg, 2000, p 31

¹⁵ Interview B1

¹⁶ Yin, 2003, p 97 f

¹⁷ Kvale, 1997, p 117

¹⁸ Ibid, p 119

¹⁹ Ibid, p 121

quite open and liked to talk about their enterprises and lives. The background information and more informal conversations with people within the organisation of Sjuhäradsmat set the themes. The informants are people and it is their reality of which the study is interested in.

The conversation is central. There must be a balance between the informant and the interviewer and an understanding that they hold the key information that is needed. The interviewer needs the informants, but the informants might also need the interviewer in order to reflect upon the discussed issues. Hence, it works two-ways.²⁰ This has worked well throughout the interviews and the respondents have discussed and reasoned about their business, values and lives. All of them have not been as open as some, but the conversation has been apparent.

Some interviews needed to be done over the telephone and these were noted down by hand and immediately afterwards written and typed in entirety. I found the phone interviews as positive, as people felt that they had an option, either by me coming to their home or by phone interview. All other interviews were taped, the respondents were of course asked on before hand if this was ok. These interviews were also noted down, as a back up, and were all written and documented afterwards. Some informants, working as officials, are easier to get back to if there is information that is missing, as it is their job. The interviews with the producers had to be done during their free time and therefore I was as flexible as possible so that they did not feel stressed or pushed. The interviews, ten in total, lasted between 1-2 hours, and the transcribed material corresponds to approximately 50 pages.

THE INTERVIEW SITUATION

Ethics and a code of conduct are central for qualitative interviews²¹. To establish trust between the respondent and myself has been crucial. In the beginning of the interviews were most of the respondents were curious about the situation and showed an interest that was kept during the whole interview. My presence affected the interviews in the beginning, as some of the informants were a bit hesitant the first minutes of the interviews. But after a while the hesitance was gone and the answers got more and more in-depth and they talked vividly. The fact that I had an understanding of the area facilitated the process. I am myself raised in Sjuhärad where the network is based, which brings possible positive and negative consequences. Positive due to my pre-knowledge of the area and its history, but it might be difficult to get some information as some might think that I already know it²². But as I do not know any of the producers personally, I know one by name, will not cause any problems. Sjuhäradbygden incorporates seven communities and considering the number of producers, around 40, my connection could most likely not be a problem, rather the opposite as I know the area but am still somewhat distant, as I do not know the people that I will interview personally. My pre-knowledge is biased, but coming from the area also provides access to information. When presenting myself to the member of Sjuhäradsmat and during the interviews I have noticed that my

²⁰ Kvale, 1997, p 117

²¹ Ibid, p 114 f

²² Repstad, 1999, p 56

background often functioned to “break the ice”, and made the process easier. It made it easier to achieve a level of mutual confidence, where the actual qualitative interview took place.

The interviews took place, as often as possible, in the producers’ homes. Kvale (1997) considers the normal context of the respondent as important as it has been shown to provide a more inclusive and adequate picture of fundamental situations. The various respondents and their willingness to talk and set aside time for the interview, made some interviews longer than others. To be humble and to show respect for their busy lives is critical and to make sure that they understood that I adapted to their schedule. One of the interviews included two producers, the rest were single interviews. This was enriching as they discussed the issue between themselves, and I could guide the conversation. I participated in a group meeting, of Sjuhäradsmat, where several members were gathered and where they had the opportunity to talk directly to me. The opportunity was of higher value in one way, than the actual discussion as it was an occasion to bring other perspectives forward and make people aware of the research process and project. It has been essential in all interviews to let the respondents talk about the interview areas and their perspectives, history and everything, without too much interruption.

CHALLENGES

One has to be open to sudden changes and challenges. A gatekeeper generates expectations on the direction of the study, but different things occur that one cannot predict, for good or bad. One has to be humble and ready for most things, and not close up to the former and more expected situation. To be flexible has been important throughout this study, in all aspects. There are no standard methods for qualitative interviews and one cannot predict everything that will occur and the consequences of an interview²³. As an interviewer it has been vital to “interpret” the people and to adjust to their lives as much as possible when setting the time and place for interviews.

A further ambition was to meet as many as possible face-to-face and give all a chance to present their perspectives at one of the network’s meetings that are open to all members. But as the majority of the producers have ordinary jobs, families and other engagements, it was not certain that all producers could take the opportunity. The opportunity to present their perspectives was given. To discuss the issues in a group, as a group-interview might bring out new information not only from people that have not been interviewed but also from the people that were interviewed individually, as the setting is changed and there might be spin-off effects due to the discussion that may come about²⁴.

²³ Kvale, 1997, p 82

²⁴ Repstad, 1999, p 83 f

2.2 Methodological reflection

QUALITATIVE TEXT ANALYSIS

The theoretical chapter, the background and the second part of the analysis are based on reports, scientific research and policy documents. The latest and biggest documents are the point of departure, to get an overview²⁵. This is especially relevant when handling with public documents, as the analysis and parts of background are²⁶. Criticism of sources is fundamental and the sources that are used throughout the thesis are related to their aim and source. The theoretical chapter is based on the scientific discussions of the theories, which are in turn drawn from scientific articles and books.

MATERIAL DISCUSSION

The empirical data in the thesis will be drawn from interviews with the members of the economic network, Sjuhäradsmat and policy documents. All sources of material for this paper are:

*Primary sources*²⁷: interviews and observations (from interview occasions and network meeting).

*Secondary sources*²⁸: scientific papers, archival information, policy documents and reports (from all actors of relevance), literature

The scientific papers and literature are the basis of a scientific discussion and the theoretical position of the paper. Policy documents, reports, archival information, papers and interviews will describe the background of the case and as the material is in some parts shallow, very public focused, and not reflecting the angles that the thesis is aiming at are interviews with key informants essential. Interviews with the producers are the core, as their perceptions are the focus of the paper. As the interviews are acknowledged to be normative and seek to reflect the producers' perceptions of their own production, network and reality, these differences are not a problem. It is important, however, to relate the given information to stated facts, of course. But the subjective information about themselves and the driving factors for them as producers are the basis.

The published information that concerns the case is very limited and I am therefore dependent on informants. The informants' knowledge is valuable for the paper, but might also be a weak link as I need the information and there is only a limited amount of people that can provide this information. The policy documents and reports that will be used when presenting the background are acquired from various NGOs that seek to affect the political agenda. Political policies from the Region of Västra Götaland and the Swedish Rural Development Agency are basic material for setting it. The policy documents constitute the political framework, for the analysis. The political context, what is going on in the broader context, will be based on all kinds of reports and documents on regional and rural development.

²⁵ Repstad, 1999, p 88

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid, p 90

²⁸ Ibid

LIMITATIONS

Entrepreneurs and sustainable rural development is a broad issue. There are many relevant aspects of it as one can relate it to all the present political debates. The case study narrows it down further, but there are other limitations that need to be recognised. The political borders of Sweden set the geographical boundaries, knowing that the policies, considering rural and agricultural politics are directly affected by the European Union. It is not pertinent to go into the mechanisms within the European Union or into what ways the policies affect the micro level.

The temporal boundary is set, once again recognising the influence of the European Union, Sweden entering the European Union in 1995, and until 2013 when the present rural development program is due. As the thesis is bringing in Sustainable development in a rural context, the time span is short. But the thesis does not intend to discuss a future prognosis, rather to make a reflection on the producers' perspectives in relation to present policies and to discuss the consequences with basis on the micro level. Sustainable development is part of the political policies that the Swedish government, and hence regions are working with and will, as other policies, only be discussed relating the perspectives of the producers and the authorities.

The thesis is interested in the producers as enterprisers and is not trying to assess the potential of their production per se. It will discuss the producers' role for sustainable rural development, as part of the background. It is the producers as enterprisers and the discussion of their drivers and conception of their situation, which is in focus. It provides an idea of the enterpriser and is important as such. The material the interviews will provide will discuss and guide what areas to consider for the second research question, the consequences of the producers' drivers.

It is important to remember that the study is based on interviews with producers that have succeeded and are still producing. Their drivers might be different, but there might also be a large number of people that have tried and failed due to structures.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

*"Data do not speak for itself, it has to be interpreted"*²⁹

The various phases of the research process intertwine and the analysis is ongoing³⁰. The procedure is going back and forth, the researcher must alter between the empirical material and theory³¹. The inductive approach of the thesis seeks to theorise the empirical material³². The themes of the empirical material have set the focus on relevant theories. To find these themes are the qualitative method³³. Already during the interviews have I processed the material and tried to hint forward in order to get the informants to develop certain issues further, more in-depth. But, considering the material and not knowing what kind of information that the informants would

²⁹ Ibid, p 94

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Friberg, 1990, p 143

³² Thurén, 1991, p 23 f

³³ Friberg, 1990, p 143

present, it has been important to stay open.³⁴ The interview guide reflects my pre-knowledge and sets the themes for the interviews. The focus has been set on the drivers of engagement of the producers, what is central to them and makes them want to do what they do.

After having conducted an interview, whilst typing it, I processed the material and wrote down all impressions of the informant and observations from the session. If there were any clear themes throughout the interview, or something that the informant wanted to talk especially about, I noted it down. After all the interviews were read through, I continued to look for themes or things that stood out, everything of relevance and importance. There were some aspects that I thought of beforehand that would be more interesting to the producers than it actually turned out. The themes eventually came about according with the producers' perception of the issues. I analysed the material, looking for everything that I did not expect and what I did expect when making the guide. All the possible drivers that had been mentioned were written down on a paper and from there I continued to look into themes, finding patterns. Some patterns could not be explained by the theories that I had worked on before hand, and new theories were taken in along side with the others and some were taken out. It was a challenging process. The themes and general patterns that came about and put a finger on what the producers wanted to say are presented in the analytical chapter. The themes are *generalisations* of the interviews with the producers and an attempt to discuss *what is there, what is not* and most important: *what it could be*³⁵. I attended a group meeting after all the interviews were done, and when I was processing the material. At the time I had a few common themes in mind and the group meeting confirmed the general patterns from the interviews. The presentation of the analysis is the best for this format, it focus on the general tendencies but also acknowledges differences between the producers, as they are individuals and their business separate.

In order to keep the informants' information confidential no material concerning their production in a way that they can be recognised is presented. All the interviews are combined and represent the themes. The essence of the answers is what is important, and they will be presented as examples of the theme that constitutes the results.

The themes and patterns from the interviews constitute the foundation for the analysis of the political documents. How do the documents consider the producers? The policies are set for the whole region of Västra Götaland or Sweden and do not go into details of specific cases, it sets the structures. The policy documents are read and related to the case by reading between the lines, in order to find the structures of relevance to the case. There are explicit and implicit themes, that are highlighted in various ways through headings, titles etc. A first method is to see whether the themes that the producers consider as relevant are recognised as a title, and another way is to see where in the text it is discussed. If the themes are discussed at all, how, what is emphasised etc.³⁶. The results from the interviews have guided the analysis:

1. The aim and vision of the policy document.

³⁴ Kvale, 1997, p 184 f

³⁵ Ibid, p 212

³⁶ Hellsppong; Ledin, 1997, p 121 ff

2. What do they consider of enterprisers and entrepreneurs? Rural business? How are entrepreneurship, enterprisers and entrepreneurs discussed?
3. How is development portrayed? Definition of sustainable development? What is considered as critical for development? Sustainable development? Sustainable rural development?

The findings will be presented as quotes and analytical parts.

The *reliability* of the study is quite high and founded on representative selections of the informants. As the study is depended on a key informant, to make the selection the reliability might be lowered. But as the information provided from the interviews is difficult to back up, as the informants are the only possible providers of the information, I am dependent on both the key informant as the other informants. The interview guide is the key for *validity*. It is crucial that the questions will direct and provide answers to the initial research questions.³⁷

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents central definitions and theories that are suitable considering the empirical material and research questions. The fact that the thesis discusses the drivers of an economic network leaves out the traditional neoclassical theory, as it does not handle it³⁸. Traditionally the development theory has been characterised by an exogenous line of thinking where the potential for growth is set by the quality, number and combination of production factors (financial capital, natural resources and labour). The key to success is to develop and support technology and hence increase the productivity.³⁹ But the condition within the model and its structures might also be of importance, as being discussed the latest centuries. The endogenous factors as knowledge, innovations are vital for the system and increased knowledge is considered to increase profit.⁴⁰ Weber stated that localisation of a business is characterised by a matter of costs where the most optimal localisation is where the costs of production are the lowest. These explanations have failed to explain the more intangible economies or *untraded interdependencies*, instead have socio-cultural factors in which the economy is surrounded by, increased in importance⁴¹. The theories presented are relevant as the analysis seek to discuss the producers' driving factors as well as various consequences of these. The theories discuss various elements of the case, and what might come up, in relation to rural development; to authorities; to the producers as business people and entrepreneurs; to their way of living etc. A multi-disciplinary approach.

3.1 Social Capital

"Within a globalizing, post- Fordist world, where many factors of production are increasingly mobile, it is argued that it is these territorially rooted immobile relational assets that underwrite the existence of networks, collaborative relations and institutional capacities

³⁷ Thurén, 1991, p 22

³⁸ Lithander 2003, p 127

³⁹ Ekstedt, 2003, p 4

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Evans; Syrett, 2007, p 57.

which are of increasing importance in providing competitive advantage”⁴²

Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy work – Civic traditions in Modern Italy* (1993), is focusing on development in the developed world where he studied the civil society in Italy. He claims that social capital can constitute the engine of growth as a lively civil society where active citizens are the fundament. Putnam conducted the study in Italy where he investigated the Italians’ confidence in their institutions, hence social factors as trust and values. He found that there was a clear correspondence between trust in societal institutions trust and a lively and active civil society and later also between this civil society and economic development. A society’s social capital, Putnam argues, is not given, but deriving from civic roots and the historical context.

He discovered that the positive development in the north is connected to a well functioning civil society and hence had a strong social capital whereas the southern parts of the country, that had not experienced the same development, were characterised by a lacking social capital. Trust, shared values and norms constitutes social capital and Putnam considers it as a set of *horizontal associations* between people in a community, which might be positive or negative but it enables cooperation and collaboration for a common benefit⁴³. Trust enables formal as well as informal institutions to function, which in turn are valuable and central for development. It is easier to cooperate in societies that have built up a strong social capital. The history and traditions of a region is, according to Putnam, central to trust and consequently development. History, traditions and society strongly affect the efficiency of institutions. Civic engagement is fundamental to democracy as well as economic development. In areas where the trust for the institutions is strong, it is easier to build up an economy for which trust is central. The economy is embedded in social structures and affected by the socio-cultural factors as trust, values etc⁴⁴. Social capital smoothens the exchange of information and knowledge, which is central for networks. The personal meeting is still important despite new technological advantages,⁴⁵ as core is considered to be the social relations that exist between people. These can look different and vary in intensity as well as formality. The capability of handling social relations is thus as important as the actual productivity, considering the efficiency.⁴⁶

DeFilips (2001) is critical towards Putnam’s way of only describing the positives of social capital in relation to economic development and the process of democracy. The individual interest is not equivalent with the interest of the group, as there are power relations in social capital as in any capital. He also criticises the methodological individualism that Fine (2001) continues on and considers Putnam’s research as an attempt of taking over the social science with liberal ideas of the civil society, democracy and development, as it has been very influential. There is not only the

⁴² Ibid, p 57

⁴³ Iyer et al, 2005, p 2017

⁴⁴ Ekstedt, 2003, p 8

⁴⁵ Malmberg, 2000, p231

⁴⁶ Lithander 2003, p 129

horizontal association, but also a *vertical association*, characterised by hierarchical relations⁴⁷.

There are three main criticisms amongst those who notice a role for social capital: A *diverse definition*, which makes it vague; applied to *examine too many social issues*; “real problems of measurement due to being definitionally diverse and reliant on alternative indicators making it prone to validation problems”.⁴⁸

So what is social capital?

DEFINING SOCIAL CAPITAL

“whereas human capital resides in individuals, social capital resides in relationships”⁴⁹

Social relations and networks are natural sources of social capital, arenas that are generating it and needs it. It facilitates coordination for the mutual benefit and the links can provide access and opportunities as well as reducing transaction costs and decrease uncertainty that enhances economic activities.⁵⁰ There are two themes that can be recognized in the discussion, *structural* or *cognitive*, where the former accentuates organizations, networks etc., sociological, and the latter emphasizes shared trust, values etc., political and represented by Putnam.⁵¹ As a capital, social capital is different from all others, as it increases the more it is used which is relevant and interesting for local economic development.⁵² There are also different types, levels of social capital. Woolcock (1998) discusses these variations and connect them to the concept of economic actions surrounded by types of social relations and situations where the social ties are autonomous. These are different on diverse levels. This must be contextualized into the various levels and considered from all kinds of aspects⁵³. There are different types of social capital. *Bonding* social capital is linking similarity and the potential power of the group or association is bigger than the individual. *Bridging* social capital concerns relations between various groups, and it is not as dense as binding social capital within groups.⁵⁴ Whereas the former provides a kind of social ‘glue’, important for sources of support in ‘getting by’, the latter provides a kind of social ‘lubricant’, important for sources of leverage in ‘getting ahead’ for both individuals and communities. Bridging social capital is important for economic and social development in a long term. Bonding social capital might be destructive, according to Olson (1982) as some groups in society may be encouraged and certain policies that might impose an unbalanced cost to society.

Social capital is not always positive, “downside social capital” is enhancing amoral familism and limits new people coming in, the relation to other outside communities etc.⁵⁵. The balance of intra-community activities and extra-community activities are

⁴⁷ Iyer *et al*, 2005, p 1017

⁴⁸ Evans; Syrett, 2007, p 58

⁴⁹ Woolcock, 2001a: 12 in Evans; Syrett, 2007, p 59

⁵⁰ Anderson; Jack, 2002, p 195

⁵¹ Evans; Syrett, 2007, p 58

⁵² Ibid, p 59

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Iyers *et al*, 2005, p 1017

⁵⁵ Evans, Syrett, 2007, p 60

central, for a positive result. The recipe of bridging and bonding social capital is situational and depends on context and time and would also produce different outcomes, but they are both needed for sustainable development.⁵⁶ “*Social Capital is not a thing, but a process that creates a condition of social capital.*”⁵⁷ It hence is generated through the process and the structural and relational aspects are found to be dimensions of this.

3.2 Place attachment and development

The values and drivers might be space- or place oriented and explained by theories that incorporate this perspective. As the area is not beneficial for agriculture the specific location that the producers are operating and living might be of another importance.

Margareta Rämgård discusses this in her dissertation “*The Power of Place – Existential Crises and Place Security in the Context of Pregnancy*” (2006) where she exemplifies the scientific discussion of the meaning of place. To some (Mead, 1934; Goffman 1956) the place is the setting of social interaction and to others (Richardsson 1980) the place is more than a stage for performances, as the place is used also to create meaning through specific material in these places. Place might not have an identity of its own, but there is a relational concept of place that is interesting. “...it shapes a network of social relations where identities are multiple and changing over time”⁵⁸. Social interaction and place is hence connected, as spatial social relations. The debate whether social relations are place-bound, or can exist in all forms and from all distances is continuing, not least considering new technology that facilitates new forms of social interaction. “Whereas the boundaries of local identity naturally align with face-to-face familiarity, civilization requires a specific competence of maintaining boundaries of abstract sodalities cross-cutting the spheres of regular social interaction.”⁵⁹ Others (Young) argue that there is no reason for face-to-face interaction to be more genuine than other relations. The place as somewhere where the individual is known by others and the individual knows, and is important for a deeper sense of belonging. The awareness that the place is of importance for others, also for people that are no longer around, can provide this feeling. Practicalities as language, body language, knowing the area etc, are also important for social life and are examples of material lives in our bodies.⁶⁰

For rural as well as urban areas, place matters, as space and social relations or place specific. Place and development is presented in the report, *Local Economy for Sustainable Development*, NUTEK (2004). Bengt Johannission, prof. emer. at Växjö University, claims that the place must be considered as an arena where social and economical dynamics can cooperate for the gain of the community, region and society as a whole. Johannisson follows Schumacher and sees the bonds between development, sustainability and localism as he claims that: “*it is only the development*

⁵⁶ Ibid, p 59 f

⁵⁷ Anderson, Jack, 2002, p

⁵⁸ Massay in Rämgård, 2006, p 39

⁵⁹ Rämgård, 2006, p 40

⁶⁰ Ibid, 40 f

that is locally anchored that have the possibilities to be sustainable. Initiatives must be taken locally and every place must find out their own profile concerning goals, maintenance and form of organisation”⁶¹. Place can enhance the local economy through establishing a place-bound identity. The furniture- region of Lammhult or industry region of Gnosjö is examples of place bonded functioning local economies where social capital also has been central.⁶² “*The social capital consists of, according to me, trust, identity and engagement. These three concepts are internally related and are especially prosperous in local landscapes.*”⁶³

3.3 The entrepreneur

Most of the people that are working in the agro-businesses are entrepreneurs, working for themselves without any employees⁶⁴. Hence is it interesting to look into the characteristics of the entrepreneur.

*“They are not special people, but they are alert individuals who are willing to act upon a perceived opportunity in a somewhat innovative way.”*⁶⁵ There are two fundamental characteristics of successful entrepreneurs as they identify opportunities on the market and an ability to mobilise all kinds of capital (human, social, physical and financial) to exploit these. The entrepreneur could be a person with special capabilities and characteristics. Schumpeter considers the entrepreneur not to be a social class but a specific condition and considers entrepreneurship to build the path whereas business is to walk on it, the entrepreneurs pave the way.⁶⁶

Maria Minniti (2006) concludes the research from various disciplines about the entrepreneur: Employed people are more likely to start new businesses; no certain relation between unemployment and new entrepreneurs; no certain relation between higher education and new enterprises either, except for richer countries; more men than women are starting new firms. Studies have shown that the feeling of controlling one's actions can determine the outcomes, people tend to appoint to entrepreneurial activities.⁶⁷ The social circumstance is central as meeting and seeing other entrepreneurs is motivating new ones but also the societal structures as the macro economic environment and institutions. The macro economic environment is central as it determines the overall cost of doing business. The cautiousness of the entrepreneur depends on the level of risk of the macro economic environment, as the businesses are operating within its structures. The institutions are essential as they set the rules and influence all actors in society. Institutional stability and transparency are fundamental and together with set rules that work over time, they provide favourable conditions for entrepreneurship, which reconnects to Putnam's ideas. Minniti concludes by stating the entrepreneurs as *agents of change*, no matter their size.⁶⁸ Weber stated two kinds of rationality: *value-rationality*, where the means are as

⁶¹ Johannesson, 1981, p 15

⁶² Ibid, 2004, p 29 ff

⁶³ Ibid, p 31

⁶⁴ *Vem är företagare i Västra Götaland?*, 2006, p 7

⁶⁵ Minniti, 2006, p 80

⁶⁶ Svensson, 2003, 50 f

⁶⁷ Minniti, 2006, p 79

⁶⁸ Ibid, p 81 f

important as the end, and *instrumental rationality*, where the end is more important than the means⁶⁹. These ideas are of relevance when looking into different kinds of businesses and entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are often value rational as the process is as interesting and engaging as the end, the business is an end or a goal in itself. Entrepreneurs are dependent on trust, with other entrepreneurs and trust form and make their business grow. Trust plays a key role amongst entrepreneurs and the people that they are working with, when starting-up new businesses. Trust can function as a substitute for formal institutions and can serve as an informal institution, and reduce transaction costs.⁷⁰ Entrepreneurs are hence connected to social capital, according to this reasoning.

3.4 Power and hegemony

As the case study is focused on small-scale producers, there might be conflicts of power between their interests and other bigger producers or actors. The network, Sjuhäradsmat, might be a consequence of this unbalanced relation and strives to enhance the advantages for the producers of Sjuhäradsmat. Power is relevant in many aspects as the producers are small-scale and facing structures that are set for bigger enterprises. The scale is the same for all business, which makes it trickier for small-scale businesses to handle food regulations, as an example. Antonio Gramsci presents the concept of the hegemony and discusses power relations. The authorities are presenting the political structures of the reality in which the network and its producers are operating within. All politics relates to power and questions as whether society enables the citizens to live the way they want arise.

Power is defined as “*the capacity to make formal decisions which are in some way binding upon others*”, this might take place all over society and all kinds of relations.⁷¹ Power is, according to Robert Dahl, pluralistic suggesting the existence of many centres of power⁷². But if Dahl was investigating the influence that people have on power, but power can also be to set the political agenda but not to interfere with the decision⁷³. Schattsschneider sees “*Power, quite simply is the ability to set the political agenda*”⁷⁴. The two perceptions of power both share the idea that the actors in a society share their opinions and the concepts treat them as rational actors. But some argue that people, in reality, can possess a completely independent mind as we are shaped by our culture. “*The ideas, opinions, preferences, of all are structured and shaped by social experience, through the influence of family, peer groups, school, the work place, the mass media, political parties... .*”⁷⁵.

The concept of hegemony is the common ideas that are considered as truths in the society. Antonio Gramsci discusses the establishment and conditions of what he

⁶⁹ Callinicos, 1999, p 160

⁷⁰ Goel; Karri, 2006, p 477

⁷¹ Heywood, 1999, p 122

⁷² Ibid, p 125

⁷³ Ibid, p 126 f

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Ibid, p 128

called the *bourgeois hegemony*, which are the dominating ideas in all life spheres⁷⁶. It is this hegemony that allows the spread of the ideas of the dominant groups in society, until they become common sense. The cultural institutions of civil society, as churches and schools, are forums where these are spread⁷⁷. The *historic bloc*, the mutual relation between socio-economic relations and political and cultural practises jointly strengthens a given order. The interaction is what is essential and they are never completely separate.⁷⁸ Hence must the hegemonic position must be successfully confronted in order for political practise to change the society. In order to break the hegemony would be, according to Gramsci, “a war of position” where individual positions are captured, contrary to the direct anterior attack.⁷⁹ A counter-hegemonic struggle in civil society to weaken the hegemony is needed, letting an alternative historic bloc to be creative⁸⁰.

3.5 Life-Mode Analysis

Living on the countryside and being a farmer or working in agro-business might also be considered a lifestyle. Thomas Højrup is a Danish ethnologist that has written about lifestyles and life-mode analysis. It developed as an effort to explain why cultural values did not always standardize with each other as some cultural differences remained despite interaction.⁸¹ Højrup (2003) discusses the foundations of life-mode analysis and says that it is “*not a variant of society’s common norms and values. Rather it is an independent and self-maintaining praxis which contains its own semantics and its own conceptual system*” and life-mode analysis seek to offer new answers to these structural questions⁸². People are blinded to other conceptual systems due to their own in which they operate. There are hence contradictions in everyday life as society consists of several systems at the same time of which the members are blind to see the contrasts of. He recognises three different life-modes: *the self-employed/independent*, (life-mode 1); *the worker/wage earner* (life-mode 2); *the careerist* (life-mode 3).

The first category, the self-employed, the independent, considers the business or work as a means and an end. A goal of the family enterprise might be to be self-employed, as the prime concern is to maintain production.⁸³ This makes it very different from conventional businesses, as there is no mechanism that ensures the optimal level of production from a strict financial point of view.⁸⁴ There is hence a difference in the concept of work as free-time and working time becomes inter-linked, whereas it is more strict for wage earners. “*Free time has no meaning: you are never free from work, because you are never put to work; instead, you put yourself to work, you involve yourself in it, because this involvement is the prerequisite for and indeed the essence of being self-*

⁷⁶ Heywood, 1999, p 146

⁷⁷ Hobden; Wyn Jones, 2005, p 236

⁷⁸ Ibid

⁷⁹ Callinicos 2005, p 213

⁸⁰ Hobden; Wyn Jones, 2005, p 236

⁸¹ Højrup, 2003, p 4

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Ibid, p 23

⁸⁴ Ibid

*employed. You are responsible for the operation and success of the family enterprise, and you are responsible for its failings.*⁸⁵ Free time and work is hence related to each other in this life-mode where as the work only serves as a function to provide possibilities, through an income, to use during the free-time, for the employee. The self-employed connect work to life and the employed connects life to the time when he or she is off.

The second category, the worker or wage earner, considers work as a means and free-time is the end, whereof work does not have a meaning in itself, but one needs an income and is hence dependent on it⁸⁶. “*Work entails earning a living, but nothing motivates the specific acts of which it consists*”⁸⁷. This means that the worker needs to have a job as well as it needs to be under instructions, the wage is the payment for the hours spent but not for the intensity of work⁸⁸.

The third category, the careerist, is a bit similar to the life-mode 1 category, as it the work is both a source of income and an engaging activity. There are no clear distinction between ends and means. But they can relate to life-mode 2 workers as they are in the same business and often have had the same positions earlier (student jobs or equivalent).⁸⁹ “*This contrast gives rise to a dichotomy, by which they invest their own work with a connotation of involvement and commitment in contrast with the routine work which they remember. This distinction is conceived as deriving from the character of the work*”⁹⁰. The work is an activity in which the career-professional can commit himself and also develop from and within and he strives up within the organisation as well as within others and better positions. Just as in life-mode 1 independence is valued highly, but the career-professional does not want the routine work that might come with starting up a business from the beginning. It does not seem rational. Instead they work their way up and prefer to possess a position that provides the creative possibility as well as controlling others.⁹¹

3.6 Conclusions

The theories presented are relating to: social capital, place and local economy, entrepreneur, hegemony, life modes. They constitute the multi-disciplinary analytical framework of the thesis.

4 “EN LEVANDE LANDSBYGD”

This is the phrasing of a Swedish nation wide campaign, by the peoples’ council and means roughly in English, *a living countryside*.⁹² This chapter attempts to paint the background for the analysis. It will describe the area more specifically,

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Ibid, p 32 f

⁸⁷ Ibid, p 33

⁸⁸ Ibid, p 34

⁸⁹ Ibid, p 37 f

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Ibid, p 38

⁹² Folkrådet, *Hela Sverige Ska Leva*

describe the political context briefly, discuss definitions of relevance and introduce the case Sjuhäradsmat.



Figure 1, Map of Europe
<http://www.map-of-europe.us/europe-map.gif>
 retrieved (2007-05-19)
 Copyright © 2005-2006 Map Europe • us



Figure 2, Map of Sweden
<http://www.norden.org/images/kort/sverige.jpg>
 retrieved, (2007-05-19)
 Copyright Kort & Matrikelstyrelsen, Danmark



Figure 3, Sjuhäradsmat, with the seven municipalities.
<http://www.sjuharad.com/Page.asp?PageId=29&Section=5>
 retrieved (2007-05-19)
 Copyright © 2004 - 2007 Sjuhärad kommunalförbund



Figure 4, Field outside of Grimsås,
Sjuhäradsmat
 Photo: Anna Haraldson

4.1 The location – Sjuhärad

The Swedish author and noble prize winner in literature, Selma Lagerlöf, describes Sjuhärad bygden in *The Wonderful adventures of Nils Holgersson* (first published 1906) as follows:

"Well, but down in the south of Västergötland, there no human can make a living? Said the giant. – Have you been with and shape that land as well? Asked the västgöte.⁹³ – Oh no, not there in particular, but I remember when us giant children were looking after our herds down there we built ourselves such an amount of stone cottages and made the ground miserable with all the rock that we threw towards each other, and I think that it should be difficult to cleanse up acres for farming in those areas. – Yes, it is true, that it does not provide enough with farming down there, the västgöte said, but there the people have settled with cloth and crafts, and I believe, that it shows more cleverness to be able to get an income in such a poor area than taking part of ruing it."

Freely from Selma Lagerlöf's *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige*, 1981:573 f

The description of area of Sjuhärad presents a picture of an area less favoured for agriculture as well as the alternative sources of income. Sjuhärad bygden encompasses seven municipalities. The food production capabilities have been limited in the area in comparison to the bordering regions of Halland, Jönköping and also other areas in Västra Götaland. The poor conditions for agriculture in combination with bad harvests led to mass starvation during the 19th century and a mass migration where people migrated to the US in hope for a better life.⁹⁴ The difficulty to grow and produce food has forced people to have several sources of income in order to survive, whereof textiles is the most dominating in Sjuhärad bygden⁹⁵. The local conditions have "driven" people to collaboration in order to overcome the common obstacles, which have in turn shaped a way life considering the conditions, to keep an open-mind. Sjuhärad bygden is an example of industrial agglomeration in Sweden considering the cloth production and is still the home region to many of the bigger cloth and fabric producers, despite resettling of production in low-income countries⁹⁶.

4.2 Political context

There are mainly three political actors of relevance on the macro level. The *region of Västra Götaland* has got the legitimised authority of implementing the national policies for regional development. Hence is *regional development* of significance. The second actor is *Swedish National Rural Development Agency* and its national program for rural areas. The program takes the third actor's (European Union) policies into consideration and is funded upon the expectations of these. The rural and regional programs are based on the development in relevant sectors in the EU, even though they are set in a national context. Sweden entered the *European Union* (EU) in 1995 and it has had an enormous impact on Swedish agriculture and

⁹³ Person from Västergötland

⁹⁴ Holmblad, 2005, p 79

⁹⁵ Ibid, p 64 f

⁹⁶ Malmberg, 2000, p 233

hence, the rural areas. The Swedish agriculture was now competing with all of the farmers within the European Union. Earlier had the government together with *the Federation of Swedish Farmers* (LRF) set the prices for the agricultural products aiming at enhancing the income development as other groups in society. The transformation of the agricultural sector in the EU is today a fact. The structural fund and the Common Agricultural Policy, (CAP) have central roles transforming the economies in the rural areas. The goal of CAP is to: (1) *Increase the productivity in agriculture*, (2) *Ensure a good living standard for the people that work with agriculture*, (3) *Stabilise the market*, (4) *Ensure income possibilities*, (5) *Guarantee a good access of products to decent prices for the consumers*.⁹⁷ The policy is similar to the Swedish policy until the 1990s, but was reformed due to negative environmental impacts as well as an inefficient method of support for regional balance and was reformed but later regulated again when Sweden entered the EU⁹⁸. There is a difference between the two still, as the Swedish agricultural policy has an environmental goal, which the CAP lacks. The membership has given more financial support to the Swedish farmers than if Sweden would not have entered.⁹⁹ The reform from 2003 is seeks to decrease the negative impacts of agricultural production as the farmers are paid for maintaining land, without producing anything, in a “*good agricultural and environmental condition*”¹⁰⁰. The agriculture policy must be seen in its historical context to be fully understood. It is a part of the core of the European Union and has been important considering the violent history of the continent, and the situation in Europe during the 1950’s, which has to be kept in mind.¹⁰¹ Development research during those years also considered agricultural surplus as a prerequisite for industrial development¹⁰². The reforming process towards a better agriculture from an environmental point of view was initiated in 1992 when EU members implemented agri-environmental programs¹⁰³. The reform was costly and did not have any notable effects on the environment. The latest reform in 2003 will not be fully implemented until 2008, but seeks to diversify the income in the rural areas and convert the European agriculture into a more self-bearing system.¹⁰⁴ The CAP and other policies that might be of relevance, set the focus for the national regional and rural programs that in turn work translates the focus into a Swedish context and enhances what they find suitable.

REGIONAL & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“*Every part of the country should contribute towards Sweden’s growth and sustainable development.*”¹⁰⁵

Regional development per se is difficult to define, but it is a goal set for the various regions to enhance development on the regional basis, regional politics. It is often referred to, in Sweden, when discussing the diminishing population and people

⁹⁷ Landsbygdsprogrammet, p 14 f

⁹⁸ Nalin, 2000, p 15

⁹⁹ Ibid, p 16

¹⁰⁰ Schmid; Sinabell, 2007, p 333

¹⁰¹ Nalin, 2000, p 9

¹⁰² Martinussen, 1997, p 129

¹⁰³ Schmid; Sinabell, 2007, p 332

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p 333

¹⁰⁵ Näringsdepartementet, 2006, p 6

moving from rural areas to urban areas¹⁰⁶. But the term is not only relevant discussing population patterns as an indicator of regional development, other possibilities concerning the development of occupation. The development of the region is most often measured in GDP per capita, or RDP (Regional Domestic Product) as it is considered to incorporate several aspects of regional development¹⁰⁷. The regional policies in Sweden have gone from a support instrument for “weaker” areas to a development and economic growth policy for the whole country¹⁰⁸.

The influence on regional policies from the EU is observable. The structural fund is the tool of the cohesion policy of the European Union, which is in turn setting the target for the Swedish regional policies: “*The aim during the coming period of 2007–2013 is to create competitiveness and employment by safeguarding existing conditions throughout the whole of the EU and by creating opportunities for all regions to contribute towards European competitiveness.*”¹⁰⁹

The regional authorities, policies founded on the national policies and directions on the matter, constitute the regional development policies that lay ground for regional development in Sweden. The fundamental idea is to create dynamic and self-bearing regions. The regional policies seek to have a more local profile and recognises the importance of incorporating the knowledge and engagement of the actors that are affected by the policies. The regions and municipalities are set to shape the policy to suit their unique potential for *development*. The national regional policy sets the focus on what to develop and thought of how, but the instruments shall be worked out on a regional and local level.¹¹⁰ The Swedish government is prioritizing the following areas for national competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment 2007–2013: *Innovation and renewal, Skills supply and improved workforce supply, Accessibility and Strategic cross-border cooperation.*¹¹¹

The rural policies are today more intertwined with the regional political goals and the policies are thus closely connected¹¹². The rural policies focus is set on the countryside and recognises the varying conditions in the country and enhances the rural area’s diversity as a potential and important aspect to take into consideration. The *Swedish Rural Development Agency* is under the *Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication* that is also responsible for the regional policies.

There are several figures about the proportion of the population living in rural areas as the definitions vary concerning *rural*. According to the governmental institution, *Swedish National Rural Development Agency*, is 24 percent (2005) of the Swedish population living in the *rural areas*, which means people living outside of communities with more than 3000 inhabitants. The percentage of people living in *sparsely habited areas*, people with more than 45 minutes by car to closest

¹⁰⁶ Lundmark, 2000, p 249

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p 250

¹⁰⁸ Scholten, 2003, p 181

¹⁰⁹ Näringsdepartementet, 2006, p 4

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Ibid, p 5

¹¹² Glesbygdsverket, 1997, p 57

community of more than 3000 inhabitants, is 2 percent.¹¹³ The OECD definition is based on the proportion of the population that lives in areas with a population density that is less than 150 inhabitants per km², which means that 70 percent of the Swedish population lives in rural areas except for Skåne and Stockholm.¹¹⁴ The business in rural areas is dominated by considerably by small businesses where the owner and worker are one and the same. Small-scale business characterises most of these areas.¹¹⁵ The highest number of businesses where the person working and owning the enterprise is one and the same (livelihood businesses), is in the agricultural sector¹¹⁶. The rural policies have become continuation of the regional policies, and strategically work with weaker areas to enhance the policy for the whole country. The policies for the countryside have shifted focus from having a primarily social aspect,

SWEDEN AND LEADER+

One of the EU projects that are operating right now and which are partly financed with money from the structural fund is the Leader project or projects. The Leader+¹¹⁷ project is the follower of Leader I and Leader II, whereby the first started before Sweden entered the European Union and the second lasted from 1995-1999. The overall goals with the last project has been; to improve the conditions for a strong economy in the area which will enhance employment; to increase the natural and cultural values; to improve the organisational possibilities in the society; and goals concerning employment, youth participation, equality, integration and environment.¹¹⁸ The work is led by Local Action Groups (LAG-teams) that incorporate representatives from the private, non-profit and public sector that together provides a plan for the area. The financial part is solved through a pot of money from various actors, national co-financing, and money from the EU and from people/private organisations. The private contributions are from mostly non-profit work and in order to incorporate it, as an asset it is calculated as money through a model. The group decides itself what project to finance with what money. Swedish National Rural Development Agency has the administrative function and The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is the disbursing authority.¹¹⁹ What has been mainly important and what differs Leader+ from other development projects, is that it is locally anchored and the people that make the plan for the area are from the area. The Leader projects are also operating between regions and emphasise cooperation and collaboration on all levels.¹²⁰

Sjuhäradbygden has been one of the LAG areas where “Life quality” has been the theme of the leader+ projects as they seek to “*improve the quality of life through*

¹¹³ Swedish National Rural Development Agency, 2005

¹¹⁴ Landsbygdsprogrammet, p 11

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p 15

¹¹⁶ Region Västra Götaland, 2006, *Vem är företagare i Västra Götaland?*, p 6f

¹¹⁷ *Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*

¹¹⁸ Landsbygdsprogrammet, p 54

¹¹⁹ Swedish National Rural Development Agency, *Vart leder Leader?*, 2004, p 3

¹²⁰ Ibid, p 14

capturing and developing the local natural and cultural heritage in Sjuhärad”¹²¹. The goal of the project was to find the common interest that unites people and build up a conscience that will automatically lead to an increased quality of life¹²².

The structural change of the rural areas has considering the last centuries been overwhelming as the agriculture has dramatically diminished in importance as an employer and the industry has instead taken over that role. The present regional policy, *Landsbygdsprogrammet 2007 – 2013* states “*the conditions for business are radically different in different parts of the country*”¹²³. The program is in alliance with the rural development policy for the whole of the European Union and needs the Commission’s approval to be fully implemented, but it has been up and running since January 2007. The subsidy system will not be in force until the Commission’s decision. The focus of the program is to reach the environmental goals and hence is more environmentally friendly agricultural practises as organic food production and local production considered as central and provides a future higher value to the rural areas. There is also an emphasis on enterprise and entrepreneurship. The program is set for seven years and its frames are set for the European Union as a whole.¹²⁴ The prognosis for the Swedish agriculture in general is a bit gloomy as it is not as prepared as other countries are for the new development, due to climate and natural conditions.¹²⁵

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Swedish government incorporates *Sustainable Development* into the regional development policies and strives for Sustainable Regional Development. The concept incorporates three acknowledged dimensions, *environmental, economical and social*, and strives for win-win solutions where all aspects should be considered¹²⁶.

There is a fourth dimension, *institutional or political* sustainability, but it is not incorporated in the Swedish national policy. The policy is in line with the ideas of *Ecological Modernisation*, where capitalism is made environmentally friendly by reforming the existing economical, social and political institutions¹²⁷. The regional programme from Västra Götaland interprets the sustainability concept as follows:

“A Sustainable society should provide the needs of today without jeopardize the needs of future generations. All decisions should be formed in a way that considers economical, environmental and social consequences in a longer time span”¹²⁸.

The focus of regional development is hence business and to enhance growth, and seeks to reform the present system in order to achieve a sustainable development. But

¹²¹ ”*Förbättrande av livskvalitet genom att tillvarata och utveckla det lokala natur- och kulturarvet i Sjuhärad*”, Leaderplanen,

¹²² Leaderplanen

¹²³ Landsbygdsprogrammet, p 15

¹²⁴ Ibid, p 57 ff

¹²⁵ Ibid, p 33

¹²⁶ Carter, 2001, 195 f

¹²⁷ Ibid, 211 f

¹²⁸ Vision Västra Götaland, p 3

the value-based concept of sustainable development is central and the region is working with the concept integrating in all issues:

*"All work is built on Sustainable Development and the region was one of the first in the country to work with it that way. Besides the environmental aspect we have worked with the economical and social sustainability through growth strategies. Sustainable Development permeates the strategy documents. One can discuss what else can be done, but it permeates the strategies we have. The politicians are careful to analyse the affecting aspects."*¹²⁹

The regional development policy for Västra Götaland is set to establish Sustainable Regional Development. This is done by creating sustainable growth through a focus on policies that will enhance the creation of new businesses.¹³⁰

4.6 Sjuhäradsmat

The project that was initiated by Hushållningssällskapet in 1997, had been an idea since the mid 90's. As a Leader + project the most part of it was funded by the EU, Hushållningssällskapet, the region of Västra Götaland and the *Federation of Swedish Farmers* (LRF). After the project was accepted, a project leader was installed and set to find all possible local food producers in the area. The project was hence not initiated from below. Some of the producers had already been part of similar smaller projects for enhancing the local food production, or at least to get them noticed by consumers.¹³¹ The project leader was set to enhance the production and to help the producers with whatever they needed and whatever he could provide them with. As most of the producers liked to produce but did not know how to reach the market, the focus was set there, to market the products or to professionalise the sales. It was important to help the producers to see the potential in their own production. When the project ended in 2006 did Sjuhäradsmat become an economic network and has today approximately 40 members.¹³²

The project incorporates many of the aspects that the plan for leader+ in Sjuhärad considers, as it discusses local food production, entrepreneurship, green jobs, cultural and natural values, cooperation and network. The later is interesting as cooperative forces have been important to the area throughout history and is also emphasized in the national program.¹³³ The Leader+ project ended in 2006 and Sjuhäradsmat became an economic network, administered by a board that the members have elected. The network and its members are spread out all over Sjuhärad, and incorporate established producers as well as new ones. The original idea of Sjuhäradsmat was "*to provide locally produced food to the local market*", but the capacity of the producers could not meet the market needs for all products. At least not right away. As the production is yet limited it is important to get the right consumers that see the value of their work and are willing to pay for their products.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Interview B2

¹³⁰ Hållbar Utveckling i Västra Götaland, 2006, p 16

¹³¹ Interview B1

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ Landbygdsprogrammet, p 57 ff

¹³⁴ Interview B1

The member composition mixed men and women, bigger and smaller producers. The project incorporates approximately 40 producers with a variety of production: *berries* (jam, marmalade, lemonade), *bread, cereal production, cheese* (goat, cow), *eggs, fruits, honey products* (honey, bee wax), *meat production* (pig, lamb, beef, turkey, wild boar, raw deer, deer), *pastries, spices, spring water, vegetables* (cabbage, carrots, maize, onions, potatoes, etc) represents some of the production.¹³⁵ The composition of people is mixed, as the education levels are very different: some have university degrees and others do not. Some of the producers are brought up and born in the area, whereas others have moved in and established themselves during adulthood. The rural as well as the regional program enhances the importance of a positive migration and especially people with higher education are considered as important for the economy. They tend to start up businesses more than others and their knowledge can be used in existing businesses¹³⁶. The demand for the products has increased since the start, and the network has become more recognised and established. Four of the producers are full-time producers under a label of their own and the others use the network to get in contact with new consumers, help with logistics and business issues etc. That is also the idea with the network, to facilitate the production of local food by assisting small-scale farmers through a network.¹³⁷

Sjuhäradsomat and its producers might have a future competitive advantage as they are already working with a local market and as small-scale producers. They are becoming established in the area. This is recognised by people that are working with distribution and engaged in organisations as Slow Food consider local food production as a growing trend that can only be stopped by a worsening economy. The interest is increasing with an augmenting number of consumers.¹³⁸

4.6 Conclusions

The European Union and the CAP define the political context that surrounds Sjuhäradsomat and its producers. It sets the directive for the national and hence regional programs for rural as well as regional development. The members of Sjuhäradsomat are not all organic producers, but they are local food producers aiming at a local market and their products have a higher value, as the production process is quality oriented. The unfavourable soils cannot provide an agricultural production as other regions can, but there is still a high percentage that operates within the agro-sector in Västra Götaland. The producers of Sjuhäradsomat are incorporating the solutions that the LAG-group for Leader+ defined and are hence, according to this definition important for sustainable development. The background is painted and the next chapter will go deeper into the micro level and also into the macro level in order to relate the two in final conclusions.

¹³⁵ Sjuhäradsomat

¹³⁶ Landsbygdsprogrammet, p 18 f

¹³⁷ Interview B1

¹³⁸ Interview B11

5 THE GRASSROOTS OF SJUHÄRADSMAT

The analysis is presented through two perspectives, the informants on the micro level (first part), which have emerged from the interviews, and the authorities on the macro level (second part), materialized by reports, programs and interviews. The project started from my pre-understanding that incorporated; *their backgrounds and relation to the area, values, background to production and Sjuhäradsmat, drivers, role of consumers, distributors, region, the European Union and other organisations* that they considered as relevant. During the interviews with the producers, another picture emerged, not entirely different but enough to change the themes for the chapter. The producers in Sjuhäradsmat are different in many aspects: age, type of product, background, some are organic farmers others conventional, groups of people or self-employed etc. These differences are important to keep in mind as the analysis focus on the general *tendencies* that were derived from the interviews. The themes were so obvious that they constitute the analysis. The aim of this chapter is to present these and discuss the whether, as well as how, the macro level is corresponding.

5.1 The producers in Sjuhäradsmat

SELF-EMPLOYED

The adjectives that the producers use for describing themselves are interesting as they correlate with the traditional characteristics of the entrepreneur: *stubborn, durable, engaged and persistent*. This is also generated through their behaviour; they are curious and knowledge seeking. All of the producers do not use the word entrepreneur, some are more considerate and see themselves as *cultivators* or *food producers* rather than entrepreneurs. Despite what they prefer to consider themselves as, the characteristics of the entrepreneur as a *go-getter* can be applied to all. They get things done and engagement is central:

*"Engagement is important, to have give and take. Have never believed in being a layabout, that is perhaps the entrepreneurial spirit."*¹³⁹

Their engagement, professional knowledge and personal interest are contributing to the higher value of the products, a higher quality. It is evident when they talk about their products, as they really want to contribute with something. Food is not just something one produces; it is a *line of thoughts behind* the product. The personal interest is also a form of a driver:

*"Drivers are my engagement and my interest, there is a tremendous load of work. Because things are happening all the time, one needs to be a bit of that nature, to feel that it is fun, otherwise one will not keep up"*¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Interview A8

¹⁴⁰ Interview A4

A lifestyle that generates life quality

The farmer and entrepreneur is a lifestyle where work and free-time are intertwined¹⁴¹. Having the business right at the farm, in the kitchen or next to the house, as most the producers have, makes also the physical distance smallest possible. The families have a natural part of the lifestyle and as the free-time and work are intertwined, so is the family life. The businesses are based within the family where many of them are involved¹⁴². Many of them have rebuilt and restored their farms and homes for having a production. The way that they describe and talk about their business whilst showing the production locale, says a lot. The enthusiasm and energy is transmitted to me, as they show and talk about their business. The family-life is a natural part of their business as it is a motivation for the *kind* of business they have. How this relation looks like, between family and business, considering what comes first or to what extent the family means for the business or the will to find a source of income in the area.

The goal of being self-employed is present; the business is a means and an end. Ideas and visions are realised. It is not about making the most money, even if an increased income is appreciated, but to be able to *live* of their business. The entrepreneurs are realising their visions and bring ideas to life, and they want to continue. This is evident in the physical investments that they have done as well as the amount of time that they have put into it. There is a driver of seeing the immediate effect of ones work, to be able to control the outcome:

*"Sometimes one asks oneself what one is doing when the workload is heavy of hard work. But one is in charge of one's own work and one's own life. Can choose to develop or contract, it is like...a need to control perhaps... To let the children to grow up on the countryside. Work and private life in a huge mess, difficult to distinguish one thing from the other. Everything is connected."*¹⁴³

The choice of lifestyle is most important and the business makes the lifestyle possible. But it is also a means to make ends meet. Scholten (2003) discusses this as an important aspect, especially considering women's enterprisers on the countryside and argues that enterpriseing "*is one of many ways to make a living, a way to get by...*"¹⁴⁴. The lifestyle is chosen, but the business is a means to manage. For some of the producers the business secondary and the lifestyle primary, a means to provide for the family that incorporates loads of hard work. But the way of life is also providing other areas of their lives with energy as they find their business to be consuming energy but also generating energy. They choose themselves where to lay their energy. To be selective is central:

*"I have a lot of things to do. My time is very limited and so... I like politics, our enterprise and I have a big family with children and grandchildren and a lot of people. All those things are what I find fun, but not a job between 8-17... It is a [lisa för själen] for the soul."*¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Friberg, 1990, p 58 f

¹⁴² Friberg, 1990, p59

¹⁴³ Interview A7

¹⁴⁴ Scholten, 2003, p 180

¹⁴⁵ Interview A 9

The business and lifestyle generates life quality, it provides the possibility to work with what *they* want and to occupy themselves with what *they* choose. It provides the opportunity to be around the family in another sense than other jobs. Values are incorporated with the choice of business and to be self-employed offers a flexibility to integrate other values. It is a form of *value-rationality*¹⁴⁶.

*"My experience and it is the same when talking with the others in Sjuhäradsmat, is that this gives so much life quality to life. It lifts the life quality. The life quality of the whole life, also the other work's quality to have this as well."*¹⁴⁷

SOCIAL RELATIONS, SPACE & SOCIAL CAPITAL

The area in which the producers live, not the entire area of Sjuhärad, is important in one-way or another to all of them, but rather as *spaces* where social relations are central¹⁴⁸. The area is almost covered in forest and stone, there is a lot of work also as the vegetation zone is comparable to the north of Sweden as it is situated partly on the highlands of Småland. Throughout history the areas of cultivated lands have been removed from stone. The climate has been challenging. And to some, the area has become their possibility to live the dream of growing or producing food, due to lower prices and access to land. The area has provided the possibility to have the lifestyle they want. The lifestyle of the independent or self-employed is spread in the area, which is generated back to the producers. The place identity and social relations are central for the local economy¹⁴⁹. One argues:

*"The region of Sjuhärad is a bit spick and span, working people that are not used to having things served. One has not the best opportunities to grow. One does it oneself, sort of. There are many talented entrepreneurs that might not have finished secondary school, but who has an enormous knowledge. Endurance and energy is characterising people. People are nice and curious."*¹⁵⁰

Security

The social relations are essential to all and important in all aspects. The social relations are elemental, as citizens, as entrepreneurs, as parents, members of organisations, family members, landowners, politicians etc. As the individuals are different, they also do different things and to various extents, but the relations outside their own business are basic to all. The social relations generate *security* to some of the informants, which makes spatial relations central to most. But the place in itself, or the knowledge of the place, is also mentioned as a form of security:

*"...To have a lot of knowledge, to know a lot about a person, situation or a place, makes one feel a lot more safe. And know what other people think of me."*¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Callinicos, 1999, p160

¹⁴⁷ Interview A10

¹⁴⁸ Rämgård, 2006, p 38 f

¹⁴⁹ Johannesson, 2004, p 31

¹⁵⁰ Interview A7

¹⁵¹ Interview A10

The family is also considered as a form of security, something to rely on, and something solid. To be surrounded by people that you trust and that provides a feeling of community. Another argues:

“...living in a small town or village you often have a big spirit of community [gemenskap] with other people that live in the village. Personal friendships, I think, occur in a bigger extent than in cities.”¹⁵²

The farmers are hence independent but reliant of the social relations that surround them which is something they recognise. This connects the producers: men and women, meat producers and goat farmers, people born in the area and people that have moved to the area etc. The social relations have many aspects and another one is found in Sjuhäradsmat that bonds them all. Sjuhäradsmat is an identity for the producers where social capital and the place, Sjuhäradbygden, are combined. People need others to acquire social capital and the place can enhance its organisation¹⁵³. There is a financial aspect of social capital as well. Johannesson states that the social capital and knowledge are more important for these kind of entrepreneurs, as the financial capital is not as accessible¹⁵⁴. Financial vulnerability increases the dependence of social capital and social relations. Social capital reduces costs¹⁵⁵.

Collaboration and support

The meetings with other people that have an understanding of what the producers do or are entailed in an equivalent network of production are important. It motivates people and experience and information is exchanged even though the only common nominator is them as producers, not the type of production per se. They are interested in the other members' production, but they do not have to be alike in order to have an exchange of experiences and knowledge. *Engagement* comes through *participation*, and the members that need Sjuhäradsmat and see the benefits most clearly, are also the most engaged. There are both formal and informal meetings in Sjuhäradsmat; to where the members are invited and where study visits on member's farms are done. It is considered as important to strengthen the network through knowing each other better, as it bonds the producers:

“We have to find our role in Sjuhäradsmat. What can we do together? One has to feel [känna in] each other and get to know each other. And we have had too little of that to really feel it... But to exploit it and to get more people engaged through it would lift Sjuhäradsmat and make it stronger, stronger brand, but also to make us stronger as a force in the region or considering rural development.”¹⁵⁶

Support is important and Sjuhäradsmat is not the only arena for this. Most of the producers are engaged in many organisations. To many the information about their kind of production has been very limited and many of the producers have started up networks and organisations to create these arenas for mutual support. The various

¹⁵² Interview A6

¹⁵³ Johannesson, 2004, p 31 f

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p 33 f

¹⁵⁵ Evans; Syrett, 2007, p 59

¹⁵⁶ Interview A10

organisations and networks are complementing each other and provide different support, information and knowledge. These arenas have played a central role, as other organisations, macro actors, have been more distant to their ideas. Sjuhäradsmat is built on a *bonding* social capital, as it is inter-relational between the members. Trust, common values and mutual care are funding values and constitute the foundations in a *hierarchical* structure¹⁵⁷, what Putnam would consider a *horizontal association*. As there are bigger enterprisers amongst the small-scale producers in Sjuhäradsmat, is it a potential unbalanced power relation between the members. But the bigger enterprisers do not need the network in the same way that the smaller does, as they are already established and have other financial resources. The active members recognise the need of the network and participate, whereas others who are not dependent or do not see the need, do not, or do so to a different extent. One can assume though that there are power relations within the network, as in most social relations. Sjuhäradsmat provide security, through social capital, for the producers of which most are self-employed, by discussing new ideas, or listening to others and the social part of collaboration. The social capital is a *renewable asset*, and is generated through utilization¹⁵⁸.

There are several producers that are politically active and consider it important to strive for policies that enhance alternative development in the rural areas on the local level. The engagement in politics comes naturally, to those who are, as they seek a change both with their business and politics. It is just different methods. The local economic aspect, as Johannesson discusses, where local initiatives are encouraged and taken care of is general. They are hence *challenging* the traditional economy through themselves as entrepreneurs and their political engagement¹⁵⁹. To influence the setting of the political agenda is hence important¹⁶⁰. They seek, on an individual basis, to promote new ideas as the local economy. The social capital of Sjuhäradsmat is not downside however; as it is inclusive and is not an isolated group lobbying for their own interest. The social capital is *bridging* on the producer level as they are extra-relational and promote cooperation. It is also bridging in the sense that the producers are active and engaged in many dimensions of society: politics, civil society etc. An *including* social capital is what is most valuable to society¹⁶¹, as new producers can benefit from already existing networks and organisations. A mix of bridging and bonding social capital, are needed for sustainable development¹⁶².

The openness is central to all the producers, to inform about their business and their ideas to consumers, distributors and society in general. There is a link from their own business and openness and incentives for other people, to get more people engaged, which is important in order to provide the growing market with their products. The various producers: cheese, meat, flour, vegetables, potatoes, marmalades, eggs etc, can all provide experience and would like to stimulate others, in their roles as producers and engaged citizens. *Social capital increases the more it is used*, which is evident for the producers. It is enjoyable as well as professionally necessary.

¹⁵⁷ Johannesson, 2004, 31 ff

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p 33

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 31 ff

¹⁶⁰ Heywood, 1999, p 126

¹⁶¹ Evans; Syrett, 2007, p 59

¹⁶² Ibid

The new organisations have provided support and played a role where other more established have failed. The producers experience the relation with some of the macro actors (some NGO's, authorities etc) as an un-balanced power relation. The producers need an arena, Sjuhäradsmat or equivalent, to become more equal and state that they are of importance and want to be taken seriously as professional producers:

*"It is important to build networks that becomes channels for experience, knowledge and equipment. Everything possible...It has been an important forum, one needs support in all forms. It has been important to be extrovert and have wanted to be seen for real. I call them the LRF-people [The federation of Swedish farmers] and they have not taken us seriously. We are not competitors to the big ones, but more of a compliment. Not competitors."*¹⁶³

Personal links

Meetings with other producers, customers, distributors and other people in general are functioning as drivers as they get immediate response of their products. Interested consumers and distributors that respond to the products and that are satisfied are drivers to many of the producers. Well informed and interested distributors that know the producer are therefore also very valuable.

*"The mutual dialogue, they shall be able to transmit the higher value of our product, to talk about it and why we do it the way we do... What we are doing is seasonal, we cannot sell the same products all year around and the people we sell to must be able to explain this to their clients... The physical meeting is important"*¹⁶⁴

The producers want to increase the knowledge and the understanding of the production process and the products, and this is also a driving factor. Many of the producers are selling their products directly on their farms, where they seek the opportunity to give the consumers the whole picture of their business. The producers are generating their knowledge and social capital as individuals as well. It is an arena where they can meet their clientele on their own conditions, as well, and they are selling the *place* with the products. An identity anchored in the local area¹⁶⁵. Sjuhäradsmat's brand, the "7", incorporates the area as well as the producers and the products. This is transmitted through meetings with the customers and the people that they meet on markets and at their farms and offers a more balanced power relation. They can argue for their lifestyle and products by being open to others, and they do. The physical meeting facilitates the communication. The direct connections with customers, wherever they might be, is providing the possibility to increase knowledge amongst other people and to have a mutual dialogue to know what the consumers want and what they are interested in etc. There is also curiosity amid people:

*"My experience is that there are more and more people that want to buy directly, to get some history, perhaps to see how it works"*¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Interview A7

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

¹⁶⁵ Johannesson, 2004, p 31

¹⁶⁶ Interview A6

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development and sustainable development are naturally related to the producers; a sustainable rural development is a *precondition* for living in rural areas.

"To me it belongs together, because a Sustainable Development is a development that is constant over a long period of time... The sustainable development entails that it functions also on the local arena. And this also incorporates the countryside. To me is a sustainable development to produce as much as possible of the local, of what is actually needed...It should be created locally and used locally, which is also close to our business idea. "¹⁶⁷

Consistency through life, that the life is characterised by the same line of thought in all aspects is important to many of the producers. To some it is the thought of local development of the specific area, to others it is the thought of sustainable development and some also think of it as the rural development in focus. But they all consider the local production and the local market as central and their businesses are in line with the various concepts. Some of the producers' perspective of sustainable development resembles that of *ecologism*¹⁶⁸. They problemize the present consumption patterns and the capitalistic system, reflect over their own responsibility towards future generations and inter-generations and emphasise the small-scale production. This is not the general ideas or a general tendency but too evident and important to mention as the consequences later will be discussed. What is also noticeable is that they use the same words to describe sustainable development as they use to describe themselves:

"Durability, long-term perspective. Often only a year at the time is considered... sees only details. Important to seek an overarching perspective...One has to go back in order to see the bigger perspective. It is difficult to understand the home arena, but it is more difficult to understand the world. But one must try. "¹⁶⁹

The producers integrate the various dimensions of the concept and seek to influence others to engage themselves for the future of the area. There is also an emphasis on the long-term perspective, as many consider themselves as "carers" of land and future generations in general but also this land and future generations within the family in particular. They perceive their own responsibility to develop, preserve and continue the business for future generations.

Sjuhäradsmat as a platform

The connection to sustainable rural development and local food production is evident and Sjuhäradsmat enables this. It is central for the producers to operate where one is, and sustainable rural development provides new possibilities, new opportunities to live and earn an income on the countryside.

"Provide the possibility to earn a living on the countryside. Some go for the big and others for the small, but it is all as important. Belief in the future is important. Mistrust is contagious and to dare is important. To provide the possibility for people, to live and make a living on

¹⁶⁷ Interview A10

¹⁶⁸ Carter, 2001, 44 f

¹⁶⁹ Interview A7

the countryside. We are small businesses and can operate on the countryside. Little means can make big. We actually do want to produce something and live here”¹⁷⁰

Entrepreneurs in general are central for sustainable rural development, according to the producers, and especially agrarian-based businesses. The producers have, as self-employed and as food producers, a direct interest for preserving the natural resources, as it is the basis of their livelihood. Thus the status of entrepreneurs must increase and in particular what they do, according to themselves. There is an enormous knowledge that is spoilt. People in rural areas are engaged and active and should be considered as assets:

“..when one gets the support and the aid one needs, in order to be able to utilize the resources of the countryside and the creative force. There is an incredible amount of knowledgeable people.”¹⁷¹

OUTSIDE THE OFFICIAL PARADIGM

The producers do not consider themselves as part of the official paradigm of development; their reality is not incorporated. Instead they consider themselves as fighting for an alternative development, and promote their way of living, their business and engagement as possibilities for the countryside. Human agents are needed in order to influence the society¹⁷². They feel underestimated as assets and for sustainable rural development. Their business and lifestyles make it feasible to demonstrate the possibilities of their way of living and their entrepreneurship. They seek to emphasise a local economy where all entrepreneurs are recognised and where engagement is enhanced. Gramsci stated that people could make their own history and establish a social will to change society¹⁷³. The producers are emphasising this aspect in their role as entrepreneurs and active citizens. They are struggling to break the traditional picture of rural development. They set themselves as examples.

“We are a bit like that, us here around being in the front line in finding alternative developments on the countryside and try to engage as much as we can. By starting up ourselves, I think we contribute quite a lot. It is more and more rewarded. Amongst civil citizens, the appreciation is bigger, it is not yet the same thing with authorities.”¹⁷⁴

That they see themselves as taking the front for an alternative development raising questions about *if* they are, in *what way* and if *Sjuhäradsmat* is reproducing this picture. Johannsson would say that they are. *Sjuhäradsmat* constitutes a platform for their business and as it reproduces the place identity of Sjuhärad, it is also reproducing the picture of local development and the producers as frontiers. New members are an indicator of an increased interest in *Sjuhäradsmat*, and the network is expanding. The platform is more established for these alternative ideas and motivates others to participate. Whether the “new” producers are new to *Sjuhäradsmat* or have started up their business recently, is more difficult to distinguish. Their engagement

¹⁷⁰ Interview A7

¹⁷¹ Interview A9

¹⁷² Sztompka, 1993, p 174

¹⁷³ Ibid, p 175

¹⁷⁴ Interview A4

might generate commitment amid other people, producers or not. They put themselves in relation to society and consider it central to be engaged and to present possibilities, to focus on the future. Applying the thoughts of Gramsci is Sjuhäradsmat an arena within the civil society that is generating an alternative idea of the rural areas and the producers. A counter-hegemonic struggle within the civil society is needed¹⁷⁵ and is taking place on the micro level, in Sjuhäradsmat. The producers are by being successful, but also through their very existence, undermining the prevailing hegemony.

The producers do not only react toward the common picture of the entrepreneur, but also on the conventional way of business. They perceive the general time perspective in society as too short, where profit is supposed to be immediate. The producers seek persistency and durability, characteristics of the entrepreneur, in the society. They have slowly built up their businesses and funded their investments themselves, but the system is emphasising a faster development, which forces the enterpriser to have a lot of financial capital initially or take loans. This makes it difficult to people who wish to build it up themselves according to their preferences and the reality they are in, different stages in life, family situation etc. Most of the members of Sjuhäradsmat have jobs that provide for their main income and many have other sources of income. One of the producers argues:

*"There is much around this of having a business that I do not really control, I mean book-keeping, insurances, food-regulation and there are a lot of those things... as in principal wherever one turns there is an expectation that one shall make a living out of the business. It is supposed to go very fast from the start until one makes profit, one is not supposed to have something that one builds up under a longer period and lives cheaply... And then I feel, how do they consider business? If one is supposed to borrow money and be running, it is supposed to be so big and so fast today. Everything. This about keeping on and potter and live off something else while building up a small business until the day that one reaches the desired volume. It is... That thought does not exist in any way, in the encounters with society."*¹⁷⁶

Independent

Independency is important to the producers, as many prefer fewer subsidies and instead acquires that kind of autonomy, than receiving subsidies and the demands that come with it. The lifestyle of the self-employed and independent is noticeable. Most of the people have financed their business themselves, both due to independent factors and also because it has been difficult to finance and to accomplish their visions otherwise. There is also a tendency that they want to do it themselves as they can through investing money from other sources as other jobs. To finance it themselves may have been the only option for many whilst they also prefer to be independent and control the business themselves:

*"I am not prepared to take a loan, I want to finance it myself and build it up without being a burden to the society either."*¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Hobden; Wyn Jones, 2005, 236

¹⁷⁶ Interview A10

¹⁷⁷ Interview A6

The idea of the local economy is appealing to many, where direct investments would be made within the community. The money that came from the area would be invested in the area. The present institutions are too reluctant towards these ideas and are thus not beneficial for local rural development. A micro-credit system, or an investment company where the people in the area could invest their money where they live, is considered to be beneficial to promote alternative ideas. These are aspects of a local economy, where all capital is more or less place-bound¹⁷⁸.

Authorities' roles

To many of the producers is the role of the region quite clear: *appreciating structures that recognise different businesses and where they can find support for diverse creative ideas.* The region should work with them and provide enhancing structures for entrepreneurs whereas the European Union should focus on structures that enhance local production and equal conditions for the farmers on the European market in general. Recognition from the region as providers for a sustainable rural development is central, and would facilitate an inclusion of new and more local food producers.

"The most important is that they show some interest and want to try, to get some locally produced. In a longer perspective that can bring a long-term and sustainable development and with it more life around the area. As it is now, is it in my opinion that there is a lot that is all about experience-based stuff and one after the other gets on that train. Right now is that a bit hip, people that rebuild their farm and people that come and compete. If I look at this place...I would like to see the possibility of buying carrots, potatoes, onions, strawberries and so on, that are locally produced and within Sjuhärad the possibility perhaps exists, if one goes around." ¹⁷⁹

Considering the assistance that exists, for starting-up business in general, personal communication and guidance, where *their* business is on focus, should be applied. These meetings would become more balanced as it is based on a two-way communication and the entrepreneur gets as much as possible out of it. The producers often experience that the authorities do not identify with their type of business and what is central for them. Instead they promote what they want and do not consider what actually exists. It would be preferable if the authorities would start from the micro perspective and look into what is already taking place. Many of the courses, not all, are reproducing the producers as outside the paradigm due to the fact that their drivers and what is central in their business are not considered.

5.2 Authorities' perspectives

There are a couple of policy documents of relevance that are setting the political structure: *The Rural Area Program* from the Swedish National Rural Development Agency and *Vision for Västra Götaland* from the region of Västra Götaland as well as *A national strategy for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment 2007-2013* from the Swedish government. They are all based on the EU policies for 2007-2013. The rural area program is focusing on development of rural areas and the Vision for Västra Götaland is focusing on implementing the national policies in a

¹⁷⁸ Johannesson, 2004, p 33

¹⁷⁹ Interview A6

regional context. The analysis looks into how the political structures are *responding* to the driving factors and central values of the producers. Considering the issues already discussed: *How does the macro level perceive the micro level?*

THE RURAL AREA PROGRAM

The Swedish rural politics has as an overarching goal an environmental, ecological and social sustainable development of the countryside. The goal integrates a sustainable production of food, employment in rural areas, consideration of regional conditions and sustainable growth. The landscape's natural and cultural values shall be defended and the negative environmental impact shall be minimized. The rural politics have in Sweden a close relation to environmental politics and the national environmental quality targets. The connection is also strong to the regional development politics and forest politics. „¹⁸⁰

The necessary means recommended are a good economy through sustainable growth and an encouraging environment for starting up enterprises and entrepreneurs¹⁸¹. The entrepreneurs are central for a sustainable development and growth, but the program recognises difficulties for small businesses that are not considered to have the right location or niche to get financial capital. This is considered as one of the biggest issues for the countryside. Organic food production and local food production are presented as the type of agrarian-based production that can be competitive on the market, together with tourism and bio energy.

The Swedish countryside is not a homogenous part of the country. The conditions for enterprise is radically different in diverse parts of the country. Furthermore are the conditions for different lines of business/.../ The conditions for enterprise are different for the countryside closer to populated areas and more sparsely inhabited areas. „¹⁸²

The regional differences are recognised but the various entrepreneurs are not mentioned more than what is shown by this quote. There are differences but no recognition of dealing with these, despite the goal where all areas should contribute to the development. The spirit of community [gemenskap] is mentioned, as an asset and a requirement for increasing the numbers of entrepreneurs in the rural areas.¹⁸³ Hence Putnam and the ideas of social capital are considered as a positive characteristic of the countryside, but as society is different in different parts of the country so too is the social capital and its outcomes varying¹⁸⁴. The various forms of social capital and how the spin-off effects from entrepreneurs can be captured and enhance local economy is not discussed in the document. It rather states the social capital as fundamental for entrepreneurs and enterprise, but does not imply how anywhere in the 237 pages long document. The argument is taken from another report, *The Small-scale Enterprise Conditions in Rural Areas*¹⁸⁵ (2006) from Glesbygdsverket, that states that most of the business in the rural areas is self-employed, 89 per cent of the business in rural areas are micro enterprises with up to 9 employees whereof 80 per

¹⁸⁰ Landsbygdsprogrammet, p 57

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p 16 ff

¹⁸² Ibid, p 15

¹⁸³ Ibid, p 16 ff

¹⁸⁴ Evans; Syrett, 2007, p 59

¹⁸⁵ "Småföretagandets villkor i gles- och landsbygder"

cent of these are self-employed businesses¹⁸⁶. One possible explanation is lack of financial capital and concern for the responsibility of an employee¹⁸⁷. The report states that most of the new enterprises that are *livelihood businesses*¹⁸⁸ and those started up due to lack of alternatives in the area where they live. These enterprises are considered to have a positive impact on development in the long run and perhaps also growth. The report also considers growth as varying as the business can grow by itself but also together with other enterprises, in networks and it recognises various types of entrepreneurs as well as it acknowledges the fact that not all businesses seek to grow.

¹⁸⁹ The rural area program does not consider this however anywhere in the document, it does not problemize the types of entrepreneurs. Hence, it does not perceive the reality of the producers of Sjuhäradsmat. The *potential* of the rural areas lie within reaching the environmental targets and a continuous growth, a sustainable growth. The local importance for a good economy is stressed, but the local economy is not presented as an asset in itself. The local economy is considered to be a threat in the present paradigm¹⁹⁰. A strong local economy could support local initiatives, where national institutions (banks etc) do not have the same knowledge of the area or same engagement for the various kinds of creative ideas. Johannisson states the narrow definition in the program as a problem for agrarian-based enterprisers, as they seek to diversify their income and broaden the business¹⁹¹.

The varying conditions in the country for entrepreneurs could be a consequence of a lack of social capital and as these areas most likely also lack financial capital and a local economy. Johannisson states that this might be a hegemonic construct in order to easier handle difficult development processes¹⁹². Social and human capital can often substitute the financial capital in the local setting¹⁹³. The outcome of a positive spirit of community in rural areas is dependent on the social capital, which is contextual and situational¹⁹⁴. The regional context and setting is varying. The negative population trend that many of the rural areas are experiencing might generate a more bonding social capital and isolated networks, and less bridging social capital. On the other hand, as Johannisson argues, it is important for the local areas to find their identity and to establish a qualitative development¹⁹⁵. Too easily gained financial capital might generate quantitative growth and other capitals would not be integrated. A balance is needed and the local context has to be acknowledged.¹⁹⁶

Lifestyle, the entrepreneur goes career

The lifestyle of the entrepreneur is not discussed and life quality as a driver on the personal level is not mentioned. The categories of lifestyles that the document

¹⁸⁶ Glesbygdverket, 2006, p 27

¹⁸⁷ Glesbygdverket, 2006, p 1

¹⁸⁸ Levebrödsföretag

¹⁸⁹ Glesbygdverket, 2006, p 7

¹⁹⁰ Johannisson, 2004, p 28

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p 38

¹⁹² Ibid, p 33

¹⁹³ Ibid

¹⁹⁴ Evans; Syrett, 2007, p 59

¹⁹⁵ Johannisson, 2004, p 36

¹⁹⁶ Ibid

focuses on are mainly the *careerist*, but they also consider *self-employed/entrepreneur* characters emphasising their potential as future careerist characters. The program considers the main issues for entrepreneurs to lack financial capital and reluctant to the increased responsibility of an employee. But if the business is a lifestyle where independency is valued, might not as many seek to expand. The self-employed are a lifestyle that seeks to maintain the production as it is, because it provides a possibility, security and flexibility that a growing business will not have. It is another lifestyle and the concern of having employees might be an expression for this. The enterprise is more flexible and easier to form and control as long as it is a one-person business. Actors as the Federation of Swedish Farmers are prioritising the social dimension and the potential of the countryside for sustainable development as fundamental, to enable for people to live in the countryside, the freedom of choice¹⁹⁷.

REGIONAL POLICIES

*“Every part of the country should contribute towards Sweden’s growth and sustainable development. The regional development policy focuses on creating growth, sustainable development and a high level of service for women and men in all parts of the country.”*¹⁹⁸

Sustainable growth is the means for fulfilling the societal goals on the countryside, and a precondition for sustainable development. “*Sustainable growth is economic growth which does not jeopardise the ecosystem on which we depend and which safeguards human resources.*”¹⁹⁹ The national strategy for regional development emphasises local and regional influence over the development work²⁰⁰, Johannisson considers these programs as too narrow in its focus of development and is more of an obstacle than support for the local economy²⁰¹. Vision for Västra Götaland seeks to generate a locally anchored development and recognise the importance of local influence of the strategies, as it is developed together with the representatives for the various municipalities and other stakeholders of relevance. Scholten (2003) states that the regional policy is by setting the urban areas, as the norm, establishes a constant unbalance in the relation between periphery, countryside, and the centre, urban areas. The visions for the regional policies are set considering what the urban areas hold. Another problem is that the conditions in the centre are not as constructive or valuable for the rural areas as the policies uphold them. The regional differences should be considered as assets and should focus on what people locally perceive as important. The policies are too restrictive, as the traditional industrial policy legacy is evident in their definition of full-time income and perception of enterprising, and are therefore not efficient in stimulating new businesses on the countryside.²⁰²

The development is growth focused and so is the Swedish government’s concept of sustainable development. The entrepreneur is central in the economy as a means to

¹⁹⁷ LRF, p 7

¹⁹⁸ Näringsdepartementet, *A national strategy for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment 2007-2013*, p 6

¹⁹⁹ Ibid

²⁰⁰ Ibid p 4

²⁰¹ Johannisson, 2004, p 38

²⁰² Scholten, 2003, p 195 f

reach an end. The policy is *instrumental rational*²⁰³ and does not discuss the kind of business that is considered sustainable, nor the lifestyle of the entrepreneur. The problems of the entrepreneurs are considered to be lack of financial capital. Johannisson considers it to be a constructed issue, to a certain extent, as there are other forms of capital that are as important²⁰⁴. The societal areas that are discussed in the documents are affecting different groups of people and different consequences are generated as they either are included or excluded, people are either engaged. The regional policies have traditionally been excluding as they apply and define the issues and solutions too narrow. There are several examples where people have created local initiatives and hence challenged this hegemonic picture of the business process and political strategies²⁰⁵.

SJUHÄRADS BYGDEN

Sjuhäradbygden is considered to be an interesting area within the region, as there is a range of activity on the micro level. The informants from the region refer to an entrepreneurial tradition. People have traditionally diversified their income and engaged themselves in social activities, which has helped the present entrepreneurs, no matter the business:

*"Sjuhäradbygden is an interesting area. Can state that the business and "go-getter" mentality as well as the entrepreneurial spirit is characterising the district... Different from other parts of the region as Skaraborg and Dalsland. They make things happen instead of waiting for things to happen. A bit of a Gnosjö²⁰⁶ spirit [Gnosjöanda]."*²⁰⁷

The comparison to Gnosjö represents the notion of Sjuhäradbygden as entrepreneurial oriented where people take matters into their own hands as well as it focuses on industrial development and focus on clusters. The local identity is an important factor in the establishment of local development²⁰⁸. The region of Västra Götaland is emphasising a sustainable economy and growth, education and infrastructure, in order to achieve the goal.

*"Today's needs shall be fulfilled without adventuring the needs of future generations. It presupposes a functioning economy, a life bearing and healthy environment and not least participation, individual and social development. And it also presupposes a long-term perspective and consideration for future generations."*²⁰⁹

The region wants to be an area for development and offer life quality to the people that live there. Entrepreneurship and growth-oriented businesses are enhanced as fundamental for sustainable development. *"Attitudes towards entrepreneurship and environmental development are definitely future point with a big development potential to*

²⁰³ Callinicos, 1999, p 160

²⁰⁴ Johannisson, 2004, p 33

²⁰⁵ Scholten, 2003, p 196 f

²⁰⁶ A famous economic cluster in Småland, Sweden

²⁰⁷ Interview B2

²⁰⁸ Johannisson, 2004, p 35

²⁰⁹ Hållbar Utveckling i Västra Götaland, 2006, p 8

*both sustainable development and to economic growth.*²¹⁰ The business that is sought after is mainly enterprises that seek to grow as well as bigger enterprises aiming at the national and international market. The definition of a sustainable economy does also include a responsive environment for new enterprises and entrepreneurs. The lifestyle focus is the same as previous policy documents. The policy discusses one type of business, the growth-oriented. Rural issues are integrated in regional politics, which might explain the narrow framing of the entrepreneur, as a most of the agrarian-based business are self-employed enterprises²¹¹. But at the same time has it been central to generalise the issues in the region in order to internalise the rural areas, there are both positive and negative aspects. The problems of the rural areas are seen as general issues of the region, communications and infrastructure should function everywhere and the structures for entrepreneurs are the same no matter geographical location within the region or population density. The whole region is the region of Västra Götaland's responsibility.²¹² The goal is to “*Support, capture and enhance local development work as an important resource for sustainable growth.*”²¹³

Sjuhäradsmat

Local food production is corresponding to the sustainability goals of the region of Västra Götaland²¹⁴. From a macro perspective is the network a means in the process for sustainable development:

*“During the last 10 to 15 years have many food projects that prefers to profile locally produced food, the area. This is often very accordingly with the sustainability goals. What has been discussed is that many projects have popped up and then disappeared, Sjuhäradsmat has succeeded very well in comparison to others, how these projects can be supported. The region has decided to build some kind of centre to support these projects... It is prioritised.”*²¹⁵

Sjuhäradsmat and its producers are hence important factors for a sustainable future and a regional resource centre is will soon be installed in order to help these types of projects. There is an acknowledged function of the agrarian-based business in general:

*“The farming companies are often the heart of the countryside and the villages and thanks to the grazing animals is the landscape kept open and contributes to an attractive living area.”*²¹⁶

The regional perspective of the material provided from the informants would emphasize the need for support, but also a broader concept of the entrepreneur and the enterprise. The position of the region of Västra Götaland is to enhance regional development that is in line with the sustainability goals they have put up. The documents do not consider or discuss the reality of the producers of Sjuhäradsmat is experiencing or take in their perceptions of business, entrepreneurship and sustainable

²¹⁰ Ibid, p 14

²¹¹ *Vem är företagare i Västra Götaland*, 2006, p 11

²¹² Interview B2

²¹³ *Program for local development and entrepreneurship in Västra Götaland*, p 6

²¹⁴ Interview B2

²¹⁵ Ibid

²¹⁶ Ibid

development.

5.3 Conclusion

The chapter have analysed the common nominators and drivers of the producers in Sjuhäradsmat and analysed the political structures in which they operate. The drivers are discussed and also the consequences of these. The micro level and macro level perceives several central areas differently that will be concluded in details the next chapter.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Entrepreneur: Life style/personality

The members of Sjuhäradsmat are entrepreneurs in the agrarian-based business. There are many reasons to why these people have started up businesses, with a common nominator; it enables the lifestyle they want. They are self-employed and independent and seek to remain so. The business is a means and an end. It includes hard work, but they are in control themselves and they can prioritise where to put their energy. It provides a possibility to combine interest, income from the lifestyle. The lifestyle offers life quality where other factors as working at home and close to the family are central. The social relations to the society, community, neighbours, family, friends, are fundamental for them. These entrepreneurs' businesses need time, to find a loyal clientele, distributors, mutual support and knowledge. They are characterised by a longer time perspective as it has taken time to build them up and as their visions for the same is also set in a longer perspective. The life style and personality of the producers are hence drivers.

The network of Sjuhäradsmat has enabled some of the support needed, in order to establish the businesses and to market themselves. There are other networks and organisations, where the producers are engaged and are members of, (The federation of Swedish farmers, KRAV etc.) that are related to their personal interests and their production. These provide a form of support as well. The producers are generating social capital through their lifestyle: they are active, engaged and open to other entrepreneurs. Sjuhäradsmat and equivalent networks are also generating social capital, which is fundamental for development. There is hence a societal interest in keeping Sjuhäradsmat and its members inclusive. The social capital can to a certain extent diminish the need for financial capital as cooperation, trust and knowledge facilitate the business process.

The producers consider themselves as outside the common paradigm of development and sometimes also the definition of the enterpriser. They seek an alternative development with a focus on the local conditions and where the local initiatives are basic. The producers are hence struggling through their roles as entrepreneurs on the countryside and through other arenas, to broaden the picture of development. Sjuhäradsmat is an arena for support in their role of entrepreneurs, and is hence generating the producers as alternative. Through Sjuhäradsmat are the *place*, the local setting combined with their own *lifestyles* and high-value added *products* sold. The network transmits their perception of development.

Place: Social capital

Sjuhäradsmat and its producers are the type of agrarian production that is needed to compete on the market. Their high-value added products, with the environmental concerns are enhanced, by political visions but not by the structures. The consequence is that the producers do not see themselves as part of the paradigm. The micro level is not represented in the macro level and its political structures. The definition of the entrepreneur, enterpriser, business and rural development are too narrow as it is set on growth-oriented entrepreneurship and economy and do not include the rest. The reality that the producers are operating within is not discussed and recognised. If sustainable rural development is the vision should the people that are considered as relevant by the same authorities, also be enhanced by the political structures. To support the producers through recognition, by establishing that a part of the public purchases should be locally produced and look into the conditions for these enterprises in depth, would the structures present themselves as more including. Place and social capital are drivers as the social relations and the traditions are important to the producers. They want to change the course of development for the area in which they live. They seek an alternative development that is place related and is locally anchored where the social capital is an important driver.

The macro actors act in line with the macro structures, and is characterised by the traditional industry focused policies. The regional development policies are set to establish growth for Sweden, the macro level. The regional development strategies are of a more *instrumental rational* nature, as they are more target-oriented. The micro actors, sees their business as an end and a means, which is of a more *value rational*. The producers have chosen to produce for a local market and some also organically. They have chosen the *space* and from there realised a business, the lifestyle that the space brings was chosen before starting the business. New networks and organisations are needed to fill the gap of support, created and established on the local level where the recognised need is, e.g. Sjuhäradsmat. The definitions are preventing local development due to the narrow definitions. The policies are enhancing the areas that are valued for sustainable development, but it tends to be more excluding than including, for the entrepreneurs, which might create a downside social capital. If people are discouraged by regional policies rather than encouraged, might the networks and businesses isolate themselves. They need support from the structures at the very least not hindrance in their business. The narrow definitions are preventing the region as well as national authorities to deal with the problem, as they do not recognise it. If Sjuhäradsmat and its producers close up and isolate themselves within their networks, are them as assets wasted. It is hence central that the political structures recognise the various drivers of different kinds of entrepreneurs as it also shapes their future choices. If all areas should generate development it is crucial to recognise the different entrepreneurs, different local conditions are assets and might contribute in different ways. They bring assets and generate social capital. The organic production and local food production is needed and emphasised; the *producers need the same recognition*.

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The relation between Sjuhäradsmat and sustainable rural development is recognised by the authorities that strives to enhance equivalent projects. But there is a

difference in the interpretation of the concept between the micro and macro level. The producers accentuate the social dimension and consider it central to be able to live on the countryside. Whereas the authorities see the producers as a means to achieve environmental targets and enhance the economic development. The small-scale business and local economy are central, whilst the region and Sweden is focusing on expansion of markets and businesses. The producers are setting themselves as examples for the possibilities and potential of local economy and alternative development. The authorities have an Ecological Modernisation concept and do not consider the small-scale production or the lifestyle as an end in itself.

Relating to the initial quote of Johannsson, where he presents the locally anchored development as the only kind of development that has the prerequisites to be sustainable. The empirical material from the analysis is evident and proves him right, sustainable development *must* be locally anchored. But the local level must be recognised and considered an asset. The macro political structures must be rooted in the micro level reality. If sustainable rural development is sought for must all *drivers*, be acknowledged and considered for what they are: drivers.

7 FINAL DISCUSSION AND FURTHER IDEAS

The thesis have emphasised one aspect of sustainable rural development in connection to small-scale entrepreneurs, and the network of Sjuhäradsmat. But it has also generated further questions as: The people working in the sustainable businesses on the countryside, who are they? How will sustainable rural development be generated? What are the options? Considering the distances that exist in rural areas, how will sustainable entrepreneurs operate? What are the conditions? Are they idealists and “green wave” people from the urban areas? Is this a realistic picture? The answer is no, people in rural areas are no more idealistic than others and the countryside is not homogenous, people are different. To let local initiatives thrive and the local level be creative might be a step in the right direction. Regional and rural policies that are created bottom-up, where the micro level set the macro policies. The political structures must frame and enhance the type of production that they see important, but recognise and implement the regional variations. Most issues of sustainability are locally anchored and hence call for local resolution.

There are several aspects that are of relevance but have not been the aim of this paper: the role of costumers, European Union and future rural policies (new CAP programs), role of distributors, or continuing on the concept of social capital: how the various entrepreneurs are affecting each other on the local level (what do the extra-relations look like, how are they formed etc). Are entrepreneurs and engaged people motivating other? How? The extra-relations between various actors in society might be difficult to assess, finding indicators for social capital, but would be very interesting. One might look into a certain number of actors and see how they are interacting with others and in what way. To map potential consumers is important as that might lead to a discussion of the “local market”. Where is it, what does it mean to consumers and producers? Is local always sustainable? There is a range of concepts that needs to be critically assessed.

8 LITERATURE

- Alvesson M; Sköldberg K. (2000): *Reflexive Methodology – New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, Sage, UK
- Anderson, A.R; Jack, L.S (2002): *The articulation of social capital in entrepreneurial networks: a glue or a lubricant?*, Entrepreneurship and Regional development, 14, pp 193 – 210
- Hobden, S.; Wyn Jones, R. (2005): *Marxist theories of international relations*, IN: Baylis, J; Smith, S (Editors) *The Globalization of World Politics – an introduction to internationak relations*, Oxford University Press, UK, pp 225-249
- Callinicos, A. (1999): Social Theory – A Historical Introduction, Polity Press, Oxford
- Carter, N. (2001): *The Politics of the Environment – Ideas, Activism, Policy*, Cambridge University Press, UK
- Coompanion (2006): Kooperativt företagande ökar mest, Entreprenörer vill starta företag – tillsammans, Coompanion, Sverige
- DeFillipis, J. (2001): *The Myth of Social Capital in Community Development*, Housing Policy Debate 12 (4), pp 781–806.
- Deiaco, E.; Nordström L. (1998): *Blomstrande näringsliv och dynamiska regioner – vad kan vi lära av omgivningen?* IN: Nilsson, J.E., Blomstrande näringsliv – Krafter och motkrafter bakom förändringar i europeiska och amerikanska regioner, Kungl. Ingenjörsvetenskapsakademien, Stockholm, pp 9-20.
- Eklund K. (1999): *Vår Ekonomi – En Introduction till Samhällsekonomien*, 9th ed, Prisma, Värnamo
- Ekstedt, E. (2003): *Från idéer om ekonomisk utveckling till lokalt utvecklingsarbete i Norrland*, IN: E.Ekstedt; L-E.Wolvén (Editors), Relationsbyggande för ekonomisk utveckling – från idéer om ekonomisk utveckling till lokalt utvecklingsarbete i Norrlands inland, Arbetslivsinstitutet, Stockholm, pp. 125-146.
- Evans M., Steven S. (2007): *Generating Social Capital? The Social Economy and Local Economic Development*, Urban and Regional Studies 14:1, pp 55–74.
- Fine, B. (2001): *Social Capital versus Social Theory: Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium*, Routledge, London
- Friberg, T. (1990): *Kvinnors vardag – Om kvinnors arbete och liv, Anpassningsstrategier i tid och rum*, Studentlitteratur, Lund
- Glesbygdsvetenskapen (1997) *Förnyelsens landskap – bygdepolitik för 2000-talet*
- Glesbygdverket (2006): *Småföretagandets villkor i Gles- och Landsbygd*
- Glesbygdverket (2004): *Vart leder Leader?*
- Goel S.; Karri R. (2006): *Entrepreneurs, effectual logic and over-trust*, Entrepreneurship theory and Practice, 30: 4 pp 477-493.
- Held, D.; Goldblatt, D.; Perraton, J.(1999): *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, Polity Press, Cambridge
- Held, D; McGrew, A. (2003): *The Global Transformations Reader*, 2nd ed, Polity Press, Cambridge
- Hellspong, L; Ledin P (1997): *Vägar genom texten – Handbok i brukstextanalys*, Studentlitteratur, Lund
- Heywood, A. (1999): *Political Theory – An Introduction*, 2nd ed, Palgrave, UK
- Herlitz, U. (2004): *Samhällsbygge med lokalekonomiska finansieringsalternativ*, IN: Lokal Ekonomi för Hållbar Utveckling, Nutek, Stockholm
- Holmblad, L. (2005): *Från gånggrift till EU-region*, IN: B.Tynderfeldt (Ed.), Västergötland, Bilda Förlag, Verona
- Højrup, T. (2003): *State, Culture and Life-Modes – The foundations of Life-Mode Analysis*, Ashgate, UK

- Iyer S.; Kitson M.; Toh B (2005): *Social Capital, Economic Growth and Regional development*, Regional Studies, 39:8, pp 1015–1040.
- Johannesson B. (2000): *Humankapital och socialt kapital som kraftkällor vid regional utveckling*. Fritzes, Underlagsrapport nr 13 till den regionalpolitiska utredningen.
- Johannesson B. (2004): *Den lokala ekonomins kraftkällor*, IN: Lokal Ekonomi för Hållbar Utveckling, Nutek, Stockholm, pp 27-40.
- Jordbruksdepartementet (2006): *Reviderat förslag till Landsbygdsprogram för Sverige år 2007 – 2013*.
- Kvale, S. (1997): *Den Kvalitativa Forskningsintervjun*, Studentlitteratur, Lund
- Lagerlöf, Selma (1981): *Nils Holgerssons Underbara Resa genom Sverige*, Bonniers Juniorförlag, Leipzig
- Lithander, J. (2003): *Från skalfördelar till Povel Ramel – samverkan mellan småföretag i landsbygdsmiljö*, IN: E.Ekstedt; L-E.Wolvén (Ed.), Relationsbyggande för ekonomisk utveckling – från idéer om ekonomisk utveckling till lokalt utvecklingsarbete i Norrlands inland, Arbetslivsinstitutet, Stockholm, pp. 125-146.
- LRF (presented 2006): *De Gröna Näringsarnas nya affärsmöjligheter – Nuläge och framtid*,
- LRF (2007): *Lantbruksbarometern 2007 – Lantbrukarnas uppfattningar och förväntningar om konjunkturen*, Swedbank & Småbankerna, LRF konsult och LRF
- LRF (2005): *Landsbygd i utveckling – Lantbrukarnas Riksförbunds Landsbygdsstrategi*, (Main author, Ingrid Mars)
- Lundmark, M. (2000): Regional utjämning eller polarisering i Europa? IN: Berger, S. (Editor), Det nya samhällets geografi, Uppsala Publishing House, Jönköping, pp 247-267.
- Lundquist L. (1993): *Det vetenskapliga studiet av politik*, Studentlitteratur, Lund
- Malmberg, A. (2000): *Lokal miljö, agglomeration och industriell konkurrenskraft*, IN: Berger, S. (Editor), Det nya samhällets geografi, Uppsala Publishing House, Jönköping, pp 221-246.
- Marsden T.; Banks J.; Renting H.; Douwe van Der Plooeg J. (2001): *The Road Towards Sustainable Rural Development: Issues of Theory, Policy and Research Practice*, Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning 3, pp 75–83
- Marsden, T.; Smith, E. (2004): *Ecological entrepreneurship: sustainable development in local communities through quality food production and local branding*, Geoforum 36 (2005), pp 440-451.
- Martinussen J. (1997): *Society, State & Market – a Guide to Competing Theories of Development*, Zed Books, UK
- Massey, D. (1994): *Space, Place and Gender*, Polity Press, UK
- Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications (2006): *En nationell strategi för regional konkurrenskraft, entreprenörskap och sysselsättning 2007–2013*
- Minniti, M. (2006): *Entrepreneurs Examined*, Business Strategy Review winter 2006, pp 78-82.
- Murdoch, J. (2000): *Networks – A new paradigm of rural development?*, Journal of Rural Studies 16, pp 407-419.
- Nalin, Evald (2000): *Varför bör CAP – EU's gemensamma jordbrukspolitik reformeras?*, Livsmedelsinstitutet, Lund
- Nutek (2004): *Lokal Ekonomi för Hållbar Utveckling*.
- Olson M. (1982): *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation and Social Rigidities*, Yale University Press, New Haven
- Olsson, J (2005): *Hållbar utveckling underifrån?*, IN: Olsson, J (Editor) *Hållbar utveckling underifrån*, Nya Doxa, Riga, pp. 11-28.
- Olsson, J. (2005): *Lokal nivå i focus*, IN: Olsson, J (Editor) *Hållbar utveckling underifrån*, Nya Doxa, Riga, pp. 29-42.
- Pettersson, C. (2005): *Förelänta nationerna sätter dagordningen*, IN: Olsson, J (Editor) *Hållbar utveckling underifrån*, Nya Doxa, Riga, pp. 45-66.

- Pugliese, P. (2001): *Organic Farming and Sustainable Development: a Multifaceted and Promising Convergence*, Sociologica Ruralis, vol 41-1, 112-130
- Putnam R. (1993): Making Democracy Work – Civic traditions in Modern Italy, Princeton University Press, Princeton
- Region of Västra Götaland (2005): *Vision Västra Götaland – Det Goda Livet*
- Region of Västra Götaland (2006): *Vem är företagare i Västra Götaland?*, rapport tillväxt och utveckling
- Region of Västra Götaland (2006): *Hållbar Utveckling i Västra Götaland – Utveckling, Utvecklingsarbete, Framtid*, Regionutvecklingsekretariatet
- Repstad, P. (1999): *Närhet och Distan – Kvalitativa Metoder i Samhällsvetenskap*, 3rd ed, Studentlitteratur, Oslo
- Rämgård, M. (2006): *The Power of Place – Existential Crises and Place security in the Context of Pregnancy*, Lund University
- Sayer, A. (2000): *Realism and Social Science*, Sage, London
- Schmida E.; Sinabellb F. (2007): *On the choice of farm management practices after the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy in 2003*, Journal of Environmental Management 82, pp 332–340.
- Scholten, Christina (2003): *Kvinnors Försörjningsrum – Hegemonins förvaltare och murbräckor*, Lund University
- Småföretagsdelegationen (1998): *Goda idéer om småföretag och samverkan*, SOU 1998:92, Närings och handelsdepartementet, Stockholm
- Svensson, F. (2003): *Entreprenörskap och byråkrati – hindras kreativa företag av reglerande myndigheter?* IN: E.Ekstedt,; L-E.Wolvén (Editors), Relationsbyggande för ekonomisk utveckling – från idéer om ekonomisk utveckling till lokalt utvecklingsarbete i Norrlands inland, Arbetslivsinstitutet, Stockholm, pp. 47-66.
- Sztompka, P. (1993): *The Sociology of Social Change*, Blackwell Publishers, UK
- Thurén, T. (1991): *Vetenskapsteori för nybörjare*, Liber, Malmö,
- Woolcock, M. (1998): *Social Capital and Economic Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis and Policy Framework*, Theory and Society27 (2), pp 151–208.
- World Commission on Environment and Development (1978): *Our Common Future*, Oxford University Press New York, p 8
- Yin, R.K (2003): *Case study research – Design and methods*, 3rd ed, Sage Publications, US

URL's

Leader- Sjuhärad:

<http://www.leader-sjuharad.com/page310.html> (retrieved, 2007-01-12)

Sjuhäradsmat:

<http://web.sjuharadsmat.com/index.htm>, (retrieved, 2007-01-30)

Appendix 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE 1: Producers of Sjuhäradsomat

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Occupation
Age
Education
History in the area?
Family?

VALUES: What does the area mean to you? Or describe the area, what characterises the area? (Culturally, Socially, Economically, Environmentally, Politically)

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT:

SECURITY: Definition/Description

QUALITY OF LIFE: Definition/Description

PRODUCER/PARTICIPANTS:

BACKGROUND TO THEIR PRODUCTION: How?

DRIVERS: Visions of business.

BACKGROUND TO THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN SJUHÄRADSMAT: Idea of Sjuhäradsomat, Common nominator, Drivers

CONSUMER: Are there any? Who? Where do they live?

DISTRIBUTOR: Are there any? Who? Where? How does it function/work? What role do they play?

STRUCTURES: Define role of political institutions: EU? Government? Region? Other actors of relevance?

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Definition, Potential connection between SD and Sjuhäradsomat?

INTERVIEWGUIDE 2: Informants on macro level

THEIR BACKGROUNDS: Relation to the area

CHARACTERISTICS OF SJUHÄRADSBYGDEN: Definition

DEFINITION OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Definition, their role, central areas to enhance

SJUHÄRADSMAT: Its role, Market, Essential characteristics of the network in relation to the political visions,

POLITICAL STRUCTURES: Their role