Who am I, and if so, how many?

Identity Dynamics in Agricultural Entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Identity matters and identity is hailed increasingly as central to fully apprehending entrepreneurship. Identity is inherent to entrepreneurship because entrepreneurs establish and grow their ventures based on their identities. Hence, identity infuses entrepreneurial activities with meaning and guidance. An identity perspective in entrepreneurship allows us to move beyond traditional views embedded in economic rationality when seeking to understand entrepreneurial motivation and behavior in the agricultural sector. It emphasizes that farming entrepreneurs think, behave and act in ways that they deem appropriate for themselves – notably because farmers are explored as individuals who are sensitive to their personal values and beliefs, which are crucial to identity. Each farmer has her/his own version of what it means to be a good farmer, which influences her/his entrepreneurial behavior.

This dissertation is situated in the growing literature on identities in entrepreneurship that has provided new insights and developed theory that helps explain the rich heterogeneity of entrepreneurs' characteristics and motivations as well as how entrepreneurs' identities are linked to decision-making and behavior. However, there is insufficient analytical use of the dynamics of entrepreneurs' multiple identities in existing scholarly work. This problem is critical because there are potentially multiple salient identities to entrepreneurs that evolve and/or change over time and that consequently influence entrepreneurial endeavors and outcomes and that need to be managed by entrepreneurs. It is, moreover, critical because identity might not only influence entrepreneurial behavior and outcomes but in turn might also be influenced by entrepreneurial endeavors. Given these limitations, the purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the dynamics of entrepreneurs' identities over time when pursuing entrepreneurship.

To fulfill this purpose, the dissertation builds on a longitudinal and qualitative theory-building research approach that allows actors under study to be followed over an extended period of time and identity dynamics and context to be captured in greater detail. Opportunities for researching identity dynamics in entrepreneurship become especially apparent as we look at farming. Social and structural changes in the agricultural sector result in farmers' enactment of various social roles and/or social group affiliations. At the same time, the majority of farming takes place in the family context in which family farms are transitioned over many generations. In such a complex environment, the development and the psychological experience of managing multiple identities can constitute both challenges and opportunities for farmers.

Overall, the dissertation contributes to the emerging inquiry on identities in entrepreneurship by providing novel theoretical models of founder identity development

and processes of identity management and their influence on individually and on organizationally relevant outcomes. The findings of the dissertation also contribute to the literature on contextualizing entrepreneurship by providing key contextual dimensions of the agricultural sector and showing how studying these dimensions can illuminate less well-understood aspects of entrepreneurship theory. Practically, this dissertation presents obstacles to, and opportunities for, developing an entrepreneurial identity and a more entrepreneurial approach in the agricultural sector.

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Svensk sammanfattning

Identitetsfrågor och identitet blir allt mer centrala för att fullt ut förstå entreprenörskap. Identitet är essentiellt för entreprenörskap eftersom företagare etablerar och utvecklar sina företag baserat på sin identitet. Därför tillför identitet mening och vägledning till entreprenörsaktiviteter. Ett identitetsperspektiv inom entreprenörskap gör det möjligt att lämna befintliga traditionella åsikter inom ekonomisk rationalitet bakom oss när vi försöker förstå entreprenörers motivation och beteende inom jordbrukssektorn. Det betonar att jordbruksföretagare tänker, uppför sig och agerar på sätt som de anser lämpliga för sig själva, speciellt eftersom jordbrukare undersöks som individer som är mottagliga för sina personliga värderingar och övertygelser, vilket är avgörande för identiteten. Varje jordbrukare har sin egen version av vad det innebär att vara en bra jordbrukare, vilket påverkar varje entreprenörs beteende.

Denna avhandling tillhör den tilltagande strömmen av litteratur om entreprenörsidentitet som har givit nya insikter och utvecklat teori som bidrar till att förklara den rika heterogeniteten bland entreprenörers egenskaper och motivation, samt hur företagares identitet är kopplat till beslutsfattande och beteende. Däremot saknas tillräcklig analytisk användning av dynamiken i företagarens flera identiteter i befintlig forskning. Detta är ett kritiskt problem eftersom det finns flera potentiellt relevanta identiteter för företagare som utvecklas och/eller förändras över tid och som följaktligen påverkar företagares satsningar och resultat, och som måste hanteras av företagare. Det är därtill kritiskt eftersom identitet inte bara kan påverka entreprenörsmässigt beteende och resultat utan följaktligen också kan påverkas av entreprenörsarbetet. Med hänsyn till dessa begränsningar är denna avhandlings syfte att undersöka dynamiken i entreprenörers identitet över tid i deras entreprenörskap.

För att uppfylla detta syfte bygger avhandlingen på ett longitudinellt och kvalitativt teoribyggande forskningssätt som möjliggör följande av de aktörer som studeras under en längre tid och beskrivande av identitetsdynamik och sammanhang mer detaljerat. Möjligheterna att undersöka identitetsdynamik inom entreprenörskap blir särskilt tydliga när vi ser på jordbruket. Sociala och strukturella förändringar i jordbrukssektorn resulterar i att jordbrukare antar olika sociala roller och/eller sociala grupptillhörigheter. Samtidigt sker en majoritet av jordbruket i familjesammanhang där familjeföretag övertas i flera generationer. I en så komplex miljö kan utvecklingen och den psykologiska upplevelsen av att hantera flera identiteter utgöra både utmaningar och möjligheter för jordbrukare.

Sammanfattningsvis bidrar avhandlingen till ny undersökning av identiteter i entreprenörskap genom att tillhandahålla nya teoretiska modeller för identitetsutveckling hos grundare och processer för identitetshantering och deras inflytande på individuellt och på organisatoriskt relevanta resultat. Avhandlingens resultat bidrar också till

litteraturen om kontextualisering av entreprenörskap genom att tillhandahålla en viktig kontextuell dimension i jordbrukssektorn och hur man studerar dessa dimensioner kan belysa sidor av entreprenörskapsteori som inte är lika välförstådda. I praktiken presenterar avhandlingen hinder och möjligheter för att utveckla en entreprenörsidentitet och en mer entreprenörsmässig strategi inom jordbrukssektorn.

Dedication

I hope my dissertation provides a springboard for farmers who aspire to lead a more entrepreneurial farm business and individuals who want to become founders in the agricultural sector, as well as for scholars, policymakers, consultants, educators and other important stakeholders of the industry who have the power to shape an entrepreneurial future in agriculture – in theory and practice.

Contents

List of Publications

This thesis is based on the work contained in the following papers, referred to by Roman numerals in the text:

I   Fitz-Koch*, S., Nordqvist, M., Carter, S., & Hunter, E. (2018). Entrepreneurship in the Agricultural Sector: A Literature Review and Future Research Opportunities. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practices*, 42(1), 129-166.

II Fitz-Koch*, S., & Cyron, T. The Interplay of Micro and Macro Transitions in Founder Identity Construction. *Manuscript*.

III Fitz-Koch*, S., & Nordqvist, M. (2017). The Reciprocal Relationship of Innovation Capabilities and Socioemotional Wealth in a Family Firm. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 55(4), 547-570.

IV Fitz-Koch*, S., Nordqvist, M., & Akhter, N. Next-Generation Entrepreneurial Activities and Positive Identity Development in Family Firms. *Manuscript*.

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* Corresponding author.

The contribution to the papers included in this thesis was as follows:

I   Planned and chose study design. Performed analysis. Wrote paper jointly with coauthors. Corresponding author, had overall responsibility for writing the paper.

II   Planned and chose study design. Collected data. Performed analysis and wrote paper jointly with coauthor. Corresponding author, had overall responsibility for the paper.

III Planned and chose study design jointly with coauthor. Performed data analysis. Wrote paper jointly with coauthor. Corresponding author, had overall responsibility for the paper.

IV   Planned and chose study design. Collected data and performed analysis. Wrote paper jointly with coauthors. Corresponding author, had overall responsibility for paper.

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Importance of Identity for Understanding Entrepreneurship

"In my heart I will always be a farmer."
(Swedish entrepreneur in the construction and property business)

The exemplary quote above illustrates an interplay between identity and entrepreneurship that is common in the agricultural sector. Recent structural, technological and institutional changes in agriculture have led to the widening of the good farming ideal and a fragmentation of what it means to be a farmer (Stenholm & Hytti, 2014; Warren et al., 2016). It no longer suffices to only be a farmer, as farmers must also engage in entrepreneurial activities. Some might even no longer be involved only in farming activities as such but might also engage, for instance, in the construction business as well as owning their farm. Nowadays, agricultural actors use new labels such as "manager" or "entrepreneur" as commonly as "farmer" or "family farm" for self-definition (Brandth & Haugen, 2011; Bryant, 1999; Jervell, 1999; Niska et al., 2012; Stenholm & Hytti, 2014; Vesala et al., 2007;). At the same time, the strong identification with farming tends to persist on a deeper level, partly because farms are primarily family firms that are owned, managed and worked by families over centuries (Gasson & Errington, 1993; Jervell, 2011).

Lately, new entrants have become increasingly recognized as important to the survival and competitiveness of the agricultural sector (European Commission, 2016). Newcomers usually include those who neither have a connection to an existing farm nor longstanding farming experiences and who

find a way into agriculture by various routes, many of them unorthodox by starting innovative businesses. Quite often, they bring new ideas and methods to local farming but face the challenge of adhering to their personal ideals and making a livelihood from their new ventures (European Commission, 2016; Monllor i Rico & Fuller, 2016). Identity battles – regardless of whether they are a newcomer or an established farmer – are therefore more common than ever in farming, which makes it such a promising context in which to study identity dynamics in entrepreneurship.

In the broader social sciences, scholars increasingly hail identity as central to fully apprehending a wide array of phenomena because human behavior often implicates the individuals' subjective understanding of who they are, were and who they want to become (e.g., Alvesson et al., 2008; Ashforth, 2001; Atewologun et al., 2017; Brown, 2015; Ibarra, 1999). In other words, identity matters because it constitutes a central and persistent part of our lives and generally refers to the meanings that individuals attach to themselves, which is usually understood as the answer to the question "who am I?" (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The core of identity is therefore self-definition and how individuals feel about and value their identity. It further includes the goals, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, skills, abilities, and stereotypic traits associated with that identity (cf., Ashforth et al., 2008). Scholars "regard identities as enacted in the 'now' through language and action" (Brown, 2015, p. 23). Thus, identity content not only signifies the meaning of the identity (e.g., what it means to be a farmer or an entrepreneur) and of our personal and social lives, but also prescribes modes of behavior (Atewologun et al., 2017).

Similarly, identities are central for and inherent to entrepreneurship (e.g., Cardon et al., 2013; Farmer et al., 2011; Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Ireland & Webb, 2007; Powell & Baker, 2014, 2017) because they infuse entrepreneurial activities with meaning and guidance (e.g., Farmer et al., 2011; Gruber & MacMillan, 2017; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2018). Hence, entrepreneurial endeavors are "intimately intertwined" with the entrepreneur's identity (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009a, p. 319). An identity perspective allows us to move beyond traditional views embedded in economic rationality when seeking to understand entrepreneurial motivation and behavior, because it emphasizes that entrepreneurs think, behave and act in ways that they deem appropriate for themselves – Notably because an individual's identity or sense of self is crucial to personal values, feelings, and beliefs, and because individuals strive to behave in ways that are consistent with the meanings inherent in their identity (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Thus, when individuals have a salient entrepreneurial identity, they are dedicated to discovering and creating new business opportunities to validate important self-conceptions (Cardon et al., 2009; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010;

Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007; Zuzul & Tripsas, 2019). The concept of founder identity was refined to account for the number of subidentities that entrepreneurs may have and that their efforts shape (Powell & Baker, 2014). Overall, the entrepreneurship literature on identity has provided novel insights and developed theory that helps explain the rich heterogeneity of entrepreneurs' characteristics and motivations (e.g., Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Murnieks et al., 2014; York et al., 2016; Zuzul & Tripsas, 2019) as well as how entrepreneurs' identities are linked to decision-making and behavior (e.g., Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Powell & Baker, 2014, 2017; Wry & York, 2017; York et al., 2016).

Unfortunately, there is insufficient analytical use of the complexity and interplay of entrepreneurs' multiple identities over time in existing scholarly work (Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Ramarajan, 2014). A grounding concern of my dissertation is that the literature on entrepreneurial (and founder) identity has not fully looked at the dynamics of identity, that is, the identity mechanisms that stimulate development, maintenance, and change in processes as well as the relationships among different identities in the pursuit of entrepreneurship. The problem is critical because there are potentially multiple salient entrepreneur identities that evolve and/or change over time (e.g., Mathias & Williams, 2017; Zuzul & Tripsas, 2019) and that consequently influence entrepreneurial endeavors and outcomes, which need to be managed by entrepreneurs. It is, moreover, critical because identity might not only influence entrepreneurial outcomes but in turn might also be influenced by entrepreneurial endeavors and environment (e.g., Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Fisher et al., 2016; Ladge & Little, 2019). Therefore, to better understand why some entrepreneurs succeed and some others do not, we need to take into consideration identity dynamics.

My dissertation studies the agricultural sector as a fitting empirical context in which to better understand the dynamics of identity in entrepreneurship. Opportunities for researching identity in entrepreneurship become especially apparent as we look at farming. I further focus on person, role, and social identity theory to understand identity dynamics and variation within entrepreneurial individuals as well as to understand entrepreneurial families in entrepreneurship. Methodologically, my dissertation builds on a qualitative and inductive research approach, which allows me to follow entrepreneurs and families over a period of time and to capture context, time, developments and changes in identities in greater detail.

1.2 Towards Contextualizing Multiple Identities and Processes in Entrepreneurship

In seeking to build on the emerging literature on entrepreneurial identity by studying identity dynamics, there is an opportunity for scholarship to consider identity processes and the relation between multiple identities at the level of the individual entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial family, as well as the context in which their identity is embedded. Such a focus will enrich our theoretical and practical understandings of identity in entrepreneurship and its temporal dynamics.

1.2.1 The Need for Process Studies

Although identity has an important temporal dimension (e.g., Ashforth, 2001; Atewologun et al., 2017; Brown, 2015; Pratt et al., 2000), attempts at an explicit investigation of temporality in identity and entrepreneurship research are relatively scarce (e.g., Gorgievski & Stephan, 2016; Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Lévesque & Stephan, 2019; Lewis et al., 2016; Powell & Baker, 2017; Pratt, 2012; Zahra & Wright, 2011). Scholars have discovered that individuals engage in activities to construct, sustain, and manage their identities (via social interaction) that are congruent with their self-concept. Yet, the processes by which identity in entrepreneurship evolves and changes, because of, for example, identity contradiction (Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Lewis et al., 2016), as well as the trade-offs and sacrifices or gains that may accompany identity choices (e.g., Atewologun et al., 2017; Brown, 2015), are mostly unexplored. Given the critical importance and inescapability of time in identity, and in the lives of organizations and entrepreneurship in particular, it is problematic that a large part of entrepreneurship scholarship tends to exclude time (Hjorth et al., 2015; Lévesque & Stephan, 2019).

For me, process studies involve considering phenomena dynamically; that is how and why entities (e.g., people, firms, strategies, identities) develop, change, and act over time (Langley, 2007; Van de Ven, 1992). They also illuminate the role (or mechanism) of tensions and contradictions in driving patterns of, for example, change, and show how interactions across levels contribute to change. At the same time, process studies may reveal the mechanisms underlying maintenance as well as harmony in driving patterns (Langley, 1999; Langley et al., 2013). Methodologically, a good deal of process research adopts qualitative approaches to capture nuances of processes and relies on longitudinal data that are rich and varied in nature (cf., Langley et al., 2013).

By recognizing the centrality of time in identity in entrepreneurship, process conceptualizations can offer an essential contribution to a more nuanced and

detailed understanding. They allow us to connect antecedents to outcomes of entrepreneurship and provide explanations as to why things become how they are. From a process perspective, we can understand outcomes better, as it leads to a less simplistic, less static, and less linear understanding of what entrepreneurial outcome implies (cf., Langley et al., 2013). Thus, further fine-grained research is needed to appreciate nuances in how, why, and with what implications identity is constructed (e.g., the transition to a founder identity), maintained, and managed by entrepreneurs.

1.2.2 The Need for Studying Multiple Identities

As indicated above, identity is a complex and multidimensional construct that comprises multiple (sub)identities rather than a univocal and unchanging self. It profoundly influences not only how we feel and think, and what we desire, but also how we behave (e.g., Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Shepherd & Haynie, 2009a; van Knippenberg, 2000). Alongside the entrepreneurial identity, there are meaningful nonentrepreneurial identities that are likely to affect individuals' entrepreneurial endeavors and venture decisions (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Lewis et al., 2016; Powell & Baker, 2014; York et al., 2016).

Individuals can even simultaneously have multiple work identities (Ramarajan, 2014; Ramarajan et al., 2017b). For instance, an entrepreneur may define him or herself as a marketing expert, product developer, or innovator, as well as an accountant (e.g., Cardon et al., 2009; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Mathias, 2017; Mathias & Williams, 2018). An entrepreneurial identity is thus likely the culmination of several micro-identities (Powell & Baker, 2014; Shepherd & Haynie, 2009a). Beyond the importance of each identity, how entrepreneurs experience the relationship between their multiple micro-identities may be conflicting or enhancing (Ramarajan et al., 2017b). This is likely to influence how entrepreneurs manage their multiple identities (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009a) and also whether they succeed in their new venture efforts.

However, most entrepreneurship literature assumes that individuals experience a singular entrepreneurial identity that motivates them to think and act like an entrepreneur. The few contributions focusing on multiple identities in entrepreneurship do not fully examine how these multiple identities coexist and how they interplay in the pursuit of entrepreneurship. Such theoretical shortcomings potentially maintain a too simplistic differentiation and representation of identity in entrepreneurship (entrepreneurial vs. nonentrepreneurial identity) that does not mirror the complexity and dynamics of identities related to entrepreneurship and the challenge of managing them all.

1.2.3 The Need for Contextualized Studies

Many of the attempts that try to investigate the multiple identities of entrepreneurs are theoretical in nature (e.g., Shepherd & Haynie, 2009a, b; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2018; Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008; Wry & York, 2017), which probably explains why we still do not know much about how contexts affect entrepreneurs' identities and identity management (Atewologun et al., 2017; Brown, 2015; Gorgievski & Stephan, 2016; Jones et al., 2019; Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Welter & Gartner, 2016). It appears problematic because context, defined as the immediate work and private environment as well as industry, influences entrepreneurial opportunities and decision-making and at the same time can be an important boundary condition (Johns, 2006; Mowday & Sutton, 1993). Thus, context is crucial for understanding when, how, and why some entrepreneurial efforts succeed while others do not (Gorgievski & Stephan, 2016; Welter, 2011; Welter & Gartner, 2016).

In the agricultural sector, it seems that entrepreneurs do not abandon their current work role of being farmers (Alsos et al., 2011). Hence, entrepreneurial identity cannot be conceptualized without attention to the work, family, and personal lives of agricultural entrepreneurs, and the overlap and interplay between the different identities, as well as the wider context in which entrepreneurial activities exist (Alsos et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2019; Lewis et al., 2016; Watson, 2009). This perspective is congruent with the general research on identity, which has come to view work identities too far from and separate to other dimensions of an individual's life (Atewologun et al., 2017).

In addition, looking at the sector, there is scope for more research on different identity units of analysis, such as the individual and family, as well as the dynamic interrelationships among them (e.g., Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Shepherd et al., 2019) and the nature of identity negotiation in the creation of new ventures (e.g., Atewologun et al., 2017; Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008). Given the pervasiveness of identity, it matters on every level of analysis.

Studying context provides not only new insights about when, how, and why entrepreneurship happens but also about who becomes involved (cf., Welter, 2011) and may provide a different nuance on how context can change phenomena. Although direct succession within a (family) farm business remains the most common way by which "newcomers" enter the agricultural sector, in recent years there has been evidence that a growing number of newcomers that have limited previous experience with agriculture and entrepreneurship are entering the sector (European Commission, 2016). This is interesting, because the costs of farming have been going up while overall farm income has declined, which has required many farmers to give up agriculture and end their family's

indebtedness (EU, 2018). New founders may be motivated by nonfinancial goals and the opportunity to enhance their quality of life through owning and operating a business closely aligned to personal values, goals, and interests (European Commission, 2016). Thus, the study of identity dynamics in entrepreneurship matters and is meaningful.

1.3 Research Purpose and Questions

Given the above theoretical limitations, my dissertation incorporates a process and multiple identity perspective to better understand entrepreneurship phenomena in context. The agricultural sector is a rich setting for studying multiple identity in relationship to entrepreneurship and allows important implications for farmers, family firms, and entrepreneurs in general to be outlined. Thus, the purpose of my dissertation is to investigate the dynamics of agricultural entrepreneurs' identities over time when pursuing entrepreneurial activities. This means that I investigate identity mechanisms that stimulate development, maintenance, and change in identity and entrepreneurship processes as well as the relationships among different identities in the pursuit of entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. Accordingly, I formulate three guiding research questions for the individual thesis papers:

1 How do individuals in the agricultural sector develop an entrepreneurial (founder) identity?
2 How does entrepreneurial identity influence entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector?
3 How and why do multiple identities relate and change in the pursuit of entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector?

1.4 Overview of Thesis Papers

My dissertation compiles four papers, each addressing identity in the agricultural sector from a different perspective and motivation. A compilation approach allows me to incorporate different foci and consequently to answer my different research questions. Each paper has a distinct research question that drives it, but together they provide answers to the above guiding research questions.

Paper I sets the empirical context for this dissertation by systematically reviewing the extant research in agricultural entrepreneurship. The purpose of this first thesis paper is to appraise the main themes within agricultural entrepreneurship research and to identify the key contextual aspects of the agricultural sector through which entrepreneurship scholars can learn more

about entrepreneurship in context. The literature review highlights identity as a particularly important dimension for understanding the uniqueness of this sector and having the conceptual relevance for advancing entrepreneurship research and theory more broadly. Principally it is the foundation of my dissertation because it defines the three research questions mentioned above that I explore in the following thesis papers.

Paper II addresses research questions one and three of my dissertation by exploring how newcomers to the agricultural sector, particularly urban farmers, construct a founder identity over time. Constructing a founder identity is essential for individuals transitioning into entrepreneurship. Yet, the knowledge about how the process of founder identity construction unfolds is very limited. The findings of this study offer new insights by highlighting how the construction of founder identities requires several macro transitions into new subidentities and the subsequent management of those subidentities via micro transitions. Challenges arise when founders perceive subidentities as conflicting. Practically, the insights are important because they caution new farming founders about the potential challenges of adopting new identities and offer strategies on how to overcome difficult transitions.

(RQ: How do micro and macro transitions impact the construction of founder identity?)

Paper III shifts the focus to understand family identity and its relation with entrepreneurship at the firm level, addressing research question two. In particular, this paper deals with innovation in an agricultural family firm by researching how family identity and noneconomic and emotional values connected to it influence the capability to innovate and vice versa. In combination with dynamic capabilities, the socioemotional wealth (SEW) perspective offers a framework in this paper that enables an investigation of identity dynamics and the nature of innovation capabilities in family firms.

(RQ: How do the dimensions of SEW influence innovation capabilities, and how do innovation capabilities influence the dimensions of SEW?)

Paper IV aims to integrate family and individual identity to understand how and why next-generation farmers engage in entrepreneurship. In particular, the paper examines how and why next generations' multiple identities relate and change in the pursuit of entrepreneurial activities in the family farm context, and how their identity impacts family identity. Numerous studies in the family business field have stressed that family business members strongly identify with their organizations. The family's long-term involvement and the common practice of including the family's name in the business's name increases the identification of family members with the family business as their social group. While the social identity literature usefully identifies reasons why family

members draw their identity from the family firm, it does not examine how and why family members' individual identities influence entrepreneurial activities or how they manage their multiple identities. Thus, this paper captures next-generations' entrepreneurial motivations and outcomes, thereby answering research questions two and three.

(RQ: How and why do next-generation family members' identities influence entrepreneurial activities?)
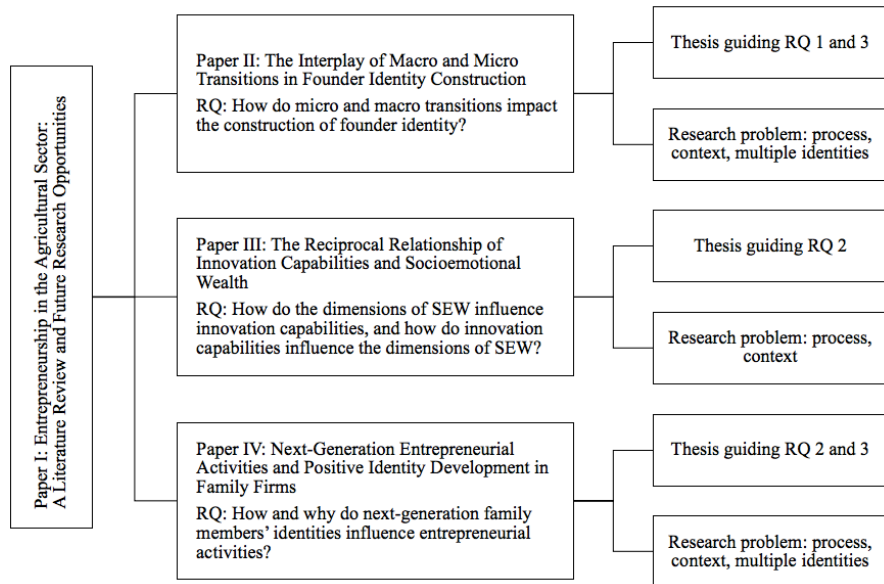
Figure 1. Overview of thesis papers and their relations.

1.5 Outline of the Dissertation

The focus of this dissertation is the intersection of identity, entrepreneurship, and agriculture. Therefore, in the remainder of this dissertation, I first present theories of identity, my theoretical framework, and then introduce the agricultural sector, the empirical context in which I investigate the phenomenon of entrepreneurship through an identity lens. In Chapter 2, I provide first a more general view of identity that identity theorists share and will then discuss social identity, role identity, and person identity as well as explaining how they are different and how they are complementary. I then discuss previous literature on multiple identities, and lastly, I describe entrepreneurial and founder identity. At the beginning of Chapter 3, I provide a general overview of the Swedish agricultural sector and illustrate its specific characteristics. I then discuss the

importance of family farms and new entrants, and provide an insight into entrepreneurship and its role in agriculture. Chapter 4 explains my philosophical orientation and my motivation behind my research approaches. I further discuss my sample selection, data collection process, and data analysis strategies, as well as quality in research. Chapter 5 explains the contributions to theory and practice, and discusses limitations and future research opportunities.

2 Theories of Identity

2.1 Defining Identity

"What does it mean to be who you are?" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 3). *Identity* is the self-referential answer to this question or the subjective knowledge that is self-defining (Ashforth et al., 2008; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Gecas, 1982; Stets & Burke, 2003; Tajfel, 1982a) and generally refers to the set of meanings attached to a person by the self and others (Ashforth et al., 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Gecas, 1982). In a nutshell, in this thesis, I define identity as subjective knowledge and meaning that is self-defining. Identity defines who one is when one is an occupant of a specific role in society (role identities) or a group member (social identities), or claims certain characteristics that identify one as a unique individual (person identities) (Ashforth, 2001; Ashforth et al., 2008; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Burke & Stets, 2009; Gecas, 1982; Stets & Burke, 2003). Put differently, identities can reflect social positions (roles), social groups or character traits. For instance, people have meanings that they apply to themselves when they are a professor or a parent (role identity), when they are a member of a peace association or sports club (social identity), or when they claim they are a happy person or fair individual (person identity) (Ashforth et al., 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009). Thus, individuals move along a spectrum from identifying themselves as unique individuals (person identity) to viewing themselves in roles and relationships (role identity) to seeing aspects of themselves derived from membership in a social category (social identity) (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Table 1 below summarizes the three identity perspectives: role, social, and person.

Another definitional issue of identity research arises regarding the term *self* (and self-concept) (Gecas, 1982; Ramarajan, 2014). The self originates in the mind of a person and is that which characterizes an individual's consciousness

of her or his own being or identity. The self is able to be both subject and object, and reflexive behavior is the core of the self (Burke & Stets, 2009). The self has the ability to take itself as an object, to regard and evaluate itself, and plan accordingly. Mead (1934) suggested that the self is composed of an "I" and a "me." Mead does not mean to raise the metaphysical question of how a person can be both "I" and "me," but to ask for the significance of this distinction (cf., p. 173), that is, the reflexive behavior. The "I" is the agent aspect of the self that initiates action in order to bring about desired consequences. The "me" is the perceptive-observer aspect of the self that looks at the action, looks at the environment, looks at the relation between the two, and guides the activity of the "I" to its intended end (Burke & Stets, 2009). Hence, the self refers to the process of reflexivity (which emanates from the dialectic between the "I" and the "me") and the "self-concept, on the other hand, is a product of this reflexive activity" (Gecas, 1982, p. 3).

Because the self emerges in social interaction within a complex society and because people occupy different positions within society, the self reflects this differentiation into a variety of conceptual partitionings of the self, or "*multiple selves*" (James, 1890; Rosenberg, 1979). "Thus, the self as father is an identity, as is self as colleague, self as storekeeper, self as student …. Each of these is a different identity, and each may act as an agent instigating behavior within the different roles" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 10). This also means individuals can have multiple identities. In this thesis, I use the term "self" to mean the broad construct that may include all bases of identity and the term "identity" to refer to the more specific targets such as role or social group-based identities (cf., Ramarajan, 2014).

In the following, I will discuss first role identity theory, then social identity theory, and lastly person identity. Subsequently, I will discuss multiple identities that are an important aspect of my dissertation as mentioned above in the introduction. Lastly, I will discuss entrepreneurial and founder identity, also in regard to the agricultural sector as a transition to introduce my empirical context.

Table 1. *Overview of identity perspectives (adapted from Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 129)*

Features	Role Identity	Social Identity	Person Identity
Bases	Expectations tied to social positions (roles)	Social group	Individual self-concept
Definition	Meaning tied to a role	Meaning tied to a social group	Meanings that define person as a unique individual
Behavior	Complementary to others	Similar to others	Independent of others
Self-Reference	Me as role	We	Me

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Features	Role Identity	Social Identity	Person Identity
Main Verification Outcome	Self-efficacy	Self-worth	Authenticity

2.2 Role Identity Theory

Role identity theory (cf., Burke, 1980; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker, 1980, 1987; Stryker & Serpe, 1982) explains social behavior in respect of the reciprocal relations between self and society. It is based on the symbolic interactionist view that society affects social behavior through its impact on the self (Blumer, 1969; Hogg et al., 1995; Mead, 1934). One's sense of self is therefore largely grounded in the perception of others. In other words, through social interaction and the internalization of collective meanings (e.g., what it means to be a farmer) one comes to see oneself through the eyes of others and constructs a more or less stable sense of self (Ashforth, 2001; Burke, 1991; Stryker, 1980).

Role identity theory sees "social life as largely taking place not within society as a whole but within relatively small networks of role relationships, many, perhaps most, local" (Stryker, 2008, p. 19), and argues that the socially constructed sense of self is strongly anchored in specific roles that one has in society. When interacting with another person, one necessarily occupies a particular role, such as spouse, friend, or student. Roles provide structure, organization, and meaning to selves and to situations (Burke & Stets, 2009). Taking a structuralist view, roles are the "sets of behavioral expectation associated with a given position in the social structure" (Ashforth, 2001; Burke, 1991; Ebaugh, 1988, p. 18; Stryker, 1980). Further, a social position is a category in society or an organization that an individual occupies (Burke & Stets, 2009) and reflects a more or less institutionalized or commonly expected and understood designation in a given social structure (Ashforth, 2001). For example, "associated with teachers are the (role) expectations of being knowledgeable and instructive" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 114).

Consequently, a role identity is the internalized meaning of a role that individuals apply to themselves. For example, the role identity of a "teacher" may include the meaning of "mentor" and "friend" that an individual applies to himself or herself when having activated the role of a teacher. The meaning in role identities is derived partly from cultural and partly from individuals' distinctive interpretation of the role (cf., Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2014). Role identities provide meaning for the self, not only because they refer to concrete role specifications, but also because they distinguish roles from relevant complementary or counter-roles (e.g., Burke, 1980). For example, "the

role of mother takes on meaning in connection with the role of father, 'doctor' in connection with 'nurse,' and so on" (White & Burke 1987, p. 312). However, it is through social interaction that identities acquire self-meaning in the end: Other persons respond to an individual in terms of his or her role identities, and these responses, in turn, form the basis for developing a sense of self-definition and meaning (Burke & Reitzes, 1981; Burke & Stets, 2009).

Role identities, by definition, imply action (cf., Callero, 1985). While society provides roles that are the basis of identity and self, the self is also an "active creator of social behavior" (Stryker, 1980, p. 385). Ultimately, every person naturally wants to verify their identities in a situation. "Identity verification" means that the perceptions of the person in the situation are consistent with the person's identity meaning (cf., Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 116). At the same time, a role is a set of expectations prescribing behavior that is considered appropriate by others (Simon, 1992). Thus, when role identity meanings are not shared, individuals must negotiate the meanings with others who may have a different understanding of that identity (McCall & Simmons, 1978).

Satisfactory enactment of roles not only confirms and validates a person's status as a role member (Callero, 1985), it also reflects positively on self-evaluation. Generally, individuals want to feel competent and effective in their environment (Gecas, 1982). Therefore, the perception that one is enacting a role satisfactorily usually enhances feelings of self-esteem and results in a heightened sense of self-efficacy (Burke & Stets, 2009), whereas perceptions of poor role performance may elicit doubts about one's self-worth, and may even produce symptoms of psychological distress (Hoelter, 1983; Stryker & Serpe, 1982; Thoits, 1991).

2.3 Social Identity Theory

A social identity is based on a person's identification with a social group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). A social group is a set of individuals who share the view that they are members of the same social category (e.g., nationalities, sports teams, religions, occupations, choir) (Burke & Stets, 2009). The concept of social identity was developed by Tajfel (1972, 1978, 1982a, b) and Turner (1975, 1982, 1985; Tajfel & Turner, 1985) and is defined as "the individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him/her of the group membership" (Tajfel, 1982a, p. 31). The core idea of social identity theory is that social groups or categories into which individuals fall and to which they feel they belong provide the basis of who they are regarding the defining characteristics or typical features of the group or category (Hogg et al., 1995). In contrast to role identity theory, social identity

theory is intended to explain intergroup relations, group processes, and the self (Brewer & Kramer, 1985; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Turner & Giles, 1981).

People possess several social category memberships that vary in relevance in the self-concept. Each of these memberships is represented in the individual member's mind as a social identity that both describes and prescribes one's attributes as a member of that group. This includes what one should think and feel, and also how one should behave (Hogg & Turner, 1985; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Hence, when a specific social identity becomes activated in a particular setting, self-perception and behavior "become in-group stereotypical and normative perceptions of relevant out-group members become out-group stereotypical" (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 260). Therewith a membership implies an in-group and an out-group and correspondingly a sense of "us" versus "them," which makes social identities relational and comparative (Tajfel & Turner, 1985). Generally, people define categories according to the most widely shared characteristics of category members, or a specific person who serves as an example for the category or both (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1985).

Social identities are not only descriptive and prescriptive, they are also evaluative (Hogg et al., 1995). Members of a category are strongly motivated to adopt group behavior to achieve or maintain in-group versus out-group comparisons that favor their in-group, and consequently the self, because of social identities' substantial self-evaluative consequences (Tajfel, 1982a; Tajfel & Turner, 1985).

To account for the issues mentioned above, social identity theory explains the operation of two underlying sociocognitive processes, namely categorization and self-enhancement (Hogg et al., 1995). It is categorization that builds intergroup boundaries by producing group-distinctive stereotypical and normative perceptions and behavior, and that assigns individuals to the relevant category. Therewith, categorization leads to the depersonalization of individual self-perception and to uniformity of perception among group members. In other words, having a particular social identity means being and acting like others in the group and seeing things from the group's perspective. When individuals view themselves as the embodiment of an intragroup prototype and when unique personal attributes are downplayed, depersonalization has occurred (Oakes et al., 1994; Turner, 1985; Turner & Oakes, 1989).

Self-enhancement drives the categorization process and is the desire to seek an evaluatively positive self-concept. Humans have the basic need to see themselves in a positive light in relation to relevant others and that self-enhancement can be received in groups by comparing the in-group and relevant out-groups in a manner that favors the own in-group (Hogg & Abrams, 1993;

Hogg et al., 1995). Group members therefore generate positive distinctiveness, or the belief that one's own group is better than an alternative group (Hogg, 2006). Such comparisons are usually made on stereotypical aspects that favor the in-group rather than on those that are less flattering to the in-group. Finally, having one's social identity as a group member verified also activates a sense of belongingness and raises one's self-worth (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2000).

2.4 Person Identity

According to social identity theory, personal identity involves seeing oneself as a unique and distinct individual, different from others. It is the "idiosyncratic personality attributes that are not shared with other people" (Hogg, 2006, p. 115). In social identity theory, "the self-concept is comprised of a personal identity encompassing idiosyncratic characteristics (e.g., bodily attributes, abilities, psychological traits, interests) and a social identity encompassing salient group classifications" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). What guides behavior is one's own goals rather than the goals or expectation of the group. As explained above, when a social identity is activated, depersonalization occurs; however, it does not mean that one loses personal identity. Rather there is simply a change in the focus from the individual to the group (Ashforth et al., 2008; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Turner et al., 1994).

Recently, role identity theorists have shown that identity theory applies to person identities too, which are identities based on the person as a unique biosocial individual (e.g., Stets, 1995; Stets & Biga, 2003; Stets & Burke, 1994, 2014; Stets & Carter, 2006, 2012). In role identity theory, the term "person identity" rather than "personal identity" is used, but the term is used in a manner similar to how it is understood in social identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). Person identity includes the meanings that set the person apart from others as a unique individual. These meanings are not attached to roles or groups but are part of how individuals define themselves (McCall & Simmons, 1987; Stets, 1995; Stets & Burke, 1994). Person identity meanings are based on culturally recognized characteristics that individuals internalize as their own. They may include characteristics such as how dominant and controlling the person is (e.g., Stets, 1995; Stets & Burke, 1994), how moral the person is (e.g., Stets & Carter, 2006; Stets et al., 2008), or what the person values (e.g., Gecas, 2000; Hitlin, 2003). Because person identity meanings of being controlling or moral and so forth are culturally shared, others will draw upon these same meanings to identify the individual and thus facilitate the verification process of the self (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Person identities are always with the person and are relevant in most situations across groups and roles, because they refer to important aspects of the individual. People "put on" and "take off" these characteristics as they might "take on" and then "exit" particular roles (Burke & Stets, 2009; Kreiner et al., 2006). Because person identities are always with the person, they are thought to have higher salience and commitment than other identities, and may act as master identities influencing other roles or social identities that people take on (Burke & Stets, 2009). "For example, some people are more controlling than others and this is a characteristic that people want to maintain at the level they feel is appropriate for them (Stets & Burke, 2014, p. 124), and this control will show its face in the different roles the person takes on and even in the different groups he or she joins" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 125).

Right up to the present day, social identity and role identity theorists have discussed person identities, but they have generally remained peripheral to both theories, even though they relate to role and social identities. "Given that person identities are the 'new kid on the block,' … there is still much to investigate about person identity both theoretically and empirically" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 113, 2014).

2.5 Multiple Identities

The definition of who one is can be complex and multifaceted, because we have many selves as we have others with whom we interact (James, 1890). At any point in time several identities could be activated together, possibly increasing the number over the course of a lifetime (Ashforth, 2001). Therefore, a person can have many identities, or "identity plurality" (Pratt & Foreman, 2000), based on organizational membership, profession, gender, ethnicity, religion, nation, and family roles. An underlying assumption that many perspectives hold in common is that identities can be counted; people typically hold four to seven identities (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Concepts such as role occupancy and identity accumulation are calculated based on the sum of all role positions an individual occupies and identifies with (Pratt & Foreman, 2000; Thoits, 1983).

Research across these perspectives suggests the need to pay attention to the relationships between identities. One approach is to examine how individuals psychologically experience the relationships among their multiple identities, specifically whether they experience their identities as conflicting or enhancing (Brook et al., 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Pratt & Foreman, 2000; Ramarajan, 2014). The idea is that identities can be coactivated or simultaneously salient (Blader, 2007; Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). Therefore, the baseline is not the

absence of multiple identities but the lack of investigation of the relationship between salient identities.

The psychological experience of one's identities being simultaneously salient has often been described as causing internal conflict and tension (Ramarajan, 2014; Ramarajan et al., 2017a). Identity conflict is the experience where one is torn between, or must give up, the meanings, values, and behaviors associated with one identity in order to maintain or preserve another (Ashforth et al., 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Horton et al., 2014). Yet, a less explored but equally important aspect of multiple identities is identity enhancement (Ramarajan, 2014) or "identity synergy" (cf., Pratt & Foreman, 2000). In role identity theory, terms such as "role facilitation," "enhancement," and "enrichment" suggest that people experience benefits from multiple role identities, using the skills, knowledge, positive emotions, and resources that arise when one role intersects with another (Creary & Pratt, 2014; Dutton et al., 2010; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Rothbard, 2001; Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). Other scholars focus on the overlap or integration between different identities where scholars highlight the idea of similarity or overlap in meaning and content across multiple identities. Segmentation between identities is sometimes conceptualized as the opposite of integration, which accounts for how distinct and differentiated various aspects of the self are from one another (Ashforth et al., 2000; Phinney, 1993). Generally, identities that are related by a common system of meanings are more likely to be verified (Burke & Stets, 2009).

A key limitation of many of these studies is that they have focused on a single relationship between given pairs of identities. However, we need to expand on the core construct of identity to include many identities and patterns of relationships and investigate the consequences of multiple identities (e.g., Ramarajan, 2014; Ramarajan et al., 2017b). Hence, examining multiple identities also requires expanding the focus from the relationship of conflict to include other relationships such as enhancement and integration. Doing so will allow identity scholars to understand the full scope of people's multiple identities, which is critical as it may well influence or even change the picture of identity that we have received from previous literature on identities in the work context (Ramarajan, 2014). Therefore, a more complex picture of multiple identities will help us better understand and update important identity-related phenomena in entrepreneurship from individual well-being to organizational change.

At the same time, research on multiple identities would benefit from integrating role, social, and person identities. Person identities also guide behavior; however, social identity theorists generally do not focus on person identities given the depersonalization process that social/group identities

activate, and role identities have been more the focus in role identity theory. While we are beginning to study person identities such as moral identity (Stets & Carter, 2006, 2012; Stets et al., 2008) or control identity (Stets, 1995; Stets & Burke, 1994, 1996), there are many more person identities, such as values, that need to be examined as we come to better understand all of human social behavior (cf., Stets & Burke, 2014). Independently of their simultaneous occurrence within a group, we need more research on the relationships among person, role, and social identities.

2.6 Entrepreneurial and Founder Identity

Identity in entrepreneurship encompasses role identity (a person's interpretation of what it means to be an entrepreneur) and social identity (the self-concepts a person derives from memberships in particular social groups) (Powell & Baker, 2014; Zuzul & Tripsas, 2019). Entrepreneurial role identity is defined as "a person's set of meanings, including attitudes and beliefs, attributes, and subjective evaluation of behavior, that define him or herself in an entrepreneurial role" (Hoang & Gimeno, 2015, p. 1). Thus, the definition includes attributes such as being decisive, for instance in tasks of the entrepreneur such as firm creation, but also how the individual regards the entrepreneurial role and whether she or he identifies with that role (Hoang & Gimeno, 2015; Morris et al., 2018; Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007). Entrepreneurial social identity in turn is the set of meanings that are shared by the entrepreneur group or a society (Burke & Stets, 2009; Tajfel & Turner, 1985). In this dissertation, I define entrepreneurial identity connected to behavioral expectations. Thus, one has an entrepreneurial identity when one identifies, evaluates and exploits opportunities (cf., Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007).

While a number of studies on identity in entrepreneurship have focused on the notion of a singular entrepreneurial identity (e.g., Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Morris et al., 2018; Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007), some other studies observed that multiple identities, rather than a singular identity, are likely to be salient in how entrepreneurs run their firm (e.g., Cardon et al., 2009; Powell & Baker, 2014, 2017; York et al., 2016). Founder identity was introduced to account for the multiple identities that entrepreneurs have when they start and run their firms (Powell & Baker, 2014). Consequently, founder identity is defined as "the set of identities that is chronically salient to a founder in her/his day-to-day work" (Powell & Baker, 2014, p. 1406). Hence, an entrepreneur may have many micro-identities – within a holistic or "super-ordinate" identity when pursuing business opportunities (Powell & Baker, 2014; Shepherd & Haynie, 2009a). For example, entrepreneurs can be simultaneously a keeper of the

bottom line (capitalist as the social identity), green activist (environmentalist as the social identity), and caring boss (valued employer as the social identity), which all together influence how they run their firms (Powell & Baker, 2014).

Identities help orient entrepreneurs in their social context and provide them with guidance related to behavior (e.g., Lewis et al., 2016; Newbery et al., 2018). Entrepreneurial identity is shaped over time and through personal experiences (Lewis et al., 2016; Newbery et al., 2018) and may include interaction with mentors and business partners (Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016). Identity is therefore a medium through which the entrepreneurial self and the social interact (Leitch & Harrison, 2016; Watson, 2009). Individuals typically gain awareness about entrepreneurs through learning and the observation of role models within contexts such as family, education institutions, peer groups, and popular media (Swail et al., 2013). Hence, at a first stage, becoming entrepreneurs build an impression of entrepreneurship based on an elective combination of observed behaviors, and, at a second stage, experiencing these behaviors. Differences between observed and experienced behaviors may lead to a cognitive dissonance that reduces the salience of an emergent entrepreneurial identity (Newbery et al., 2018).

It is suggested that the behavioral expectations of entrepreneurial identity are not limited to profit-seeking activity and may include innovation, risk taking, perseverance, or enthusiasm for leading new firms (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Murnieks et al., 2014; Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007; Zuzul & Tripsas, 2019). Entrepreneurs may identify with a specific role in the entrepreneurial process, such as "inventor," "founder," or "developer," because they are engaged in an activity that relates to a meaningful and salient role identity (Cardon et al., 2009), or with the goals of their firm, which can be social or economic (e.g., Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Navis & Glynn, 2011; York et al., 2016).

Therefore, the outcomes of entrepreneurial activity have been shown to differ in line with entrepreneurs' particular identities (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Powell & Baker, 2014). For example, "missionary" founders in the sporting goods industry, who desire to use their firms for the greater good and who see themselves as the drivers of social change, sold sustainable products (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011). Similarly, founders in the textile industry who identify as "environmentalists" sourced their material from environmentally sound manufacturers (Powell & Baker, 2014). In addition, a recent study has shown how commercial and social welfare-based identities can interact to not only shape the goals entrepreneurs set for their venture but also shape the entrepreneurs' approach to recruiting stakeholders (York et al., 2016). Thus, entrepreneurs' identities have important implications for firms gaining and

maintaining legitimacy and securing resources beyond initial stakeholders (Navis & Glynn, 2011).

An identity perspective provides an explanation for different abilities and propensities of farmers to engage in entrepreneurial behavior and to adapt and adjust to the ongoing changes in the agricultural sector. In this context, many studies address the question of whether farmers see themselves as producers and/or as entrepreneurs. The good farmer (producer) identity is based on the physical presentation of the farm business as well as on the production output of plants and animal rearing (Burton, 2004). "Through the practice of 'roadside farming,' associated with displaying their farming ability to other farmers and passers-by from the community," farmers build their farming identity (Stenholm & Hytti, 2014, p. 134). Farmers have traditionally been perceived as having a deep connection to their land and their farm. Therefore, the attachment farmers have to a place is seen as inherent to their identity maintenance and construction (Cheshire et al., 2013).

Because of the speed of change in the agricultural sector, there may be the risk of a clash of identities – between the entrepreneurial identity and that of being a farmer (Stenholm & Hytti, 2014; Vesala et al., 2007). According to some studies, production-oriented identity is still dominant among farmers and entrepreneurial identity is something that is incompatible with the traditional agrarian way of life (e.g., de Lauwere, 2005; McElwee, 2008; Vesala et al., 2007; Vesala & Vesala, 2010). Many diversified farmers, who seek profits outside of traditional farming, see themselves still as producers (Burton & Wilson, 2006; Vesala & Vesala, 2010). Other studies, however, show that farmers do identify themselves as entrepreneurs and that it is possible for farmers to have an entrepreneurial identity (e.g., Bryant, 1999; Carter, 1998; Ni Laoire, 2002; Yakova, 2006). Farmers who identify as entrepreneurs are described as innovative and risk taking (e.g., Vesala et al., 2007; Vesala & Vesala, 2010). It emerges that farmers who engage in entrepreneurial farm diversification seem to have a stronger entrepreneurial identity than conventional farmers (Vesala et al., 2007).

In Sweden, farmer women build their entrepreneurial identity on an image of rural domesticity, including a representation of themselves as traditional farm women (Pettersson & Cassel, 2014). However, women entrepreneurs who run tourism businesses on working farms, for instance, are coping with tensions and conflicts between agricultural production and tourism at the farms in terms of not only practical work and duties, but also how gendered farming identities are performed (Cassel & Pettersson, 2015). Women are using the farms in new ways by developing their entrepreneurial ideas and by changing how gender is performed in agriculture (Pettersson & Cassel, 2014). At the same time, they are

constantly stretching and transcending boundaries between work and home as well as between the different business types (Cassel & Pettersson, 2015).

Overall, the literature shows that farmers are clearly not a homogeneous group and that they may see themselves as producers or entrepreneurs or beyond. Depending on the framing of the activity, farmers either construe an identity (role and/or social identity) as producers or entrepreneurs, or as both producers and entrepreneurs. At the same time, other nonworking identities such as family (social identity) may influence their interplay. Yet, scholars agree that identity is essential for understanding and explaining the nature of ongoing changes in the agricultural sector as well as for understanding the patterns and success of entrepreneurship.

3   The Agricultural Sector: An Ever-Changing Industry

3.1   The Swedish Agricultural Sector

Agriculture is the world's most important industry, as it produces and delivers food, a basic need of every living being, for the world's 7.4 billion inhabitants (FAO, 2017). More specifically, "we shall understand agriculture as consisting of activities that foster biological processes involving growth and reproduction to provide resources of value. Typically, the resources provided are plants and animals to be used for food and fiber, although agricultural products are used for many other purposes also" (Lehman et al., 1993, p. 127). Thus, agriculture is defined as the cultivation or production of plants, including crops (such as cereals), fruits, and vegetables, as well as animal rearing. In Sweden, the green business sector accounts for almost 4% of the country's GDP (LRF, 2019).

Agriculture in Sweden differs by region. This is because of Sweden's different soils and climate zones, with some parts being more suitable for forestry – especially in the north of the country. The southern part of Sweden is the most agriculturally productive, not least because it has the longest growing season and fertile areas (about 60% of arable land is found on the fertile plains of southern Sweden). Generally, animal husbandry is the dominant line of production (Statistics Sweden, 2018). In the central part of Sweden and in the southern part of the country the cropping farms dominate, with vegetables and horticulture products accounting for only 8.7 percent of the agriculture output in 2018 (vs. animals 26.7%, animal products 24%, and cereals 11.6%) (European Commission, 2019). The crop production is strongly dominated by cereals (mainly wheat) and by leys. The proportion of leys increases towards the north of Sweden. Wheat, rapeseed and other oil plants, and sugar beet are common in southern Sweden, while barley and oats are more important further north

(Statistics Sweden, 2018). Potatoes are grown throughout the entire country (Statistics Sweden, 2018) and made up 4% of the agriculture output in 2018 (European Commission, 2019).

Yet, although agriculture is essential for human beings, the tasks of being a farmer are challenging from a business perspective. Farming is a commodity industry with multiple producers of homogeneous goods (as described above). Buyers are therefore price sensitive. Inasmuch as business model margins are inevitably tight, so volume has to be high – a demand small farms cannot meet (Rooml & Redman, 2016). Structural developments over the last few decades have led to fewer but larger farms in Europe (European Commission, 2019). Policy reforms have reduced the scale of support, while the demand side is changing in the form of growing retailer concentration and complex consumer preferences, which have affected both the farm businesses and the life of those involved (Alsos et al., 2011; FAO, 2017; Suess-Reyse & Fuetsch, 2016). For example, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy pays subsidies based on each hectare of land in use, resulting in increasingly greater subsidies for larger farms and incentives for consolidation. Most small businesses suffer from the same problems: The low food prices hardly cover increased production costs. The processing and retail companies make the profits and the (small) producers come away empty-handed (Agri-Atlas, 2019).

For smaller-sized farms in Sweden this transition has been described as a crisis. In just the past 20 years, more than half of Swedish milk producers have disappeared. In 2016, there were about 62,937 agricultural enterprises (in 1999 there were 80,119) with an average area of 41 hectares of arable land – that is almost twice as many hectares as 40 years ago (European Commission, 2019; Statistics Sweden, 2018). About half of the Swedish food consumption (in value) is produced domestically; Swedish self-sufficiency has decreased steadily since 1990, although the population is increasing. Today, the total degree of self-sufficiency is estimated to be about 50 percent. In comparison, in the early 1990s, Swedish farms produced over 75 percent of the country's food (LRF, 2020). The changes in agricultural policies and reduced profitability have resulted in a decline of the meat production (cattle and pork) in particular (Eriksson et al., 2016; LRF, 2020). Yet, the agricultural production of, for instance, cereals (120%), sugar beet (100%), carrots (110%), and eggs (95%) is satisfactory, and opportunities for farming include sustainable meat, vegetable, and fruit production, where Sweden is heavily dependent on imports (LRF, 2020).

Swedish food markets are characterized by the dominance of a few large retailer chains. There are three big retail chains, namely ICA, Coop, and Axfood, and they alone constitute about 73% of the market share. This shows high levels

of concentration, with ICA controlling over 41% of the national market. High concentration in the Swedish food retail segment may not necessarily lead to a welfare loss for the consumers if it increases efficiency, provides wider product choice, and reduces final consumer price. But essentially, high concentration levels increase the retailers' bargaining power over farmers (and other suppliers) and the use of such power could lead to unfair trading practices, which may be considered a problem (Eriksson et al., 2016).

Because of Sweden's geography, the transport of agricultural products can cover relatively large distances and some regions display a lack of scale. Hence, transportation costs can be high, especially in the north of the country where the population is sparse. Only very large companies can afford a successful operation in those remote areas. Agricultural cooperatives such as Lantmännen and Arla are examples of the consolidation developments in Sweden that allow for such successful operations. However, joining forces and becoming more efficient also results in fewer decision-makers and concentration of power (Eriksson et al., 2016; Nordmark, 2015).

Technological shifts, climate changes, and environmental disasters further challenge the (Swedish) agricultural industry (European Commission, 2019; Suess-Reyse & Fuetsch, 2016). For instance, Swedish farmers have drastically suffered from the disastrous effects of the summer heatwave in 2018, which shrank cereal harvests and decreased pastures, leaving many farmers struggling to survive (Jordbruksverket, 2019). Technology allows the (often) large vertically integrated agribusinesses to increase their yield and strengthen their competitive advantages vis-à-vis small and medium-sized farms, not to mention additional economies of scale and scope. The technological revolution taking place is not simply one of increasing mechanization, it includes the use of GPS tractors, drones, and other precision farming techniques that replace the need for labor and further amplifies the cost-of-production divide between traditional and more capital-intensive farms (De Clercq et al., 2018).

However, technological improvements could also help address climate change and the intensification of natural hazards (FAO, 2017). Ecological sustainability has become an important part of Sweden's agricultural industry; the federation of Swedish farmers put climate change as one of their top priorities. In Sweden, organic milk production and plant cultivation are currently more profitable than conventional; however, farmers may expect a lower yield per hectare (Jordbruksverket, 2018a). High-input and resource-intensive farming systems, which have caused soil depletion and high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, for instance, cannot deliver a sustainable food and agricultural production. Hence, there is a call for transformative processes towards holistic approaches, such as agroecology, climate-smart agriculture, or conservation

agriculture, to protect and enhance the natural resource base, while increasing productivity in Sweden (Carlisle et al., 2019; FAO, 2017).

However, not all small and medium-sized Swedish farms are disappearing – they are also changing to meet the challenges facing them in the "new" competitive landscape. Their resilience is largely attributable to their entrepreneurial capacities and ability to engage in entrepreneurial behaviors (Alsos et al., 2011; Dias et al., 2019). Many farms have been family businesses over several generations that survived despite the sector's difficulties. At the same time, more and more newcomers have entered the sector recently, which might increase the number of small-scale farms again as well as the opportunity for sustainable development and a higher self-sufficiency for Sweden (European Commission, 2019; Stadsbruk, 2017).

3.2 Securing the Future and Diversity of (Sweden's) Agriculture: Family Farms and Newcomers

Family farms are the dominant form of agricultural holdings in Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2018). More than perhaps any other type of economic activity, farming takes place in a family context. Family farming has been defined in regard to family ownership, family labor input, and managerial control, but also in terms of succession (farm transfer) within the family (Gasson & Errington, 1993; Glover & Reay, 2015; Jervell, 2011). In the family farming context, strategic decisions have major resource implications for the business and also the family. For instance, if a dairy farmer chooses to expand the dairy herd and install a new milking parlor, this major capital investment will financially affect both the family and the business (Glover & Reay, 2015).

Family farms are a very interesting type of family business, because their diversity, adaptability, and persistence have long been recognized. Some family farms are therefore excellent examples of long-term sustainability since they steadily reallocate resources to address the changing needs of the business and to maintain operations (Gasson & Errington, 1993; Glover & Reay, 2015). The sustainability of family firms is an important topic, not only to individual family firms but also to society more broadly. Business historians view firm survival as the most critical long-term indicator for evaluating firms (Colli, 2012; Glover & Reay, 2015).

Family farms are both very similar to and different from "other family businesses." The fact that they are also dwelling places, more than any other issue, distinguishes family farm businesses from most other family businesses. Farms are usually business premises and family homes at the same time. Moving the business is, therefore, hardly ever an option because the value of the farm as

a dwelling and its land is essential for farmer families' identity (Burton, 1998; Jervell, 2011). In the agricultural context, living on the family farm business is the norm: It allows family members to manage typical farm work more easily and leaves more time for family life (Gasson & Errington, 1993).

Farmer families seek to satisfy a number of inconsistent goals, balancing simultaneously the farmer's own scale of values with business goals (Gasson & Errington, 1993). The primary goal of many family farms is to maintain independence (family control) and pass the business onto the next generation and keep the family name on the land/business (Anderson & Jack, 2000; Gasson & Errington, 1993; Stokes & Blackburn, 2002) – profit seeking is not their key driver (Austin et al., 1996). Since most farms are successfully transferred from generation to generation, the financial and frequently emotional survival of each generation is linked to the farm's success (Johnson & Booth, 1990; Potter & Lobley, 1992). Family farms are able to sustain the business despite minimal economic returns by engaging in four different strategic behaviors, namely by diversifying the business, through debt maximizing, and by sacrificing family needs and compromising (Glover & Reay, 2015). Many family farms might have little commercial value in agriculture but are still valuable to families that have lived there over several generations (Jervell, 2011).

Despite these very old farming families who have cultivated their traditions over many centuries, more recently the next generations have been less and less interested in agriculture. Thus, it is crucial to motivate next-generation family members to enter the sector, and in particular to understand their needs and wants. In Sweden, the farmers' average age is high, and 74% are older than 50 (Statistics Sweden, 2018). Although there has been support for young farmers since 1980, not enough young people are being attracted to continue family farming (Agri-Atlas, 2019; Statistics Sweden, 2018; Zagata & Sutherland, 2015;). In the European Union, about 190,000 young farmers received support between 2007 and 2013, but about 3.5 million farmers over the age of 65 years will retire in the coming years. Most of these prospective pensioners run small or medium-sized family businesses and lack a successor. The current agricultural policy supports young farmers with about 2 percent of its budget, but this money is insufficiently targeted at the needs of young and new farmers, and is poorly articulated with national policies such as setting up new businesses (start-ups) (Agri-Atlas, 2019; European Commission, 2019).

EU direct payments have allowed many farmer families to continue working in agriculture despite worsening economic conditions. But all too often, untargeted per-hectare payments have fueled an increase in farm sizes and land concentration. This in turn prevents subsequent generations from entering or leasing again. Although smaller farms have received more money since the

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform in 2013, it has not stopped the decrease in small farms (Agri-Atlas, 2019; European Commission, 2019; Statistics Sweden, 2018). Established large farms that already cultivate a lot of land have more capital and thus the opportunity to go into debt – and buy even more land. Newcomers and smaller farms do not have such advantages (European Commission, 2016). The price of agricultural land has risen drastically over the last couple of years in Sweden. For example, in 2018, the average price for arable land was 90,700 crowns per hectare and for pastureland it was 35,300 crowns. Compared to 2017, the price of arable land increased by over 8% and the price of pastureland by 10% (Jordbruksverket, 2018b).

Despite these circumstances, an increasing number of people have surprisingly wanted to start farming – with or without agricultural policy support – in recent years (European Commission, 2016). Newcomers are benefiting from alternative ideas such as land acquisition through community land trusts, farmer cooperatives, or farm incubators as ways to enter the sector. Urban agriculture in particular has received increasing attention from new entrants in Sweden (Stadsbruk, 2017). Urban agriculture is defined as the production of crop and livestock goods within cities and towns (Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010). Farming in cities and towns can create a vital urban environment that has new social, ecological qualities and that is also economically viable (Lovell, 2010; Pulighe & Lupia, 2016). For instance, fostering agricultural activities in cities can contribute to urban resilience (Barthel & Isendahl, 2013), protecting the environment through, for example, biodiversity (Lovell, 2010), and the health and well-being of city dwellers (Goddard et al., 2010; Lin et al., 2015; Middle et al., 2014), as well as providing access to fresh food (Pulighe & Lupia, 2016). Many urban agriculture enthusiasts advocate the recognition of the right to farm in the city as an essential condition for either food security or food sovereignty (Allen & Frediani, 2013; Maxwell, 2001). At the household level, urban agriculture can also be a source of income (Maxwell, 2001; Pulighe & Lupia, 2016).

For a few years now, Botildenborg, a nonprofit organization in Malmö, Sweden, has run the concept "Stadsbruk" (city farming), a method for municipalities to develop and implement urban farming in their cities. The concept aims to contribute to a greener city and a more sustainable future by offering means for cities and newcomers to connect as well as education for people who want to start their own urban farm business. Stadsbruk is Europe's only incubator for start-ups aimed at commercial urban farming and therefore is a meeting place for urban entrepreneurs. At Stadsbruk, entrepreneurs receive help in designing business models and business plans as well as tips and advice on cultivation in the city (Stadsbruk, 2017).

3.3 Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship can be described as the creative process whereby entrepreneurs identify and exploit opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Exploited opportunities that flow from entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector result in new offerings that drive the market process and that may take the form of existing business growth, new ventures, or the creation of business activity within an existing business (Davidsson, 2006, 2016). Using existing or new resources, farmers have been looking for new business models and sources of income to respond to challenges in the sector. Often this includes the development of new nonfarm income-generating activities on their farms (Alsos et al., 2011; Hansson et al., 2013), although conventional, production-oriented agriculture continues to provide entrepreneurial opportunities (Dias et al., 2019; Vesala & Pyysiäinen, 2008). Farmers as entrepreneurs spend time as producers, cultivating the soil, growing new plants and/or raising livestock. But they also spend much of their time involved in entrepreneurial activities outside of agricultural production, such as farm-based tourism or cheese production (e.g., Di Domenico & Miller, 2012; McElwee et al., 2006). Others have embraced entrepreneurial orientations by way of innovation in, for example, channel selection (e.g., home delivery and selling shares in individual cows to reach consumers directly) and marketing (e.g., establishing authenticity, local origin, or landrace in order to differentiate).

The motives behind entrepreneurial activities undertaken by farmers are diverse. The general consensus is that farmers are either pushed or pulled into entrepreneurial activities. Opportunity-driven entrepreneurship describes situations in which farmers start new nonagricultural activities because they want to implement a good business idea or to reallocate existing resources and/or gain business growth. Necessity-driven entrepreneurship describes situations in which farmers have to diversify in order to stay self-employed, secure family income, or decrease risks caused by changes in the market situation (cf., Hansson et al., 2013). A desire to reduce risk and uncertainty connected to agricultural production seems to be an important reason to engage in entrepreneurship, followed by a desire to grow, exploit market opportunities, and enhance financial conditions and revenue, as well as to fulfill personal aspirations and to maintain lifestyle and a good family life (e.g., Barbieri & Mahoney, 2009; Northcote & Alonso, 2011). Several studies, however, found social motives to be more important than additional income in explaining entrepreneurial activity and claim that analyses based purely on a profit maximization assumption are not valid in the agricultural sector (e.g., Cuykendal et al., 2002; Hansson et al., 2013; Vik & McElwee, 2011).

In Sweden, two underlying motives seem to be critical in starting new ventures outside conventional agriculture: first, to reduce risk and use idle resources; and second, for social and lifestyle reasons (Hansson et al., 2013). Swedish farmers' attitudes and subjective norms are especially influential on their decision to develop entrepreneurial activities instead of specializing in a single agricultural enterprise (Hansson et al., 2012). They are cautious entrepreneurs, unwilling to put their established farm businesses at risk with the uncertainties of large new ventures. Instead, farmers like to test new business ideas in a learning process, where small-scale experiments give rise to gradually increasing the scope of the new business ideas and investments (Ferguson & Olofsson, 2011). Hence, Swedish farmers prefer to use their own means rather than sacrificing the control of their core business (farming).

In addition, farms' business structures, and financial and demographic conditions influence the degree of specialization and entrepreneurial diversification in Sweden. Farms that are more specialized tend to also be specialized in the future. Farms that have diversified in a particular way tend to engage in entrepreneurial diversification in the future. Both strategies (specialization and entrepreneurship) require long-term investments and processes that may result in a "lock-in effect" (cf., Hansson et al., 2010). At the same time, the degree of specialization increases when financial conditions are more favorable, whereas entrepreneurship increases when financial conditions are less favorable. Surprisingly, businesses headed by women are found to have a higher degree of specialization, whereas males are positively associated with entrepreneurship within agriculture. Also, the older the farmer, the less entrepreneurial he or she is (Hansson et al., 2010).

Finally, focusing on agricultural entrepreneurs' perceived value of advice from different network partners in Sweden, it was found that different partner types exercise different influence. In particular, social networks such as other farmers, employees, and family and friends are more associated with new venture development than professional networks that comprise bankers, production and economic advisors (Ferguson & Hansson, 2015).

In a nutshell, entrepreneurship is important in the Swedish agricultural sector because it helps economically struggling farms (of which there are many, especially since the droughts) to survive and thrive, as well as facilitating a life in harmony with personal and family needs. Farmers that demonstrate entrepreneurship in farming are more successful in business. Entrepreneurship might not be a panacea, but it certainly makes Swedish farmers less vulnerable to the ever-changing industry and better equipped for the challenges of global competitiveness.

4 Methodology

4.1 Philosophical Orientation

I believe it is worthwhile making one's philosophical orientation clear. "To know how a researcher construes the shape of the social world and aims to give us a credible account of it is to know our conversational partner" (Miles et al., 2013, p. 6). Some qualitative inquirers have walked away from the more traditional views (such as positivism) on doing qualitative research, while others, including myself, have tried to hold on to what is good about the past while updating it to bring it more in line with the present. Like many others, I have therefore chosen elements of both the past and the present (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Miles et al., 2013).

I believe that social phenomena exist not only in the mind of people but also in the world, and that some reasonably stable relationships, or patterns, are to be found among them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There are regularities and sequences that interlink phenomena. From these patterns, we are able to obtain constructs and theories that underlie individuals and social life (Easton, 2002; Miles et al., 2013; Pawson, 2013). Just because most constructs are invisible to our eyes does not make them invalid (cf., Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, reality exists independently of perception, which is patterned so that it can be studied, explained, and known. Yet, I would emphasize that reality can be context dependent (Patton, 2015; Pawson, 2013).

I agree that knowledge is a social and historical product and that "facts" come to us theory laden. Hence, I acknowledge the importance of the subjective and the meaning making at the center of life (cf., Miles et al., 2013). It is my goal to identify and transcend these processes by finding explanations and building theories, in order to account for a world that is "both bounded and perceptually laden" (Miles et al., 2013, p. 7). My explanations flow from an account of how

different structures produced the entities I am studying (cf., Miles & Huberman, 1994). Hence, my position does not apply the classical deductive logic but seeks both causal explanations and evidence to show that each event or entity is an instance of that explanation (Easton, 2002; Miles et al., 2013; Sayer, 1992). This is one reason why I have moved towards more inductive methods during my doctoral studies.

These views are in line with critical realists. A critical realist agrees on an external reality and simultaneously has a more constructivist idea about the nature of knowledge. In critical realism, science is seen as an approximation of reality and as attempts to come closer to reality through plausible mechanisms that reflect underlying patterns as accurately as possible (Bhashkar, 1975; Sayer, 1992). For its part, therefore, critical realism includes both objective and subjective views. At the same time, I am pragmatic about what I want to accomplish with my research. I want to bring about social "change" and make individuals' lives better. Hence, I believe we should seek, theoretically as well as practically, useful answers that can solve or provide direction for concrete problems. Lastly, I agree that "research is actually more a craft … than a slavish adherence to methodological rules" (Miles et al., 2013, p.7). Therefore, sharing more about the craft is vital, as is advancing practical methods for judging the quality of our research.

In line with my philosophical stance, my perspective on identity draws on the symbolic interactionist perspective (Mead) and the structural perspective on identity. On the one hand, the symbolic interactionist perspective sees society as permanently created and recreated, with change being a constant in society. Hence, society evolves out of interactions that shapes the self, but importantly, the self also shapes interactions that play back on the social process (society). On the other hand, the structuralist perspective sees society as composed of complex organized systems. Social structure is composed of patterned interaction and relationships and "complex mosaics of differentiated groups, communities, and institutions, cross-cut by a variety of demarcations based on class, age, gender, ethnicity, religion etc." (Stryker, 2008, p. 19). Hence, this perspective accounts for regularity in social life.

I take a middle-range position in this paradigm divide where I regard structure and agency that is labeled *structural symbolic interactionism* (cf., Ashforth, 2001; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). It follows that identities become more or less institutionalized because they are based on social structure such as roles or categories (structural perspective); however, the meaning imputed to, for example, roles and the way in which individuals enact their identities are negotiated within structural constraints (symbolic interactionist perspective) (Ashforth, 2001). Structure implicates the external, the structural

side, and considering people identified with categories or taking on a role or playing a role. "From this point of view, the structures in which identities are embedded are relatively fixed and identities (people) play out the parts (roles) that are given to them" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 12). For instance, professors do things that professors are supposed to do. Variations across persons taking on a role exist and are viewed as relatively minor (except they affect structure). A sales manager who does not increase sales may be replaced with another sales manager who can increase sales (cf., Burke & Stets, 2009). What is essential in this view is that structure persists and develops according to its own principles.

4.2 Qualitative Research Approach

I do qualitative research because it is the most accurate response to the research purpose underlying my dissertation. Research questions should "dictate" the methodological approach that is used to conduct the research (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Silverman, 2010). Qualitative research is especially applied to gain insights into unexplored research phenomena and to address research questions on *how* and *why* (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Frost, 2011; Patton, 2015). Further personal motivation includes accessing the inner experience of people, determining how meanings are shaped in context, and revealing rather than testing variables and relationships. According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), "committed qualitative researchers tend to frame their research questions in such a way that the only manner in which they can be answered is through qualitative research" (p. 2008) – which certainly applies to myself too.

A major strength of qualitative research is that it focuses on "naturally occurring ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what 'real life' is like" (Miles et al., 2013, p. 10). Qualitative data are usually collected in close proximity to a specific situation, rather than through e-mail or solely over the phone (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2015; Silverman, 2010). Context influences are not stripped away (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Miles & Huberman, 1994), which provides the opportunity "to discover and understand latent, underlying, or nonobvious issues" (Miles et al., 2013, p. 11).

Another feature of qualitative research is that qualitative data have richness that allows researchers to reveal complexity: profound descriptions and explanations that are vivid and that "have a ring of truth" (Miles et al., 2013, p.11) with a strong influence on the reader (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Silverman, 2010). Qualitative data are commonly collected over a sustained period of time, which makes them powerful for the studying process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This enables going beyond

"snapshots" and the questions of what or how much to how and why things happen as they do. It even enables access to causality as it actually plays out in a particular setting (Miles et al., 2013).

The immanent flexibility of qualitative research provides further confidence that we really understand what is going on (cf., Miles et al., 2013). Often, committed qualitative researchers favor qualitative work, including myself, because they are drawn to the evolving and dynamic nature of qualitative research in contrast to the more rigid and structured design of quantitative research methods (Corbin & Strauss, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Langley, 1999). Like other qualitative researchers, I truly enjoy serendipity and discovery. A qualitative approach satisfies my natural curiosity, openness, creativity, and sense of logic. It is also the opportunity to learn more about people that I resonate and connect with at a personal level. Usually, qualitative researchers do not seek distance between themselves and their participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), but connectedness, which allows for rich empirical data.

4.3 Application of Inductive Research Approaches

Given the limited theory on identity in entrepreneurship, I follow an inductive research approach in my dissertation. An inductive research approach typically starts with data about a phenomenon from which concepts and relationships arise to provide a description and then an explanation of the phenomenon, eventually constituting a theory of, for example, entrepreneurship (cf., Shepherd & Sutcliffe, 2011). Hence, the theorist infers relationships from empirical data. The strict approach of induction is delineated as bottom-up theorizing because it begins with cases that are close to the raw data and as close as possible to the ideal of no theory under consideration (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 1996; Dyer & Wilkins, 1991; Eisenhardt, 1989; Gioia et al., 2013; Glaser, 2001; Shepherd & Sutcliffe, 2011).

It is hardly possible to achieve such an "ideal of a clean theoretical slate" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 536) and is not necessary either (Suddaby, 2006; Walsh et al., 2015). An inductive approach does not imply disregarding theories when formulating research questions and objectives and we can apply "the notion of induction to top-down theorizing" (cf., Shepherd & Sutcliffe, 2011). Instead, researchers should formulate a research problem and possibly determine some potentially crucial variables, with some reference to extant literature (Suddaby, 2006). However, they should avoid thinking about specific relationships between variables and theories as much as possible, especially at the outset of the process (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Similar, Shepherd and Sutcliffe (2011) propose that inductive theorizing begins with data contained in the literature from which problems and potential solutions, that is, literature, theories, constructs, and relationships, emerge to offer a description and then a coherent resolution of a research problem, which results in a new theory development. The data are not the rapidly generated volatile structures that contain information about phenomena; rather, the data are the array of rapidly generated volatile structures that contain information that exists in the literature. Gioia et al. (2013) further make the point of not knowing the literature "in great detail," "because knowing the literature intimately too early puts blinders on and leads to prior hypothesis bias (confirmation bias)" (p. 20). Yet, circulating between emergent data, themes and concepts, and the relevant literature is important because it helps to figure out if findings have a precedent and if one has discovered a new theory (Gioia et al., 2013).

In summary, an inductive approach does not prevent researchers from using existing theory to discover theoretical contributions during the research process (e.g., Suddaby, 2006) or to formulate research questions (e.g., Shepherd & Sutcliffe, 2011). Thus, one can start theorizing from empirical evidence or from existing literature. While I started Papers II and IV with theorizing from empirical evidence, we started from existing literature to formulate our research question in Paper III.

4.3.1 Grounded Theory

In social science, grounded theory is probably the most influential qualitative method, because it is a method that comfortably incorporates concepts such as validity, reliability, causality, and generalizability into qualitative research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 2015). Also, the procedures for grounded theory are systematized and prescriptive as well as contextually adaptable (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010). Importantly, "grounded theory has won widespread acceptance as sufficiently rigorous to serve as an acceptable framework … because of the emphasis on data-based theory; and … because it unabashedly admonishes the researchers to strive for objectivity" (Patton, 2015, p. 109).

Put simply, Glaser describes grounded theory as the development of "patterns that explain how to resolve your main concern" (Walsh et al., 2015). To do so, grounded theory underlines a procedure and stages for connecting induction and deduction through a process called "constant comparison," doing theoretical sampling and testing emergent concepts with additional fieldwork (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010; Patton, 2015). Grounded theory is meant to build theory rather than test theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and seeks to help in handling masses

of raw data as well as allowing researchers to be systematic and creative at the same time (Patton, 2015; Suddaby, 2006). In grounded theory, empirical material is collected by a variety of means. The most frequently collected kinds of data are observations and interviews, yet data collection is not limited to these forms. Any kind of written, recorded, or observed material, can be applied (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Aside from its emphasis on theory development, grounded theory was interesting and suitable for studying entrepreneurship in agriculture for three reasons (cf., Bryant & Charmaz, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Locke, 2001). First, and most importantly, grounded theory methods are appropriate for exploring deeply contextualized patterns of behavior. The concepts from which theory is developed are derived from data collected during the research process not chosen prior to beginning the research. This feature allowed me to discover most relevant issues to actors in the agricultural context, thereby contributing to theory and practice. In particular, I was able to uncover entrepreneurs' beliefs and meanings that underlie their actions. Second, in grounded theory, data analysis and data collection are interrelated. This ongoing and cyclic process, the systematic comparison and contrasting of multiple cases, allowed me to increase confidence in the emergent theory. It also allowed me to examine topics and related behavior from diverse angles, which facilitated comprehensive explanations. Third, grounded theory methods are an appropriate fit for answering the how and why elements of my research questions.

4.3.2 Case Study

Among qualitative research strategies, case studies play a particularly important role, as they represent one of the most widely adopted qualitative strategies in management studies and entrepreneurship, providing groundbreaking insights into, for example, strategic management (Eisenhardt, 1989; Gibbert et al., 2008). Case study research is applied to gain insights into unexplored and unexplained research phenomena (e.g., Edmondson & McManus, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2009), especially when the research questions are process oriented (Bingham & Eisenhardt, 2011; Langley, 1999).

A case study is a research strategy that investigates in depth a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context (Pettigrew, 1973; Yin, 2014), especially "when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 27). It is therefore recommended as a suitable research strategy for investigating entrepreneurship in context (Welter, 2011). Case studies are particularly relevant to organization and entrepreneurship studies because they promote "understanding the dynamics present within single

settings" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 533) by using a variety of lenses, which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. Case studies apply, therefore, multiple data collection methods to strengthen the grounding of theory, concepts, or relationships by triangulation of evidence (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014).

In that regard, the case study research is a well-suited strategy for my research for three reasons. First, it is an excellent way to gain deep empirical insights into entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector and to get close to the actors in my research project. Second, it allows me to cope with a situation in which there are multiple variables of interest that are embedded in the context of investigation. In particular, the features of case studies are relevant to family business research (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014) – which is the focus of dissertation Paper III – because family firms exist at the intersection of two systems, the family and the business (Tagiuri & Davis, 1996), that interact when pursuing entrepreneurship. To fully understand the entrepreneurship phenomena associated with family involvement in, and influence on, the business, researchers need to combine multiple perspectives and navigate multiple levels of analysis (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Finally, a case study allows me to follow one single case over time and its dynamics and thus to tell a compelling story, which others may recognize in a different context. As Dyer and Wilkins argue, such stories "are often more persuasive and memorable than statistical demonstrations of ideas and claims" (1991, p. 617).

4.4 Theoretical Sampling

Usually qualitative inquirers employ purposive, and not random, sampling methods. They search settings, groups, and individuals where the process being investigated is most likely to occur (Patton, 2015). Theoretical sampling is a strategy of data collection based on concepts or themes derived from data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) and "simply means that cases are selected because they are particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs" (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). "The purpose of theoretical sampling is to collect data from places, people, and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 134). Hence, theoretical sampling is concerned with constructing a sample that is meaningful theoretically, because it builds in certain features that help in finding the manifestation of a theoretical construct of interest so as to elaborate and examine the construct (Patton, 2015).

A first critical choice is whether it is suitable to conduct a single-case study or if a better understanding of the phenomenon will be gained through conducting a study with multiple cases. "Theoretical sampling of single cases is straightforward" (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). They are chosen because they are unusually revelatory, extreme exemplars, or offer opportunities for unusual research access (e.g., Easton, 2010; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Siggelkow, 2007; Yin, 2009). In Paper III, a single-case study was most appropriate because we had deep access to the firm and because the case company offered a distinctive and extraordinary setting in which we could observe the phenomenon under investigation (entrepreneurship and innovation in family firms). In particular, next to close proximity, which facilitated a longitudinal and in-depth study, a single-case study was suitable for two more reasons. First, the family firm showed outstanding entrepreneurial activity, including technological innovation beyond the norm in its industry. Second, the family firm is fully owned by the family. All second-generation family members (along with one family member from the first generation) are active members on the board. In addition, the entire second generation serves in the top management team and several family members from the third generation work at the family business on a daily basis. Thus, the case has rare or unique qualities that made it a logical candidate for theoretical sampling.

But while single-case studies can richly describe the existence of a phenomenon (Siggelkow, 2007), multiple-case studies typically provide a stronger base for theory building (Eisenhardt, 1989, 1991). Theory is better grounded, more accurate, and more generalizable when it is based on multiple-case settings. Multiple cases enable comparisons that clarify whether an emergent finding is simply idiosyncratic to a single case or consistently replicated by several cases (Eisenhardt, 1991). Multiple cases also create more robust theory because the propositions are more deeply grounded in varied empirical evidence. Constructs and relationships are more precisely delineated because it is easier to determine accurate definitions and appropriate levels of construct abstraction from multiple cases (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

My theoretical sampling for the multiple cases in Papers II and IV was shaped by both design and serendipity (Corbin & Strauss, 1996; Locke, 2001; Powell & Baker, 2014, 2017). At the beginning I went into the field and tried to understand broadly under what conditions entrepreneurship occurs in the agricultural context. Asking who, what, when, and why was particularly useful for identifying themes and their possible links (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001).

In Paper II, I studied 21 newcomers (urban farmers) who participated in a farming-specific incubator program. With regard to site selection, I identified a context that offered the most efficient access to understand newcomers in the agricultural sector and how they developed a founder identity from scratch. In particular, urban farming is a suitable setting to understand founder identity construction because founders usually take on new and multiple identities by engaging in many activities additionally to farming. As such, I negotiated access to an entrepreneurial farming incubator in Sweden with a "concentrated pool" of newcomers (cf., Grimes, 2018) who are learning to become founders in the agricultural context and who have very diverse backgrounds. The different backgrounds of newcomers provide variation in how they become founders and which is also the foundation of why they see things differently.

In Paper IV, I was primarily concerned with identifying sites and study participants most likely to reveal instances wherein Swedish family firms are (a) owned and managed by a family in at least the second generation, (b) growing plants and/or raising livestock, (c) engaged in entrepreneurial activity (within or outside the agricultural sector), and (d) located in the south of Sweden (for personal proximity and farm concentration). To uncover variations and identify the existing scope of next-generation family members' identities' influence on entrepreneurial activities in agriculture, I selected families operating different types of farms and farm sizes as well as showing different entrepreneurial outcomes. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Swedish agricultural sector shows variation in its agricultural produce. I started my data collection with crop production farmers (mainly cereals, oil plants, sugar beets) but then extended my sample to include vegetable, fruit, and animal farms to see if the developed categories are applicable (comparative method). I also increased variance by including small-scale and larger-scale farms (from 9 to about 700 hectares) as well as different entrepreneurial outcomes, such as new venture creation in different markets (e.g., property, media, hotel, or food processing industry) or new product innovation (e.g., introduction of new crops to Sweden). I stopped the sampling process with 12 family firms when I reached the point of saturation, that is, the point when major categories are fully developed, show variation, and are integrated (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

4.5 Data Collection

The use of multiple data sources enhances data credibility (Patton, 2015). Each data source is one piece of the puzzle, with each piece contributing to the inquirer's understanding of the whole phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This convergence adds strength to the findings, as the various sources of data

interviewed together. Thus, in my dissertation, I engaged in triangulated data collection (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2009) using four different sources, including the combination of interviews, observations, informal conversations, and documentation. Table 2 below summarizes the multiple data sources used in my dissertation.

Interviews are an important element in my data collection. They are among the most common ways of collecting qualitative data, because they are a targeted, insightful, and highly efficient means by which to collect rich, empirical data. There are different types of interviews ranging from very structured to very unstructured approaches. Semi-structured interviews and open-ended interviews in particular are a valuable approach to studying issues and processes that are otherwise difficult to see (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015).

In early unstructured and open-ended interviews, for instance, I asked participants to tell their story of their firms and reasons for engaging in entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector (Papers II and IV). Only later did interviews become somewhat more structured as I explored theoretical subthemes (Corbin & Strauss, 1996, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The early open-ended interviews for Paper IV were carried out in 2016 and 2017 and the more structured interviews followed later in the research process between 2018 and beginning of 2020. Thereby, I could follow my participants over a period of four years and was able to collect 55 interviews with entrepreneurs and industry experts. The interviews for Paper II were conducted between the end of 2018 and beginning of 2020. This resulted in 29 interviews with 21 founders and two mentors over time.

The interviews for the single-case study (Paper III) were carried out during the period 1999–2014. Originally, some of the interviews were part of a project on understanding the role of ownership in strategizing in family firms conducted by my co-author. I joined the case in 2014 and collected several more interviews to fulfill our new research purpose. In total, we draw on 38 in-depth interviews. These interviews were conducted with three generations of family members, nonfamily managers, board members, and the firm's financial advisor.

Also, detailed *observation* notes that I took during and after informal and formal meetings contributed to my large amount of empirical material. Direct observations provide the opportunity to observe participants' behavior during either formal or casual activities, which allowed me to obtain "rich insights into the human, social, and organizational aspects" (Myers, 2013, p. 92). Being in the field helped me to compare my observations with those of my participants expressed during interviews and informal conversations. At the same time,

observations facilitated interviews, because they provided hints to probe into during my interviews. Thus, observations helped me to see firsthand what was actually going on rather than simply assume that I knew (Patton, 2015).

Through observations I was also better able to understand and capture the context within which my participants interact (Patton, 2015). For instance, in site visits to the farm businesses for conducting my interviews, my firsthand experiences helped me enormously to better grasp the environment of the firm and the people, as well as their appearance and body language, and therewith better understand who they are as individuals. Notes were produced after every visit, including reflections on the interviews as such, e.g., the tone, feelings, and body language. Moreover, my firsthand experiences with the settings and the people in the settings allowed me to be open and discovery oriented and inductive (cf., Patton, 2015). For instance, during the incubator meeting I sat on a chair in the room together with the new founders and mentors, and I observed as they interacted during the program. This led to the first important insights for Paper II.

In addition, *informal conversations* during the field trips (e.g., between and after industry or incubator meetings, at farmer markets) proved to be another rich data source. The notes taken from informal conversations helped deepen my understanding of participants' motivation for, and behaviors in, engaging in entrepreneurship. In particular, informal conversation at the beginning of data collection for Paper II allowed participants to get to know me, which helped me to gain trust, which has been advantageous during the course of research. At the same time, my personal background in agriculture, owning a family farm business, both eased my entry into the firms and appeared to give family members and founders some comfort in talking with me. It also gave me ready access to industry experts and consultants, as well as to stakeholders outside the boundaries of my focal firms and founders, who became important informants helping me understand and validate or challenge what I was learning.

I combined my observation, informal conversation, and interviews with the analysis of many different kinds of *documents*. Booklets, brochures, and company websites and reports added richness to my analysis in Paper III and allowed me to better understand the entrepreneurial development of the business and the history of the family. These documents also provided insights from periods for which I did not have interviews and observation data.

In the case of Papers II and IV, the documentation data consist of different material. For instance, in Paper II, social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube) have been proven to be an essential data source for better understanding founder identity construction in the agricultural sector. I was also part of several email exchanges during the incubator program and I received

access to Slack, software used for coordination and communication between founders and mentors. Moreover, I collected material from the incubator meetings such as notes, pictures of, for example, business model exercises, and videos of founders' venture pitches, as well as press releases about the founders and the incubator. For Paper IV, next to family firm documents (books and booklets) and newspaper articles, also social media proved to provide a rich data source to enable a better understanding of the family members' identities. For Paper II and IV, I made additional use of podcasts where entrepreneurs shared their experiences and motivation for running ventures in the agricultural sector.

Most of my data sources in my dissertation are *longitudinal in nature*. This means I interviewed and observed my participants over time and gained therefore both a process perspective on, and in-depth insights into, their entrepreneurial journey. Further, being skeptical about retrospective interviews in general, the longitudinal nature of my research allowed me to focus on participants' experiences of the present time instead of the past. However, some retrospective dialogs have been very beneficial in enabling me to gain contextualized insights as well as history and background information about participants and/or firm development.

Table 2. *Data inventory*

Data Type	Quantity	Description
Interviews Family Entrepreneurs, Family Members and Employees	48 + 38	Unstructured and open-ended, as well as semi-structured interviews with family members, entrepreneurs, and employees in the family business context and with
New Founders	25	new venture founders. Semi-structured
Other Informants	11	interviews with incubator mentors and
Total	122	industry stakeholder (other informants) to deepen understanding of the context. Interviews lasted between 40 and 180 minutes. In addition, informal conversations were a helpful data source in all papers.
Observation Incubator Meetings	41.5 hours	Observations during incubator meetings (introduction, mentoring and follow-up
Industry Events	5 hours	meetings, 42 h) and observations at
Farmer Markets	12 hours	industry events and farmer markets (17 h).
Total	58.5 hours	Notes were taken shortly after site visits on farms (16 pages).

Data Type	Quantity	Description
Documentation		Social media, newspaper articles,
Social Media:		podcasts, Slack (an online messaging
- FB & Instagram	4,293 posts	software) , as well as incubator material
- YouTube	64 (187 min)	(mentor slides, notes) added richness to the analysis of founder identity
Podcasts	18 (609 min)	construction. In the family firm context,
Newspaper Articles	67	Facebook, podcasts, books, brochures,
Slack	114 pages	firm documents, and videos helped
Incubator Material	225 pages	deepen understanding. Also, company
Firm Books and Booklets	527 pages	websites contributed to the analysis in the
Internal Firm Documents	44 pages	family firm context.

4.6 Data Analysis

I followed a four-stage procedure for inductive research by iterating between the data, existing literature, my own emerging theory, and continued fieldwork (Corbin & Strauss, 1996; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001). Although the four general stages might suggest a certain linear progression, the process was rather iterative because I found myself in all stages simultaneously. Iteration is a core feature of my analytic approach, thus new conceptual categories emerged at any stage of the research process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001). Memoing has been an important element throughout my whole analytical process. Writing memos on emerging ideas captured new theoretical "musings" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001) and provided me with analytic space to reflect and to work out ideas. It thus supported my efforts to name what I believed was expressed in data incidents, which helped me to draft the conceptual categories.

In stage one, my focus was directed towards drafting categories (codes). Thus, my aim was to assign to my data a common meaning that is captured in a conceptual category (Locke, 2001). I analyzed my data using the constant comparative method, in line with Glaser and Strauss (1967) as well as Gioia et al. (2013). Hence, I participated in two analytical activities, i.e., naming data incidents and comparing data incidents and names (Locke, 2001). In the interest of staying close to the social situation, I used the terms frequently employed by participants during observations, interviews, and in archival material to surface first-order codes (Van Maanen, 1979).

In the second stage of my analytic activity, my focus shifted to fully develop and also to provide an organization for the codes that I have been drafting (Locke, 2001). Now I was spending less time comparing data incidents to each

other and more time thinking about all the elements that might make up categories. Hence, I compared similar first-order codes to surface the characteristic of broader categories of data known as "second-order codes" (Gioia et al., 2013). In doing this, I started to arrange the categories so that they began to add up to a conceptual "whole," the emerging theoretical framework.

The third stage involved attempts to refine the categories and to delaminate the theory. At this level of analysis, theory solidifies because "major modifications become fewer and fewer as the analyst compares the next incidents of a category to its properties" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 110). I aimed to settle on the framework's theoretical components and to clarify the story they have to tell. Hence, that aim was to identify relationships between different core categories – how they may be arranged in relation to each other. At this stage, where a workable set of themes and concepts was at hand, I also investigated whether it was possible to distill the emergent second-order codes even further into an "aggregate dimension" (cf., Gioia et al., 2013).

Finally, at the fourth and final stage of the process, Glaser and Strauss describe researchers as being devoted to producing a research article. Thus, at the last stage I engaged in writing my thesis papers, where the memos produced at earlier stages essentially provide the theoretical substance for writing up the theory. The memos discussing the categories provided both the content for the categories and also a way to frame the written presentation of the theory.

I stopped my analytical process when my categories reached the point where subsequent data incidents resulted in no new naming activity regarding categories. This point is called *theoretical saturation* and means subsequent data incidents that are examined provide no new information, either in terms of refining the category or its properties, or of its relationship to other categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). After the initial stages of analysis, I also began cycling between emergent categories and the relevant literature, not only to see whether what I was finding had precedents, but also whether I had discovered something new (Gioia et al., 2013).

4.7 Establishing Quality in Qualitative Research

Quality in research is a subjective term in regard to the different philosophical schools. Some argue for adopting a procedure to ensure reliability and validity while others offer alternative criteria for trustworthy research. Despite the "paradigm wars," one can find several overlaps, which I discuss in the following. In my eyes, establishing quality in qualitative research includes validity, reliability, and credibility (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

To establish validity, which deals with neutrality in the sense that findings do not derive from the researcher's imagination but are clearly linked to data, I applied three tactics that are available. First, I made use of multiple sources of evidence in my dissertation to encourage convergent lines of inquiry (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Silverman, 2010). Second, I used the replication logic of multiple cases and incorporated all cases into my analysis. Constant comparison of multiple cases, which enables a form of replication, allowed me to increase confidence in emergent findings and theory (Glaser & Strauss; 1967; Silverman, 2010). Third, I created a database for each of my cases and maintained a chain of evidence for each case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014). This means I developed case study databases that give the protocol of the data source (e.g., from what, when, where/from whom the information stems).

Reliability is about the consistency of the findings, allowing other researchers to follow how the study has been undertaken. The objective is to be sure that other researchers who apply the same procedure will arrive at the same findings and conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2014). To reach reliability, I detailed the procedure in all of the papers for the process of research design, data collection, and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Moreover, I applied the suggested procedures and steps for my chosen research strategies. For instance, applying grounded theory, I followed the suggested four-step procedure to get from data to theory. Moreover, I rely on four different types of qualitative data (interviews, observation, informal conversation, documentation) that make my findings more dependable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To establish credibility, that is, to be believable (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I spent a prolonged time in the field, tried to be "close" to the actors, collected extensive data from various sources (triangulation of data sources), conducted the interviews myself and subsequently transcribed most of them verbatim. At the same time, I engaged in reflexive practices. For instance, I was reflexive on how my personal engagement may have influenced potential interpretations of research findings. I also challenged my findings by presenting them at various conferences and workshops as well as discussing my papers in detail with colleagues or co-authors (triangulation of authors) (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Working in a team of researchers, I could "leverage the team" to add rigor to my research process by tapping into each other's expertise and insights for data analysis and interpretation.

Finally, I believe quality in qualitative research is a combination of rigor (i.e., validity, reliability, credibility) and creativity (Corbin & Strauss, 1996, 2015; Denize, 2008; Suddaby, 2006). Creativity is needed to challenge assumptions and find novelty as well as prudent ways to illustrate empirical data and theoretical constructs. Thus, good research is interesting, clear, and logical, and

makes readers reflect and eager to read more about it (cf., Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

5   Contribution

The purpose of my dissertation is to investigate the dynamics of agricultural entrepreneurs' identities over time when pursuing entrepreneurial activities. To address this purpose, I first conducted a literature review and then developed three research questions that helped me to fill important research gaps, to provide novel insights, and thus to make a number of contributions to theory and practice. My dissertation builds on conceptual and qualitative approaches and uses identity theories (on the individual and family level) to study identity dynamics in entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. Table 3 below summarizes the theoretical contributions of my dissertation.

Table 3. *Thesis papers and contributions*

Paper	Contributions	Fields of Contributions
Paper I Entrepreneurship in the Agricultural Sector: A Literature Review and Future Research Opportunities	1. Systematic review of multidisciplinary research on entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector 2. Future research agenda: Key contextual dimensions of the agricultural sector can illuminate some of the less well-understood aspects of entrepreneurship theory	1. Entrepreneurship, literature on contextualizing entrepreneurship
Paper II The Interplay of Macro and Micro Transitions in Founder Identity Construction – RQ 1 & 3	1. Process model that depicts the construction of founder identity as an interplay of micro and macro transitions 2. Identity mechanisms underlying founder identity construction 3. Practices of identity conflict management	1. Entrepreneurship, founder identity 2. Multiple work-role identities 3. Identity theory, identity conflict

Paper	Contributions	Fields of Contributions
Paper III The Reciprocal Relationship of Innovation Capabilities and Socioemotional Wealth in a Family Firm – RQ 2	1. An in-depth and processual study of socioemotional wealth (SEW) and innovation capabilities 2. Suggests a positive reciprocal relationship of SEW and innovation capabilities in family firms over time 3. Suggests that the reciprocal relationship works in a synergistic fashion, yielding unique synergies between financial wealth and SEW	1. Family business research, family entrepreneurship (with focus on innovation) 2. Entrepreneurship, innovation literature
Paper IV Next Generations Entrepreneurial Activities and Positive Identity Development in Family Firms – RQ 2 & 3	1. Process model that explains positive identity development with means of entrepreneurial identity 2. Role of entrepreneurial identity for next-generation family members and family identity change 3. Identity tactics underlying multiple identity management	1. Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial identity 2. Family business research, family entrepreneurship 3. Multiple work-role identities

5.1 Contribution to Entrepreneurship Literature

An increasing number of scholars argue that entrepreneurship researchers should pay more attention to the contexts in which entrepreneurial activities take place (e.g., Gartner, 1985; Shepherd et al., 2019; Watson, 2013; Welter, 2011; Zahra 2007; Zahra & Wright, 2011), because it "provides individuals with entrepreneurial opportunities and set boundaries for their actions" (Welter, 2011, p. 165). Sector is a central context that impacts on many aspects of entrepreneurship.

My dissertation contributes to this discussion by researching entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. The literature review (Paper I) highlights main themes and considers three key contextual dimensions apparent within agriculture that can illuminate less well-understood aspects of entrepreneurship theory and practice through future research. The dimensions are (1) the role of *identity* in entrepreneurial motivations and actions in farming, (2) the entrepreneurial capacity of *farming families* in developing and pursuing opportunities, and (3) the ways in which *institutional context* both inhibits and enables entrepreneurial engagement in the agricultural sector. Focusing research on the three identified dimensions (identity, family, institutions) will improve our understanding of the role of context in entrepreneurship as well as how and why context impacts entrepreneurial activities and vice versa. The three

contextual dimensions cut across units of analysis and influence entrepreneurship in different ways that make the agricultural sector moreover an appropriate context for addressing entrepreneurship as a multilevel phenomenon where distinct dynamics shape the processes involved and their outcomes.

My dissertation focuses on identity and farming families. I contribute with new insights into how and why identity influences entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector by investigating multiple identities and their dynamics. Comparing the contributions of my papers allows me to show how previous role identities and person identity influence the entrepreneurial activities of agricultural entrepreneurs.

Identities carried over from previous occupations strongly impact entrepreneurship. That means that new founders build their founder identity on familiar role identities, which they carry over from previous working experiences. Also, next-generation family members enact their previous role identities when engaging in entrepreneurial activities in the family business context. Hence, independently of setting – new founding or family context – established identities shape entrepreneurial activities.

Additionally, person identity in the form of values, interests, and talents plays a critical role in the motivation for becoming a founder. For example, in the family farming context, next-generation family members see themselves as unique and distinct individuals trying to fit their person identity into the legacy business by engaging in portfolio entrepreneurship. Yet, person identity can also hamper the development of a founder identity. When founders experiment with new roles existing values might contradict how one should perform a new role. If existing values are incompatible with their new roles, conflicts arise and founders experience difficulties in adapting a new identity.

Finally, my dissertation contributes by showing how identity can change over time when engaging in entrepreneurship. In role identity theory, the self is a compilation of multiple role identities that are structured in an identity hierarchy (Stryker, 1980), where more important identities are on top and less important identities further down in the hierarchy. By investigating how multiple identities of agricultural entrepreneurs relate over time, the study shows that the importance of different role identities can change over time. Through experimenting with the self and identity management strategies for multiple identities, identities can change their positions and relationships in an identity hierarchy when pursuing entrepreneurship. Finally, person identities and what it means to be a founder can change over time.

5.1.1 Founder Identity

My dissertation contributes to the emerging discussions on multiple identities and process studies in the literature on founder identity in entrepreneurship. Constructing a founder identity is essential for individuals transitioning into entrepreneurship (Ireland & Webb, 2007). Thus, it is crucial that newcomers who want to enter the agricultural sector construct successfully a founder identity. Constructing a founder identity entails macro transitions when individuals first enter a new role (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010) and micro transitions when individuals manage multiple roles subsequently (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009a).

Paper II extends the present research on founder identity in two ways. First, the study offers a process model that depicts the construction of founder identity as an interplay of micro and macro transitions between multiple identities, which is dominated by micro transitions. While other studies usually assume that becoming an entrepreneur implies new role transitions and disengagement from some central identities (e.g., Ashforth, 2001; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Ibarra, 2003), this study contributes by showing that founders do not withdraw from familiar work roles but rather use them as means to build their unique founder identity over time. Therefore, although some identities are dominant across all cases, each founder constructs a unique founder identity composed of multiple subidentities. Previously held identities take a central role in the hierarchy of subidentities because founders prioritize identities differently (Murnieks et al., 2014).

Paper II also contributes to founder identity theory by showing that the diversity and richness with which individuals can compose their unique founder identity from multiple subroles do not necessarily facilitate founder identity construction, challenging current theorizing on founder identity complexity (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010). All founders engaged in macro transitions into new roles that triggered more substantial changes in definitions of the self. Previously held identities can influence the perception of new ones either positively or negatively. Challenges arise when founders perceive subidentities as conflicting: This can hinder macro transitions into new roles and the successful construction of a founder identity. A lack of external validation from audiences exacerbates the challenges of macro transitions, and repeatedly failing to construct a founder identity can decrease the founder's motivation to continue venturing. Identity strategies are important for managing the dynamism (including possible identity conflicts) underlying the transitioning between subroles in founder identity construction.

5.1.2 Entrepreneurial Identity

My dissertation contributes to the entrepreneurial identity literature by providing new insights into how multiple identities are related to one another when pursuing entrepreneurship. In particular, it enhances the picture of entrepreneurial identity we have drawn from previous research on entrepreneurial identity in three ways by taking a process perspective and investigating identity dynamics.

The fundamental finding of Paper IV is the positive relationship among actors' multiple identities. In other words, multiple identities are experienced as complementary and enhancing through engaging in entrepreneurship. At the same time, a desire for positive identity, where individuals experience their multiple work identities as complementary and enhancing, can be a key motivation to start new businesses. Importantly, the entrepreneurial identity is key in this process, as it is the means that allows the development of positive identity. This is in line with the general identity literature, which is based on the assumption that individuals, couples, and collectives are motivated to develop and hold identities that are not in tension with each other (e.g., Dutton et al., 2010; Kreiner et al., 2006; Kreiner & Sheep, 2009).

To develop a positive identity through entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs need to engage in identity management strategies that lead to coactivation of their multiple identities and that forge positive relationships among their multiple work identities. In particular, the study shows that founders engage in aggregating their multiple identities (Pratt & Foreman, 2000), compared to compartmentalizing and integrating as theorized by entrepreneurship scholars (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009a).

Finally, identities other than entrepreneurial identity such as person identity or other social identities can be profound drivers of engaging with entrepreneurship. So far, a lot of literature has assumed that entrepreneurial identity is the main motivation to engage in entrepreneurship. Paper IV presents a different picture. Individuals engage in entrepreneurship in order to enact important person identities or to sustain a meaningful social identity. Hence, entrepreneurial identity can have two distinctive functions. On the one hand, entrepreneurial identity supports the enactment of person identity of individuals, and on the other, it sustains salient social identities of individuals. In other words, entrepreneurial identity allows individuals to become who they want to be and/or to defend who they are.

5.1.3 Family Entrepreneurship

By studying identity dynamics in the family farming context, my dissertation contributes to the entrepreneurship literature in family business research in several ways. First, it contributes with new knowledge to the limited amount of research on next-generation engagement and on individual family members' impact on entrepreneurial business development. Next-generation engagement is a key contributor to the success and continuity of family firms; however, there is limited understanding of the factors influencing next-generation engagement (Garcia et al., 2018).

Paper IV suggests that behaviors of family firms are affected both by imprinting family identity and also individuality. The study advances our understanding of new venture creation and the development of business groups in the family farming context by acknowledging how the development of a positive work identity at the individual level forms an interplay with family identity. It presents a process model that shows how family and individual identities relate to each other in pursuing business opportunities, thereby also providing new insights into why next-generation family members follow entrepreneurial activities. The next generations' process of discovery of their individual identity parallel to the family identity shapes the entrepreneurial process. In other words, entrepreneurial activity is an outcome of next-generation identity demands of being able to continue individuality, to separate the me from the family (we), and also family identity, to preserve belonging. Importantly, entrepreneurial identity functions as a means to follow the me (individual person) among the we (family) in the family business context: Each new business added by next-generation entrepreneurs is a result of next generations' coactivation of multiple identities, which underlines the relevance of individual biographies for entrepreneurship in the family context.

My dissertation contributes moreover by showing that through next-generation entrepreneurial activities family identity can change over time. Because next-generation family members can define themselves firstly via their person identities and being entrepreneurs (different compared to predecessors [e.g. mother, father] who highlight being farmers first and foremost), they integrate their self aspects into the family identity. Through this process they extend the intergroup boundaries to a new family identity (who they are as a business family). In other words, by imprinting their individual identity into the family business context, next-generation family members shape a new family identity.

Second, Paper III advances our understanding of how family identity positively influences entrepreneurial behavior and vice versa, by offering an in-depth and processual perspective that focuses on noneconomic and emotional

values (SEW) streaming from the identity of an owning family and innovation capabilities. Previously, there was no in-depth understanding in the literature of how entrepreneurial activities (specifically innovation capability) affect noneconomic and emotional values of family firms (e.g., Chrisman & Patel, 2012; Gómez-Mejía et al., 2014; Sciascia et al., 2015). In detail, the study shows that innovation capabilities are positively influenced by the emotional attachment and the identification of family members with the firm. At the same time, the study shows that the successful development of innovation capabilities positively impacts the emotional attachment stemming from identity. Thus, when entrepreneurship is successful in the agricultural family business context, it can strengthen identity and the emotional attachment of family members to the firm.

Both family studies (Papers III and IV) show a high level of emotional attachment of family members and identification with the family firm, because family members have a deep interest in the continuity of the family firm for reasons of identity confirmation as well as self-continuity and self-esteem from identity confirmation (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007). Paper III indicates that emotional attachment of self-continuity with the firm enables an awareness of new innovation opportunities in the environment and provides the willingness and commitment to act on these opportunities, which can be a risky venture. The affective element of identity in the study also explains the altruism of the family members and their readiness to invest profits back into the family firm to pursue innovation in the family firm. This allows the family to sustain entrepreneurship and growth over time, rather than for a short period only. A long-term identification with the business reinforces family identity and emotional values that strengthen family firm identification, which benefits innovation. In particular, findings of Paper III indicate that the reciprocal relationship of the innovation capabilities and SEW yields unique synergies between financial and socioemotional wealth.

5.2 Identity Theory and Multiple Work-role Identities

My dissertation contributes to literature on managing identity conflict in role identity theory and multiple work identities, where empirical research remains sparse (e.g., Atewologun et al., 2017; Ramarajan, 2014; Ramarajan et al., 2017a). In particular, it contributes by examining conditions that trigger identity conflict and positive identity as well as the identity mechanism through which they operate.

While previous work on role identity theory has noted that possible identity conflict may lead individuals to seek new roles (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets &

Burke, 2014), findings in Paper II suggest that founders, despite identity conflict and the absence of role identification, do not always seek out new roles. Although in the agricultural context several identities present opposing sets of values and priorities (e.g., accountant or salesman vs. green activist), they do not relinquish founding activities but engage in practices of conflict resolution, which creates synergies among founders' identities and addresses the goal of venture development. Therefore, founders can forge links between identities that create founder identity enhancement despite persisting difficulties. While research on founder identity theorizes that a founder concept may consist of contradictory or competing identities (e.g., Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Powell & Baker, 2017), we now understand better how founders manage to overcome related challenges, because the Paper II outlines different practices for managing identity conflicts.

Adding to research on multiple work-role identities, the dissertation responds to the need for more research into the psychological experience of multiple identities (e.g., Creary et al., 2015; Ramarajan et al., 2017b; Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). Previous research has largely sidestepped the complexity and dynamics of multiple identities by relying on notions of single identity salience, or pairs. However, such single or pair identity approaches do not reflect the reality of today's work environment, especially in the context of agriculture.

First, the dissertation builds on and extends newer approaches that suggest multiple identities should be examined simultaneously and in relationship to one another and extends it to positive identity, which has been less explored theoretically and empirically (Dutton et al., 2010; Ramarajan, 2014). By focusing on identity management strategies, Papers II and IV show that forcing links between multiple identities and positive identity can lead to beneficial outcomes such as coming closer to an authentic self and/or finding meaningfulness in work. They suggest that people can experience psychological benefits from multiple identities, using, for example, their skills, knowledge, and learning that arise when their multiple identities intersect with another.

Second, the dissertation contributes by investigating more than two identities (identity pairs), to illustrate that some identity pairs could be enhancing and others could be conflicting. My studies show that while some identities are enhancing (such as farmer and environmentalist) other identities seem to be conflicting (such as accountant and environmentalist). Examining both identity conflict and identity harmony (positive relationship) suggests that these two different experiences can exist simultaneously (Ramarajan et al., 2017b). In the past, identity scholars usually proposed that identities either conflicted with or facilitated each other (e.g., Brook et al., 2008). However, the presence of positive identity or positive emotions might not mean the absence of identity conflicts.

While newcomers (urban farmers) struggle with new macro transitions (e.g., accountant or marketer) that are needed to run a new venture and that create identity conflicts, they are able to enjoy happiness through coming close to an authentic self, for instance. While family business members have already identified with role identities related to running a venture through growing up in a family business, conflict arises in the search for individuality in the family business context, and conflicts of multiple identity management can remain, especially in regard to identity boundary management (e.g., boundaries between family and business roles). Importantly, Paper II shows that despite prevailing tensions, positive experiences can be generated through identity management strategies. In other words, identity mechanisms outweigh identity conflicts, yet they may stay.

Finally, the dissertation expands previous research by identifying three new identity mechanisms, namely identity aggregation, integration, and adaption, in addition to role taking and immersion (Ramarajan et al., 2017b) that allow psychological benefits from multiple identity. Moreover, it contributes by outlining mechanisms for identity conflict management such as experimenting with self or highlighting the purposefulness of founding activity. For instance, the importance of most valued identities (e.g., farmer) provides motivation and mitigates identity conflicts. An identity hierarchy allows more valued identities to be highlighted and at the same time links to be created between multiple identities (identity aggregation). Thus, forcing facilitating relationships between multiple identities seems to provide both psychological resources for entrepreneurial engagement and important outcomes (entrepreneurial payoffs) such as well-being (e.g., more authenticity or meaningfulness) from engaging with it.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

Despite the implications of my work, this dissertation is not without limitations. Although my dissertation builds on multiple papers and uses multiple sources of data, its generalizability should be treated tentatively. As is common in qualitative inquiry, the specific details of the results I describe in the context of my dissertation are unlikely to be broadly empirically generalizable (e.g., Eisenhart, 2009). My research is conducted in a specific context, the agricultural sector, which can be taken as an opportunity as well as a limitation. In addition to this, findings are related to a specific country and settings. The dynamics may be different in other country settings. Hence, more research is needed to ascertain whether the findings of this dissertation can be generalized more broadly.

I study generational identity dynamics in family firms and how next-generation involvement may change family identity over time. Thus, another limitation is that my study of next-generation identity covers a "relatively short period of time". I study next-generation entrepreneurs when they have taken over the family legacy and follow them for about four years. The development of identities is usually a long-term process (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Werthes et al., 2018), especially in family business context. Regarding generational dynamics it might be therefore worthwhile studying a longer timeframe, including a multi-level analysis of ancestors and successors, as well as how and where family members develop their identities. Insights of the study suggest that identity development of next generations is a quite complex issues, where identity development and learning exist within and outside the family boundaries. Family business researchers might seek to understand identity dynamics in earlier and later stages of the entrepreneurial process in business families as well as the long-term effects of identity construction and management.

Future research should further explore critical links between individual-level and organizational-level identity, which is not the focus of this dissertation. Some insights from my data and other studies (e.g., Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Powell & Baker, 2014, 2017) suggest that entrepreneurs' identities shape firms' identity too as the entrepreneurs strive for relevant identity and concurrent actions on the firm level, which can lay the foundation for firms' outward presentation. However, there might also be cases where entrepreneurs intentionally or unconsciously deviate from their own identity by establishing an organizational identity. Hence, there is scope for research that looks more closely at the dynamic interrelationships between entrepreneurs' and organizational identity.

Similarly, it is interesting to investigate image and identity dynamics. Because image has important implications for identity (e.g., Goffman, 1959; Ibarra, 1999), founders may be motivated to convey images that are consistent with contextual expectations as well as images that are consistent with themselves, which can result in identity conflicts. Therefore, understanding the social and psychological processes of image-identity management by which founders construct or modify their images and how these processes relate to identity on the organizational level becomes important (Ladge & Little, 2019).

Overall, given that entrepreneurial identity is influenced by the context, there is still a long way to go before fully understanding the identity-context nexus (cf., Jones et al., 2019). When becoming an entrepreneur, individuals need to determine how it fits into their existing overall identity and societal expectations. Initial insights suggest that in the agricultural sector culture plays an important

role by influencing when entrepreneurship is an acceptable strategic choice and which types of entrepreneurship are acceptable (see also Hunter et al., 2019). By suggesting that developing an entrepreneurial identity might be complicated by culture in Swedish agriculture (Hunter et al., 2019), it is worth unlocking the social factors affecting entrepreneurship. Hence, future research in the agricultural context should investigate in detail the influence of culture and social norms on entrepreneurial identity development. In addition, my findings suggest that the fear of failure creates an obstacle in entrepreneurial identity development in the agricultural sector (see also Hansson & Hunter, 2019). Previous research suggests that entrepreneurs who are able to learn from and cope with their failure are more likely to recover and re-enter the entrepreneurial process (Shepherd et al., 2016). Thus, more research is needed to understand how farmers experience and cope with entrepreneurial failure and which coping strategies may support learning and persistence in entrepreneurial efforts (Hansson & Hunter, 2019).

The role of place identity, "those dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment" (Proshansky, 1978, p. 147), is another interesting research topic for future entrepreneurship research in the agricultural sector. The literature on identity in agriculture shows that farmers have a deep connection to the countryside, their land, and farm business (e.g., Cheshire et al., 2013; Dominy, 2001; Flemsæter, 2009). When attachment to place grows, people can identify with these places. A place can be a region, country, city, or neighborhood, or even the workplace and home. The result is that through identification the self-concept is based partly on place (Lewicka, 2008, 2011). Hence, the attachment to place, or the bonds of farmers with places, might influence the development of an entrepreneurial identity and how and what kind of entrepreneurial opportunities farmers follow. One question could be to investigate whether place has any particular role in the development of an entrepreneurial identity of farmers or not. If so, what kind of role does it play?

In my dissertation, I looked at family and identity dynamics in entrepreneurship; however, the literature review (Paper I) identifies institutions – next to identity and family – as key contextual dimensions of the agricultural sector, which provide promising opportunities for future research and the potential to contribute to and extend current theoretical and empirical analyses of entrepreneurship research. Studying the agricultural sector can therefore significantly improve our understanding of institutionalism in entrepreneurship. Given the history of policy support and recent reforms, the agricultural sector is a particularly interesting setting to study how formal institutions (such as high bureaucracy and unsupportive laws) and informal institutions (such as culture,

norms, and attitudes) at different levels (sector, region, and nation) affect entrepreneurial activities at the micro level. Extant research on entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector indicates that it is important to consider how external and environmental factors facilitate or impede the entrepreneurial process. Entrepreneurship scholars can design studies that investigate not solely the role of institutions themselves, but also how institutional dynamics are interpreted by actors involved in the pursuit of entrepreneurial activities.

While I integrate family aspects from an identity perspective, we still need to know more about how family, household, and kinship factors influence or become influenced by entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. My data suggest that entrepreneurial well-being is an important area for future research. Past findings suggest that a full understanding of the well-being of entrepreneurs requires knowledge of their family lives. Two relevant questions are whether entrepreneurship is helping or hindering the quality of family life and, conversely, whether family life is helping or hindering entrepreneurial pursuits (cf., Ryff, 2019). Hence, in the family business context, there can be work and family spillover effects, both negative and positive, yet entrepreneurship researchers have failed to investigate work and family effects to date (Kollmann et al., 2019; Wiklund et al., 2019). Aspects such as "spouse and family member work relationships, role relationships in the business, time commitments, and the prior success of the business as a causal indicator will affect relationships and associated well-being for the family involved or uninvolved with the business" (Stephan, 2018; Wiklund et al., 2019, p. 583).

In this regard, it might also be appropriate to consider the role of gender. Agriculture is often described as a sector where the majority of business owners are male. Yet my study indicates that a growing number of women inherit the family farm or enter the sector. Research could focus on understanding the effects of family culture or the culture of society in constraining or providing opportunities for women to become entrepreneurs in agriculture as well as the broader implications of female inheritance of farm businesses. Also, more knowledge about gender issues in such a male-dominated sector would certainly provide insights of general interest in the areas of gender roles and female entrepreneurship.

5.4 Practical Implications

In addition to its theoretical contributions, my dissertation has practical implications. In the following, I will discuss important insights for practitioners that I obtained through studying entrepreneurship in the Swedish agricultural sector and being close to the actors that I studied. As a qualitative researcher, I

had the privilege of listening to their ideas, thoughts, and feelings regarding entrepreneurship, which made me appreciate their everyday challenges. Therefore, in the following, I outline barriers to entrepreneurship in Swedish agriculture, but also suggest ways of overcoming these barriers.

5.4.1 Passion as Springboard for Entrepreneurial/Founder Identity

My dissertation calls for finding one's passion(s) to build an entrepreneurial/founder identity. Finding passion and purpose is the first, and perhaps most important, task in developing a founder/entrepreneurial identity and becoming an entrepreneur (Mathias, 2017). It is only once individuals discover what they are passionate about (e.g., farming, sales, food, money) that they can begin to develop an entrepreneurial/founder identity. Identity represents the meaning and purpose most valued by a person, and hence should reside at the heart of the entrepreneurial mission. Therewith, becoming an entrepreneur represents a truly unique profession because one can design it to fit with who one is and to engage in something that is deeply fulfilling. Thus, it is important to develop meaning and purpose, which in turn will influence entrepreneurial/founder identity and the likelihood of being successful. Further, just as "who one is" can change over time, entrepreneurs also have the unique ability to design their roles in the business to match what they want to do and who they want to be in the future. Becoming a founder for the sake of owning a business or growing for the sake of growing does not ensure greater happiness (Mathias & Williams, 2017) – when it is not aligned with who one is and who one wants to become.

Well-being and success are born out of engaging in something that provides deep meaning and reflects our identities. Therefore, I encourage farmers to pursue what they enjoy and are most passionate about, rather than follow other entrepreneurs' passions. This can be farming itself, other activities related to running a farm, or venturing out into new areas. Consequently, I discourage individuals and farmers who want to start, for example, agri-tourism, despite not being interested in and passionate about tourism, just because it has been proven to be beneficial for other entrepreneurs. All the successful entrepreneurs in my study truly enjoy what they do; some have even exceeded their expectations in terms of achievements and all enjoy positive psychological outcomes. I therefore further encourage (next-generation) farmers and newcomers when entering the family business and/or sector to test out potential selves as a path to well-being and developing an entrepreneurial identity. This approach suggests that becoming entrepreneurs should engage in the fundamental question "who should I become?," which necessarily motivates them to experiment with possible

identities that match their "true nature" (e.g., Ibarra, 1999; Kreiner & Sheep, 2009) when becoming entrepreneurs. Moreover, by asking "why," entrepreneurs can ensure that what they do matches with who they want to be, what they value and feel.

5.4.2 Managing Multiple Roles and Identities

New founders entering the farming sector typically have multiple motivations, including lifestyle, economics, and environmental aspirations. Despite this array of motivations to engage in entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector, my dissertation shows that when entrepreneurs first launch a farm business, most of them do not have the luxury of doing only those things they enjoy or are passionate about. Instead entrepreneurs, often in an effort to economize resources, have to "wear many hats" in their ventures. Scholars and practitioners have long viewed entrepreneurship not as a singular activity but as a combination of numerous, highly varied activities (cf., Mathias & Williams, 2017, 2018). This means new founders in agriculture have to take on numerous roles, such as innovation, marketing, sales, farming, accounting, product development, and distribution. My study shows that wearing many hats can allow entrepreneurs to save resources by performing a broad range of activities themselves. Also, engaging in different activities improves the entrepreneurs' holistic understanding of a business by teaching them about the various aspects of it. However, despite these benefits, the findings show that conflicts and challenges arise when building a founder identity in agriculture. Given the multitude of necessary subroles, it is difficult to achieve integration and harmony between all roles.

Therefore, I suggest three strategies to manage enduring conflicts and to enhance the possibility of a successful construction of founder identity in the agricultural sector. First, instead of refraining from engaging with less liked role activities and keeping therewith a distance from unlinked identities, one should make efforts to identify positive relationships and synergies between the different roles one needs to perform. I recommend highlighting the purposefulness of important role identities (such as farmer) that are deeply meaningful, which will help to forge links between less liked subrole identities (such as accountant). Identifying the need for them to become a founder will provide motivation and persistence to build a founder identify over time and to successfully run the farm venture.

Second, my study shows that founding becomes more challenging when several needed roles are new to the founder. The goal is to strike a balance between known and new roles so that founders keep engaging with other

important roles that are needed for successful founding as well as identifying with new role identities over time. Hence, enough time should be set aside for unfamiliar activities and monitoring these activities can ease new role development. Over time, founders can discover activities that they enjoy and that serve as further sources of motivation by learning from direct experiences – such as interacting with happy customers or discovering a major improvement to an existing product.

Finally, I suggest that founders can project negatively perceived identities in public spaces. The public expression of negative role identities can be effectively used to obtain sympathy from relevant audiences, which in turn can increase motivation to perform the disliked tasks and ultimately develop a founder identity. In that way, founders manage to retain an authentic self during the construction of their founder identity. Given the multitude of necessary subroles it is difficult to achieve integration and harmony between all roles that is clearly communicated, which might be seen as being more transparent and authentic.

5.4.3 The Promise of Entrepreneurial Diversification

My study shows that a common challenge to start-ups in Swedish agriculture is access to land. The rising capital value of agricultural land (see Chapter 3) and its limited availability is a major barrier, especially to the new entrants in my study. Land prices and leasing rates are very high in some locations, driven by high demand from investors and existing farmers who intend on achieving economies of scale that are supported by policy reforms. In addition, available land may not be formally advertised, and thus transfer is limited to local networks. At the same time, tenanted land is becoming more difficult to secure; owners typically prefer to reallocate land to larger and successful existing farmers who can pay more than new entrants or small-scale farmers, thereby reducing their own risk. "Stadsbruk" is a successful example of how collaboration with authorities can help start-ups in urban agriculture in Sweden. Generally, (local) authorities can enable access to land by intentionally utilizing land owned or managed by the authority for new entrants or farm successors, such as through low-cost rents.

Yet, innovation and quality in the food chain are promising approaches towards (financial) sustainability for small-scale Swedish agriculture and farmers who do not gain access to a large tract of land. Entrepreneurs in my study usually follow two pathways, namely (1) producing value-added products that are differentiated from conventional products and supply chains and/or (2) new venture creation, typically outside agriculture. Because of an increase in the demand for more marketing services in the form of convenience and ready-to-

eat food, the farm to retail price spread has become larger and the farmer share has decreased in Sweden (Eriksson et al., 2016). Thus, one way for Swedish farmers to enhance their income is by tapping into some value adding and novel marketing activities such as direct sales, branding, processing, and packaging. At the same time, entrepreneurial farmers often sell high-value and unique products for a limited niche market. Instead of producing commodities that are undifferentiated, farmers produce products that are differentiated such as Swedish organic wine or a unique type of meat and products that are new to the Swedish market such as wasabi. A niche market can also be created when products are sustainably produced and distributed, by focusing, for instance, on animal welfare or being a pioneer in new technologies. It is important to consider what can be offered that traditional supermarkets or even the local food cooperatives and farmers cannot.

Another approach includes engaging in new business operations in other industries (diversifying the farm business) such as tourism (e.g., B&Bs, cafés, or festivals), social and green care, or venturing out into areas that are of personal interest (e.g., furniture, restaurants, media, or education). Entrepreneurial diversification into a number of industries or market segments can help to create more stability for the small farm business and to escape from the sector's unattractive environment. Yet, entrepreneurial diversification demands new skills sets and new role identities, as discussed above. A lack of expertise and experience in the new field can prove to be a setback for the farm business. Entrepreneurship in agriculture might entail diversification, but it does not need to. Entrepreneurship could also mean concentrating the farm business on fewer things. Entrepreneurs with single objectives tend to be successful too.

5.4.4 Learning from Other Industries, Networks, and Collaborations

My dissertation suggests that farmers should learn from other industries and engage in alternative networks and/or collaborations with a view to becoming entrepreneurs. Discussing the many problems such as declining income in the agriculture sectors is essential. However, too often the discussion is undertaken in isolation, exclusively within the industry. Thereby, the agricultural sector may miss the opportunity to learn from other industries that have overcome crises a number of times and that have developed solutions that could benefit farmers. New customer requirements have long been established in many sectors, regardless of whether they are private customers or business clients, and new innovative ways to approach obsolete business models are an integral part of this in many other areas. Too often the new technological innovations mentioned above (see Chapter 3) do not address the needs of many smallholders and

medium-sized farm businesses. Hence, learning from successful firms in other branches might be a promising inspiration. Comparison might be interesting for farmers and it can be useful in any area of business, such as management, leadership, marketing strategy, and finance, to receive ideas. For instance, some of the farming entrepreneurs in my study took part in start-up events, alternative price competitions (e.g., Region Skånes Miljöpris), or crowdfounding campaigns, which opened up new relationships in diverse areas.

Entrepreneurial farmers have learned and made use of strategies that have been applied by entrepreneurs in other industries. At the same time, most farmers had job experience outside the agriculture sector or were taking education in other areas such as in a business school that opened up their networks. Thus, a particular strength of the entrepreneurs in my study is the networks they draw on outside of agriculture, enabling entrepreneurial diversification and innovation (see also Sutherland et al., 2015). They use networks to deal with a number of difficult aspects of developing their farm business and to integrate past experience (e.g., being a sales manager) and/or to build new role identities needed for successful entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs can enlarge their networks to obtain crucial information and other resources from knowledgeable others (Kahan, 2013), which they need to develop their identities. The unfolding of a career (such as becoming an entrepreneurial farmer) is intimately tied to relationships that gradually define a person's sense of self (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2007; Stryker, 2008). Networks of relationships are social resources and play a key function in shaping and sustaining businesses (Jack, 2005; Jack & Anderson, 2002). Thus, becoming an entrepreneurial farmer is socially embedded and influenced by the social networks that affect referrals and opportunities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Ibarra et al., 2005; Ramarajan, 2014; Stryker, 2008).

To grow and stabilize their farm businesses, entrepreneurs position themselves within a social network not only to shorten the path to knowledgeable others and to receive resources and feedback to build identities, but also to collaborate. Collaboration can enable small and medium-sized farms to overcome their particular challenges related to successfully engaging in entrepreneurship (Ketchen et al., 2007; Reader & Watkins, 2006). Collaborative entrepreneurship can be seen as the creation of entrepreneurship (including innovation) across firm (and perhaps industry) boundaries through the sharing of ideas, knowledge, expertise, resources, and opportunities (Miles et al., 2005). For small-scale farmers, pursuing entrepreneurship collaboratively allows them to preserve their creativity and flexibility while mitigating the inherent liabilities of smallness.

My studies and others (e.g., Madureira et al., 2015) suggest that new entrants in Sweden are disconnected from traditional agricultural knowledge systems. At

the same time, new entrants have differing knowledge and networks. Consequently, a junior(urban)-senior(rural) partnership might be a promising new entry approach where a new farmer cooperates with an established experienced farmer who needs support in diverse areas. Such an approach can be beneficial, especially where land prices and leasing rates are relatively high and where established farmers have an interest in farm business continuity. Alternatively, farmer-to-farmer (e.g., urban farmer-to-rural farmer) learning can be a beneficial collaboration for developing production knowledge and better industry access (for new entrants) on the one hand, and entrepreneurship knowledge and alternative approaches (for established farmers) on the other. Entrepreneurial approaches are common among new entrants (vs. traditional farmers) because they learn about market demands from customers through direct marketing and build on experience from past occupations. However, they may be unaware of, or unable to break into, established supply chains and institutions.

5.4.5 A Market-oriented Approach

All entrepreneurs in this study highlighted the importance of developing a marketing identity – which has been crucial to their success. Marketing has an important role in entrepreneurship as it is key to profits. By engaging in marketing, farmers can target different buyers with different products of different values, to meet changing market demands and to escape unfavorable market structures in the Swedish food industry. Thus, when running an entrepreneurial farm business, production must always be linked to a market – not only to identify customers' needs and wishes but also to be able to sell fresh produce directly to consumers. Importantly, it allows farmers to transform the stages of value delivery and to circumvent powerful players in the industry. As discussed above, the Swedish agriculture and food market is dominated by a few large retail chains and agricultural cooperatives, which usually receive the highest profit margin in the value chain (Eriksson et al., 2016). For instance, by approaching restaurants directly, entrepreneurs will not only receive fair prices but can develop a relationship with chefs and learn what products they want on a regular or occasional basis for their menus.

Entrepreneurial Swedish farmers are more likely to be involved in alternative marketing schemes such as short production chains and locally certified food. Entrepreneurs can sell their products directly from their farm via farm stores, farm stands, barns, or other structures on their property. Physical markets such as farmers' markets are another traditional useful place to sell agricultural produce. However, moving from traditional to more digital and alternative ways

has become important too. Farmers might therefore use "customer journey mapping" to understand actual customer experiences and gauge and adjust certain operational aspects of the business and/or brand.

Most entrepreneurs use the Internet and social media to their advantage, to market their small farms and to sell their products. Usually, consumers who want to find local and fresh produce as well as other farm products seek those items online. Thus, an online shop and other media presence such as Facebook or Instagram are a must for many farm businesses these days. Another benefit of using the Internet for supplemental sales is that one can attract customers who lack access to products in person. For high-end or unique products, customers may be willing to pay for the relatively high cost of shipping in Sweden and also because of convenience.

"REKO-ring" (sustainable consumption circle) is a newly created market space in Sweden for buying locally produced food without any intermediaries and an attempt to create relationships between those who grow food and those who eat it. Consumers and farmers come together in one place, where products are sold directly from producer to consumer. Farmers and buyers get in touch with each other through Facebook groups. The Facebook groups contain all the information about how to order and pay for the products as well as about where, when, and how to collect them. Originating from Finland, "REKO-ring" is becoming increasingly popular in Sweden. The first "REKO-ring" was formed in the fall of 2016, and since then, the number has increased rapidly in Sweden. In September 2019, there were 140–150 REKO-rings with more than 350,000 members (Hushållningssällskapet, 2019).

CSA (community-supported agriculture) is another promising way to sell directly from the farm to the customer in a more structured and secured way than, for example, a farm shop. In principle, CSA can be seen as community-based farm financing and marketing. Entrepreneurs set up a comprehensive production plan at the beginning of the year, estimate the physical output, and calculate the production costs. A group of people pay a fixed sum per month or per year and buy the whole production (European Commission, 2016). The benefits of this approach are strong farmer-customer relationships and the provision of an economic facility for small farms. CSA is growing in popularity and awareness every year in Sweden, especially among urban farming entrepreneurs.

5.4.6 Creating an Environment for and Culture of Entrepreneurship

My dissertation calls for ways to reduce existing bureaucracy to contribute to increasing entrepreneurial opportunities and the competitiveness of Swedish agriculture. Many entrepreneurs raise complaints regarding the overwhelming

and extremely burdensome agricultural bureaucracy in Sweden. "Overregulation" and administrative obstacles make entrepreneurship and nonconventional agricultural activity very difficult and might explain why becoming entrepreneurs struggle with establishing their administrative role identity. Strict environmental and animal protection demands compared to other EU countries and high taxes are seen by some entrepreneurs as hampering farming (while other farmers see sustainability as an entrepreneurial opportunity). However, the number of legal requirements affecting Swedish farm businesses increased by 120% during the period from 1996 to 2016. In 2016, a farmer could keep track of 22 different types of documentation and could apply for 36 different approvals, which demanded an excessive proportion of the working time (Lunner Kolstrup et al., 2017). This is very critical, as farmers are concerned that they are not aware of all requirements and thus do not comply with all of them. New entrants in particular struggle with paperwork characteristic of contemporary agriculture (particularly subsidy access). In fact, a recent study showed that some Swedish farmers could not implement their new business ideas, partly because they experienced uncertainty about the legislation for new business creation (Lans Strömblad et al., 2018).

Finally, my dissertation calls for building a positive social identity and a culture of entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector. There are social barriers to entrepreneurship that Swedish farmers face. The fear of failure can be a barrier, either in terms of possible financial losses or comments this may generate from others. Fear and shame are powerful forces that can affect the entrepreneurial decisions and actions of farmers. Failing might not be fun and failing in entrepreneurship might mean that one does not have what it takes to be an entrepreneur – a reputation that farmers already have (Rooml & Redman, 2016). However, failure is also an opportunity to learn, reflect, and regroup, and thus can be beneficial in developing an entrepreneurial identity (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2017). Thus, one can overcome fear through a strong belief in the idea and oneself, and mistakes along the way are helpful.

At the same time, some entrepreneurs mentioned concerns that farming is perceived as having a low status. Indeed, other scholars found that agriculture and farming have a low status in many European countries, acting as a social barrier to start-ups (e.g., Zagata & Lošťák, 2013). This might explain the skill shortage experienced by some agricultural entrepreneurs too. To facilitate the development of entrepreneurial identities we need to develop a culture and mindset in agriculture where entrepreneurial failure is not embarrassing but "celebrated" and where an openness to new approaches is embraced, where obstacles are turned into opportunities. Also, efforts should be taken to increase the industry's attractiveness and we need a paradigm shift from thinking that

family and small-scale farming is obsolete to it being a force for rural renewal and job creation.

Also, support from policy, authorities, and educators might be appropriate to help farmers develop an entrepreneurial identity and to start up in agriculture. Local authorities can be particularly important in supporting new entrants to farming. As well as enabling access to land, they can act as bridging organizations to connect newcomers and other local actors, or rural and urban farmers, and facilitate market access. Also, if agriculture needs to become more entrepreneurial, then agricultural students need to spend more time exploring entrepreneurship and graduate with an awareness of entrepreneurship as well as an eagerness to search for new opportunities. Educators have the responsibility of cultivating entrepreneurial identity by encouraging aspiring farming entrepreneurs to pursue what uniquely motivates them. I ask teachers, therefore, to encourage students to pursue what they enjoy and are passionate about when developing an entrepreneurial identity. Whilst teaching skills is difficult, education can also be improved through practice and inspiring young farmers into trying new things. Practical events with either a "Dragon's Den or Shark Tank style" learning experience, or courses encouraging entrepreneurship in "safe ways," might help to empower the emerging farming entrepreneurs and support them in developing their entrepreneurial identity. In addition, public local authorities can offer business mentorship programs or incubators. Typically, incubators offer office space, planning, subsidies, financing, and marketing advisory services, but also equity capital and – referring to urban agriculture in Sweden (Stadsbruk) – land.

To sum up, my study shows that entrepreneurial farmers must overcome a range of barriers to entrepreneurship in agriculture. Unsupportive laws, land access, unfavorable industry structures, bureaucratic procedures, culture, and mindset are some of the common barriers in Swedish agriculture that limit entrepreneurship in the sector. Yet, the study shows how entrepreneurs turn barriers into stepping stones to fulfill their personal goals of new venture creation or entrepreneurial growth, which eventually may result in personal happiness and well-being. Consequently, to increase Sweden's self-sufficiency and number of businesses, new directions for smallholder agriculture and entrepreneurship must be created. Sweden's self-sufficiency is an important area where urban and rural farmers can find solutions together. With a higher self-sufficiency the country will become more robust in handling possible crises or trade barriers, for example. Sustainability and new technologies in particular, such as vertical farming, precision agriculture, blockchain (e.g., for detecting bottlenecks in the supply chain contributing to food spoilage), or crowdfarming, might be promising areas for entrepreneurial opportunities in the agricultural

sector. Finally, coming from a farm myself, I find it most compelling that entrepreneurial identity can be developed and entrepreneurship can be learned. Hence, I hope my dissertation provides a springboard for farmers who aspire to be more entrepreneurial in both their lives and their businesses. Like farming, entrepreneurship is a journey. Therefore, enjoy it and do not surrender too early.

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