



**UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW**

Master Degree Thesis in Knowledge-Based Entrepreneurship

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**SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW ON SOCIAL  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SWEDEN**

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A context specific analysis of  
social entrepreneurship



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## Abstract

Faced with the fact that no consensus exists in defining social entrepreneurship, coupled with multiple academics stressing the importance of context to understand the concept, the author aim to further research this topic by investigating how social entrepreneurship is applied within a specific national context - Sweden.

Relevant literature of social entrepreneurship is presented, and the national context of Sweden is outlined to act as a framework upon which the data is analyzed and discussed. In order to best find relevant literature, a systematic literature review was performed, and through it 54 documents that discuss social entrepreneurship within the Swedish context are retrieved and synthesized.

What is found is that the majority of documents focus on specifically on rural development, marginalized groups in society, and the environment, while about a quarter of the documents approach social entrepreneurship more generally. The main themes and sub themes are then further analytically explored. Furthermore, the author explores and find sectoral differences that are visualized in a figure of three spectra of opposing dualities (fig 1). The different types of social change, as presented by Zahra et al. (2009) are discussed, and an interesting connection are found between the *social bricoleur* and rural development, as well as the *social engineer* and academics inclination to promote a (radical) change of discourse. The importance of the social mission and networks are represented by the literature, but one final thing that the documents in the Swedish context highlight is the idea that the social entrepreneur aims to make oneself redundant and that the social innovation is intended to be shared and adapted by society.

The study provide the reader with an extensive representation of how social entrepreneurship has been applied in Sweden and can hopefully act as a great document for any reader interested in a summary of what is of focus in Sweden and what gaps can be fund within this context.

## 1. Introduction – attempts to create a better tomorrow

In the pursuit of a better tomorrow there will hopefully exist a drive towards doing things more efficient, in terms of use of resources and of (moral) action to solve problems, creating progress. Since these new attempts to improve upon the past can be hard to calculate the exact outcome of, we often need to try things in order to see if they work or not, to see if they create anything of value. Generally, we have managed to improve the lives of the inhabitants of earth radically over a century, and we still do (Pinker, 2018).

One can separate society into three different contexts where we make these attempts that are intended to reach that better tomorrow, these being the private sector (the market), the public sector (the state) and the civil sector (voluntary/non-profit). As stated previously, humanity has managed to make the world a better place for more people (Pinker, 2018), but there are still socioeconomic problems that we do not seem to ever get rid of. In Sweden, and in many other countries, history tell us the story of nations that hope for new solutions to come from specific sectors. Looking back to Sweden in the 1970s and the time up to it, the public sector was championed to solve our problems (Ilstedt Hjelm & Mårtens, 2010). This was followed by the 80s and 90s that saw much deregulation and it was here that entrepreneurship of the private sector, among many forces where hailed to boost our society (Gawell, 2014). Later, the tone started to change again at the turn of the millennia, and since 2010, members of the European Union have been inspired by the vision and missions of the European Commission with their strategy where the civil sector and social entrepreneurship is at the forefront to solve our society's problems (Grote, 2020). Is the civil sector the arena in which we will be able to best attempt to create new value for tomorrow and is social entrepreneurship the process that will create this? These questions are not in the scope of this study to answer. What is going to be focused on in this paper is social entrepreneurship and what it means, which is not necessarily that self-evident. But first we will look closer at entrepreneurship, the base of the term.

Entrepreneurship is understood by many as a central force in economic development, producing growth and being an essential process in the creation of innovation and change (Lordkipanidze, Brezet & Backman, 2005). Innovation has been explained as the combination of invention (new knowledge) and entrepreneurship, the latter part being the process which translates the new knowledge to value (Hindle, 2009). The defining criteria is therefore related to both the newness of the knowledge, which can range from new to everyone or new within a specific context, and the actual value created. With one of the greatest inventors in mind, Thomas Alva Edison, what is important for successful innovation is not so much invention (or "inspiration" as he calls it), but "what it boils down to is one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration", the actual implementation (Newton, 1987, p. 24). The force that brings new (or forgotten/neglected) and valuable things to the world, is entrepreneurship. Innovation is synonymous with this statement, albeit sometimes it deviates, also containing the creation of a new invention. The two terms, innovation and entrepreneurship, can be separated in a manner that innovation is more often used when focused on the idea which others will benefit from, and entrepreneurship is more focused on the force, individual or collective, that bring an idea to the world.

Social entrepreneurship, a subset of entrepreneurship, has exponentially grown in importance over the years, demonstrated by the increasing number of articles written with it as a focus (Pierre et al., 2011; Bansal, Garg, & Sharma, 2019). Social innovation is often the result or the product of social entrepreneurship, hence the two terms are closely linked together. This might sound reversed to what was previously explained regarding the relationship of innovation and entrepreneurship, but

alas, this opposite relationship is an actuality because much of social innovation is created in the process itself - the entrepreneurship process. This chicken or the egg kind of situation that we can see emerging is one of the problems of defining the phenomena. Concerning the field of entrepreneurship, there has always existed a problem on finding consensus regarding the definition (Chowdhury et al., 2015; Kuratko & Morris, 2018; Venkataraman, 1997; Nicholson & Anderson, 2005; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), a problem that not only seems to carry over to the definition of social entrepreneurship (von Friedrichs & Wahlberg, 2016; Göransson, 2016; Angelidou & Mora, 2019; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Mort et al., 2003; Austin et al., 2006), but the “social” aspect seems to also act as a multiplier in some sense, making social entrepreneurship increasingly more difficult to define than entrepreneurship. This is most possibly an effect of social problems “wickedness”, resulting in them being hard to define, with many probable solutions (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 161). In order for researchers to find the best overview of definitions, the most popular documents defining social entrepreneurship is the best way to start.

## **1.1 Understanding social entrepreneurship**

To understand social entrepreneurship, there are three components that are important to consider: the “social” and the “entrepreneurship” component, as well as these two combined. All these three components are also all dependent on the context of which they are defined.

### **1.1.1 Defining the “social” component**

Social stem from the Latin word *socialis* meaning “living with others”, “allies” or “companionship” (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2020). Social, in the context of this paper, should be understood from multiple areas of academia. Of importance are social sciences and politics, the ontological and epistemological issues of defining social problems and solutions, the field of morality, as well as the linguistic barriers. A presentation of the political/philosophical, the ontological and epistemological, the moral, and the linguistic aspect will follow below.

In regards to the issues of the world, social problems are often viewed in terms of nations or globally, relating to different ways people are not left being left out or negatively affected by the companionship of others. Although the rule of socialism has decreased in recent decades, especially in the west, the main tenets of socialism are still relevant to many developed nations. These tenets, such as distribution of wealth equally among the people, government control of society, and public ownership of most land, are still ideas that are relevant to an extent. One of the ideas that is still most relevant largely throughout the world is the distribution of wealth within a society. The brief case that can be made for this tenet is that this distribution is believed to be “right” and, depending on one’s conviction, this is due to everyone deserving the fruit of past generations, that no one should be left behind in hardship and/or that the redistribution will benefit society in sum total. Redistribution is often conducted by the state, but there are multiple for-profit and not-for profit firms within and outside of the public sector that manages the same task through the market, dependent on the free will and choice of individual contributors or customers.

Besides the ideological importance of social problems, authors have further studied the nature of social problems in comparison to problems that can be more specified, more “tame”, as the authors define it (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Social problems are what they call “wicked problems” and are inherently hard to define by nature. Among the many dilemmas of wicked problems, outlined by Rittel & Webber (1973), a couple are important to know of. First, the social problem is defined by what solutions is believed to solve it and there is an impossibility to separate these declare the authors. This means that preference towards a certain type of problem solving, based on past

experience or ideological belief, will inherently affect the definition of the problem. Secondly, the solutions to wicked problems are hard to evaluate immediately, as well as hard to connect directly to the specific solution. A fourth point that the authors outline is that wicked problems, and thus social problems, are never really solved. These problems are only sufficiently met and the problem solver rather declare that a job done “good enough” rather than “finished” or “problem solved”. Finally, wicked problems are often symptom of other problems, which then creates an issue of what solution that truly solves a problem.

Moving even closer towards entrepreneurship, in a study specifically focused on defining the “social” within social entrepreneurship, Tan et al. (2003) present an altruism scale with six degrees of altruism that place the intention of the entrepreneur in center. A figure based of Tan et al. (2003) scale is presented in Appendix B. The altruism scale highlights the importance of an intention to create value for society and that an effort to do this might have extremely different scales of altruism, while excluding passive social value creation. The scale sheds light on the important aspect of intended social value creation in relation to personal sacrifice, but do not factor in actual social value created.

The outer boundaries of what is deemed to be social, or more specifically a social problem, are stretched to the extent that other words are considered in its stead. There is also a certain context aspect that effect the words chosen, both of importance when translating non-English into the global academic discourse that primarily is conducted in English. Besides the most commonly used term of social entrepreneurship, we find societal entrepreneurship (Dahles et al., 2010; Berglund & Johannisson, 2012; Berglund & Wigren-Kristoferson, 2012; Gawell & von Friedrichs, 2014) and sustainable entrepreneurship (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005; Larsson et al., 2016; Bergset, 2018) both concepts ingrained with an urgency of caring for the future of the planet and our societies. Separate, for the most parts, from social entrepreneurship is the notion of public (social) entrepreneurship and corporate social entrepreneurship, indicating that these markets may not meet the conditions of what is understood as social entrepreneurship.

### **1.1.2 Defining the “entrepreneurship” component**

First of all, a few important words need to be presented for clarity of the research. The three terms entrepreneurship, innovation and the enterprise are strongly associated with each other. Entrepreneurship basically concerns the process of innovation, innovation is the fruit of entrepreneurship and the enterprise is the entrepreneurial entity. Although very much interdependent, the three terms often indicate a certain focus of researchers, with “innovation” suggesting a focus more of what is being inventive, what the new thing of value is, “enterprise” focus more on the actual entity, the organization that is entrepreneurial, and “entrepreneurship” focuses more on the entire process and is therefore the more general of the three.

As presented in the first section of the thesis, an exact definition of entrepreneurship has not been decided within the academic community of entrepreneurship. However, we know that Schumpeter’s (1934) work, almost a century after it was published, still stands as the most influential pieces of entrepreneurship literature written (Ferreira et al., 2015). At the turn of the century, the currently second most influential paper emerged in the field of entrepreneurship, which is seen in the form of Shane & Venkataraman (2000) work, presently being the most cited work in the academic filed of entrepreneurship (Ferreira et al., 2015). Based on their immensely influential paper, Shane (2003, p.4) himself explain entrepreneurship as follows:



*“Entrepreneurship is an activity that involves the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities to introduce new goods and services, ways of organizing, markets, processes, and raw materials through organizing efforts that previously had not existed (Venkataraman 1997; Shane and Venkataraman 2000).”*

It is fair to say that this understanding of how to define entrepreneurship is widely accepted and used by researchers of the field. The definition that the author of this study use is a somewhat altered version, based on Shane and Venkataraman’s way of defining the concept, describing entrepreneurship as:

*“Entrepreneurship is the process of evaluating, committing to and achieving, under contextual constraints, the creation of new value from new knowledge for the benefit of defined stakeholders.” (Hindle, 2010, p. 100).*

While this definition describes the entire entrepreneurship process which contains of steps that are more entrepreneurial, as well as certain steps that are more general, Hindle (2010) also highlight what is both generically and distinctively entrepreneurial in the process, this being the first step of “evaluating”. This step in the process he calls *entrepreneurial capacity*, which he explains is “the ability to design an efficacious transformation, via evaluation, from querying the efficacy of an opportunity to answering that question in the form of a business model” (Hindle, 2010, p. 99). The entrepreneurial capacity is what set the entrepreneurship process apart from other processes and what truly is the essence of entrepreneurship.

An important part, similar to that of the degrees of altruism regarding how “social” something is regarded, is the degree to how “new” the knowledge is that is implemented, determining how innovative something is. The degrees of innovation can be put on a scale of where the innovative part of the business model is assessed based whether it is unknown to the organization, the sector or unknown to all sectors (Obrecht & Warner, 2016). If the knowledge is only new to the organization, then it is not deemed to be innovative by the authors.

Finally, going back to Schumpeter’s (1934) foundational work on entrepreneurship, there is a question on the nature of entrepreneurial change and how it affects society which will be explored in the second last part of next section.

### **1.1.3 Defining social entrepreneurship**

By understanding the two components separate of each other, researchers can better grasp the most essential parts of what each word contribute to the full concept of social entrepreneurship. But in this young academic field, the literature is still explorative and diverge in many different understandings of the topic. Although there might not exist a consensus regarding the definition of social entrepreneurship, we can find which literature that is most referenced, and from there we can start to paint a picture. Looking at the six most cited documents on social entrepreneurship, retrieved from the recent work of Hota, Subramanian, & Narayanamurthy (2019), we can quilt together an understanding of how the term frequently is defined. In these documents, six important aspects are discussed, concerning the social mission, the structure and the related sectors of the enterprise, intention and morality, value creation, networks, different types of change, and the importance of context. These aspects will be further elaborate upon now.

#### **1.1.3.1 Primacy of social mission**

Beginning with the essentials, the singular most common denominator when the authors define social entrepreneurship is that it contains a primary objective of creating social value (Austin et al.,

2006; Dees, 1998; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Mair & Marti, 2006; Zahra et al., 2009; Dacin et al., 2010). The enterprise creates this value, regardless if the organization manages to capture all the value or not (Austin et al., 2006). However, there exists a discrepancy among authors in how primary the social mission needs to be. Dees (1998) argue that the social mission needs to be central to the venture and that generating financial profit is only a means to an end. Others authors argue that the social goal does not even need to be the primary objective of the enterprise, where we also can see companies that add a social mission over time (Peredo & McLean, 2006), something that Dacin et al. (2010) on the other hand doesn't consider to be "true" social entrepreneurship, merely conventional entrepreneurship with social conscience. So even though the authors are in agreement of the importance of the social mission, the degree to which the social mission need to be embodied within an enterprise is debated, showing that even the most fundamental aspect of what is social entrepreneurship is only reach somewhat of a consensus.

### ***1.1.3.2 Structure and sector of a social enterprise***

The authors also discuss the structure of a social enterprise, as well as which sector (private, public or civil) that they operate within. Social entrepreneurship has statistically been used in regard to non-profit ventures (Peredo & McLean, 2006), but this should not discredit the financial importance. Although the main focus is on creating social value, to generate monetary means can still be very important as "economic value creation is seen as a necessary condition to ensure financial viability", believed to better increase chances of the enterprise to sustain itself over time (Mair & Marti, 2006, p. 38). This idea is further supported by the notion that the social entrepreneur should be pragmatic, setting up an enterprise that best meet the social goal, whether it is a for-profit, not-for profit or government organization, funded by different forms of capital (donors, subsidies, venture capital) (Austin et al., 2006; Dees, 1998). The choice of what venture the social entrepreneur(s) set up is therefore based on what the social need is, how much resources are needed, how much capital needs to be raised, and to what extent value can be captured (Mair & Marti, 2006). A perfect example of this can be made on the obstacles non-for-profit social entrepreneurs can meet. By establishing a for-profit company, the social enterprise can through a structural change open up doors for bank credit, needed if the social entrepreneur doesn't have the means to expand the company in cases where they want to achieve a bigger social impact (Peredo & McLean, 2006).

Social entrepreneurship also refers both to new venture creation, as well as entrepreneurial process innovation, in which case it is referred to as "social intrapreneurship" (Mair & Marti, 2006). Mair & Marti (2006) argue that social entrepreneurship should be separate from activist movements. Many of the activities of social entrepreneurship do not only blur the boundaries between the not-for-profit and for-profit, but also the public, private and non-profit sectors (Peredo & McLean, 2006).

### ***1.1.3.3 Intention and morality***

How the entrepreneur is visualized among the authors vary greatly. Besides the primary aspect of having a social mission, Dees' (1998) somewhat idealized definition include the "recognition and relentless pursuit" of it, being engaged in the "process of continuous innovation, adaptation and learning", being courageous in the face of limited resources, and having a profound "sense of accountability" (p. 4). If the social entrepreneur carries all these aspects, they are to be considered to fit the model of the social entrepreneur better, the author suggests (Dees, 1998). Other authors point out that motives of social entrepreneurs can be of ethical and moral responsibility, but that they also might driven by the motive of personal fulfilment (Mair & Marti, 2006). Although the creation of social value might be primary, Zahra et al. (2009) highlight the ethical shortcomings that might be even more prevalent in social entrepreneurship, as compared to commercial

entrepreneurship. Without similar corporate oversight, individual decisions can be made that do not necessarily enhance social wealth, rather favoring the ideology that hold true to the individuals world-view, or decisions can be made that incorporate deceit or fiction in an attempt to gain or maintain resources towards their mission.

Authors are skeptical towards a personality approach towards social entrepreneurship (Mair and Marti, 2006) and advocate researching “how” entrepreneurship is done, not “who” does it (Mair & Marti, 2006).

#### **1.1.3.4 Value created**

Social entrepreneurs tackle problems in which the need is often clear and abundant (Austin et al., 2006) and many cases of social entrepreneurship targets “customers” who are willing to pay, but are unable to, making it difficult to capture the value created (Mair & Marti, 2006; Austin et al., 2006). Contrasted with this is entrepreneurship in the business sector, conveyed as manifesting a pursuit of selfish ends, but which can create very real positive externalities, such as a net increase in real productivity which benefit all (Mair & Marti, 2006). The difference between business entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship is made clear in that the first type, social value can be a by-product of the economic value created, while the latter has the main focus of creating social value.’ As many companies create both financial and social value (whether intended or not), some authors highlight the importance that “measurement or evaluation of social entrepreneurship should reflect both social and economic considerations” (Zahra et al., 2009, p. 522).

#### **1.1.3.5 Networks**

Managing resources of the social enterprise becomes a critical task for the social entrepreneur, since a huge sum of the resources they rely upon are outside their control (Austin et al., 2006). This is often achieved through a vast network of relationships with resourceful contacts, often built on trust and reputation, rather than performance sheets. The relationships built, through which the social entrepreneur gets access to many of their resources, is often based on a specific social problem, why switching product or market is notably harder. It creates a “strategic stickiness” for the social enterprise which can make it hard to shift focus to a problem that they enterprise deem to be more important for their cause or for people generally (Austin et al., 2006).

Social entrepreneurs also seem to exhibit networks based more on a collaboration than competition, and resources can often be shared between organizations (Dacin et al., 2010). Dacin et al. (2010), based on the collaboration vs. competition aspect, make a separation between social conscience entrepreneurs and conventional entrepreneurs with a social conscience. Compared with conventional entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs are believed to be more aware of external resources and think of creative ways to circumvent environmental barriers to produce social value (Dacin et al., 2010).

#### **1.1.3.6 Different types of social change**

There have been discussions since the early days of entrepreneurship, whether something entrepreneurial is a force of radical or incremental change, both or something else as well. In order to merge traditional entrepreneurship theory with the new social aspect, Zahra et al. (2009) present a typology that stem from the important historical definitions of the different forces of change that entrepreneurship can take. First, we have the *social engineer*, which is theoretically inspired by Schumpeter’s (1942) idea of creative destruction. Here, the social value is created by tearing down the old and replacing it with something that is new, and better. The second type is the *social*

*constructionist*, which doesn't tear down old structure, but mend their imperfections and supplement what is missing. This is in line with Kirzner's (1973) theoretical view of the entrepreneur. Finally, the idea of the *social bricoleur* is inspired by the work of Hayek (1945), who believed that opportunity is best understood and acted upon by local actors. To act as a bricoleur, using whatever resources or means one has at hand, become even more true in a specific local context. The importance of the context is also an aspect that the other authors highlight, which will now be further outlined.

#### **1.1.3.7 The importance of context**

Every social problem is rooted in a certain setting, in need of a solution that can meet the specific type of problem. Therefore, the importance of the social context and the local environment are highlighted as important in understanding social entrepreneurship (Mair & Marti, 2006), national aspect of regulation, tax, politics, demographics and culture being part of the assessment (Austin et al., 2006). The social entrepreneur is seen as more aware and creative regarding the external resources made available (Dacin et al. 2010), another indication of the importance of context. As previously considered, social problems are defined by what we believe can act as solutions, and hence very much dependent on previous attempts and what existing cultural values that guides us. As is the case of these "wicked problems" that the social problems constitute: "the information needed to understand the problem depends upon one's idea for solving it" (Rittel & Weber, 1973, p. 161). Since what is seen as a social solution is very context based, there would probably be an effect on how social entrepreneurship is defined, based on the context of which it is used in. As noted by Sundin (2011): "findings in one context may not be relevant in others" (p. 215).

In recent study by Gupta et al. (2020), future directions of research into social entrepreneurship is recommended that it should be set in a single country of origin, where a specific context outside of the social enterprise is studied. The authors further suggest that the country-specific features that either facilitate or inhibit social entrepreneurship activities, such as the institutional, regulatory or cultural environment, are examined to highlight the specific challenges and enablers of a specific context.

#### **1.1.4 Summary of social entrepreneurship**

As we see, there are multiple aspects of social entrepreneurship that contribute to its meaning, as well as the difficulty in finding an encompassing definition or explanation of the concept. By looking separately at each word, as well as the full concept of social entrepreneurship, a greater understanding of the concept can be conveyed, in addition to different dualities, delimitations and predominant characteristics. The importance of context is also presented, since it is emphasized in the most influential works on social entrepreneurship, as well as authors stressing the importance further research on contexts of social entrepreneurship.

Regarding the "social" part, we find the etymological connection to "companionship" and "living together", as well as the ideological aspects, grounded in socialism and presenting a meaning of actions that create more beneficial living conditions for all. The ideas of what creates better living conditions for all differ and through the concept of "wicked problems" it is established how this creates different definitions of what constitutes the actual problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973). The degrees of altruism within social entrepreneurship offer both an idea of a wide definition of the concept, as well a potential measurement tool on the degree to how "social" the social entrepreneurship is. Finally, a different and related terminology to the social entrepreneurship concept is presented, where societal and sustainable entrepreneurship suggest a need to widen the concept, and the use of public and corporate social entrepreneurship suggest preference of defining

social entrepreneurship as something of the civil sector. The differing terminology also reflect different terms used as encompassing of, or differentiating from social entrepreneurship, requiring a study of more terms than “social entrepreneurship” specifically, in order to better understand the concept.

In the part where “entrepreneurship” is further analyzed, the significance of Shane & Venkataraman (2000) work within the field is stressed as their understanding and definition of entrepreneurship is at the base of much of entrepreneurship research. Inspired by this work, Hindle (2010) present his definition that the author of this study uses to define entrepreneurship. In his definition, “the creation of new value from new knowledge” (Hindle, 2010, p. 100) is an essential part, and an idea is presented to measure how “entrepreneurial” something is based on suggested level of newness.

When reviewing the most influential works on social entrepreneurship, we find that among the important aspects and points of discussion of what social entrepreneurship is - that being the multiple structures it can take and sectors it can operate in, the varied view on intention and morality, the complex idea of the value that is created by organizations, the heightened importance of networks – we find the social mission to be an essential component of the concept. Furthermore, three different forces of social change are presented (rooted in essential authors literature on entrepreneurship), being the social engineer, the social constructionist, and the social bricoleur. The different ideas of social change through entrepreneurship present dualities, both in terms of either moving towards or away from a state of equilibrium (engineer vs. constructionist), as well as understanding social entrepreneurship either as a global or local concept (engineer and constructionist vs. bricoleur).

The importance of context is further elaborated upon as it seems to be an essential aspect when defining and discussing social entrepreneurship. In a recent study by Gupta et al. (2020), the authors suggest further research of social entrepreneurship in relation to specific national conditions that facilitate or inhibit its occurrence. With this research in mind, in conjunction with the varying ideas regarding the meaning of social entrepreneurship, the aim of the study will be to add to the research of social entrepreneurship set in a specific national context.

## **1.2 Research question**

The purpose of this study is to research social entrepreneurship literature within a specific national context with the aim of uncovering what is written regarding social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context. Supported by previous research, the goal is to conduct context specific research to better understand social entrepreneurship. With the different types and degrees of social change in mind, as well as the different sectors in which change is enacted, the author aim towards presenting different themes found in the social entrepreneurship literature written within a specific national context as well as to present what gaps might exist. As the author has best experience with the Swedish context, this has been chosen to be the focus of the study. Therefore, the research question of interest to this study will be:

*RQ: How is social entrepreneurship academically applied or researched in the Swedish context?*

Furthermore, two additional sub-questions related to the main research question are added to provide the study greater focus in what is studied. The sub-questions are as follows:

*SQ1: What themes are found in the application or research of social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context?*

*SQ2: Are there any gaps to be found in the application or research of social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context?*

The first research question aims toward answering more objectively what documents discuss social entrepreneurship within the Swedish context. By answering this question, the author hope to provide a rigorous summary of which documents exist within this topic and their objective nature. The sub-questions aim towards providing the reader a summary of what content and what themes that are discussed and what this might indicate of social entrepreneurship within the Swedish context. The intention is to collect and analyze the relevant documents written on social entrepreneurship and a focus will be to determine which sectoral frame (private, public or civil) the phenomenon is defined within, as well as to determine specific themes that emerge.

To comprehensively identify and synthesize all relevant data on the subject, the author chose to utilize the method of a systematic literature review. Systematic reviews are suggested when there is wide range of research without any consensus on a solution or definition (Petticrew & Roberts, 2008) as is the case of social entrepreneurship. To best determine the themes of a set of literature, the literature is retrieved, analyzed and synthesized systematically and through a process of coding, hierarchal themes and subsets of themes are found.

In order to best understand why certain patterns might be presented in the data, a thorough analysis of the nation specific context, in terms of demography, history, mentality and current context of Sweden will be given in chapter 2. Thereafter, the methodology will be presented in chapter 3, where the structure of the systematic literature review will be outlined and the data collected will be presented. In chapter 4, the findings of the data will be presented, which will also be further analyzed in chapter 5. A discussion in chapter 6 will then follow the analysis, where the literature review of section 1.1 and the Swedish context presented in chapter 2 will be contrasted with the data presented in chapter 4 and 5. Finally, conclusions will be presented in chapter 7 with suggestions for future research.

## 2. The Swedish context

In this chapter, the Swedish context is presented, giving insights into the important changes of Sweden's demography, political and ideological history, and national mentality, as well as the current state of social enterprises and the civil sector. The purpose is that this information will support an understanding of what social entrepreneurship in Sweden. Furthermore, it will provide the context in which social problems are defined, ergo presenting the solutions preferred within the Swedish context (Rittel & Weber, 1973).

Sweden is a rather large country with a small population. The country has not been at war for more than two centuries and has thus benefited from a long and stable peace. All political parties across the board support the welfare model with a high tax rate that is responsible for high quality healthcare, education and social security for all. In 2018, 32.9 % of the total working population in Sweden was employed by the public sector (Ekonomifakta, 2018).

### 2.1 Demography

Sweden currently has 10.3 million inhabitants (Statistics Sweden, 2020a) in a rather large and oblong country. Sweden also has a population density of 25.4 per Km<sup>2</sup>, with a vast area uninhabited in the north (Statistics Sweden, 2020b). In the six counties the middle and northern areas of Sweden (covering about 60 percent of the area of the entire country) there only lives 1.3 million people, while half of the population live in the counties with the three largest cities, Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö (Statistics Sweden, 2020c). The demographic trend in Sweden is that many migrate from rural to urban areas, and that mainly inland areas suffer from depopulation (Alamaa, 2014), as now half of the population live within 10 kilometers of the ocean (Statistics Sweden, 2020b). From the mid-90s, the process of urbanization has even been one of the fastest in Europe (von Friedrichs, & Lundström, 2016). The ones that remain in these urban areas are disproportionately old, as the young move into the cities (von Friedrichs, & Lundström, 2016). This trend of urbanization has led to a negative spiral in rural areas, where a reduced tax base result in the closing down of health care facilities, schools, convenient stores and gas stations (von Friedrichs & Wahlberg, 2016). The consequence is less incentives for families to settle in these areas and there are also few companies that would establish themselves in these areas. The demography of Sweden has also changed due to immigration. From 2002 to 2019, the percentage of foreign-born individuals has changed from 11.8 to 19.7 % (Statistics Sweden, 2020d).

### 2.2 Historical development

#### 2.2.1 Religious history

One important category of major societal actors within Sweden has been the Christian institutions. The Church of Sweden, an Evangelical Lutheran national church, held the position as state church for almost half a millennium, between 1536-2000. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the world started to industrialize, urbanization grew and new political and religious ideas were introduced to Sweden, leading to the close relationship between the state and the Christian church started to be questioned. The decreasing societal responsibilities developed such that in the 1860s, the municipalities took over the care for the sick and the poor, followed by 1904, when the church lost the management of public schooling and finally, in the heyday of the Swedish model in the 1930s, there societal work was limited to religious services and no longer any public welfare services (Berglund, Lindberg & Nahnfeldt, 2016). It has been argued that "the church paved the way for the growth of the modern Swedish welfare state" (Persson & Hafén, 2014, p. 23). Apart from the public sector, the Swedish

church is today the largest provider of welfare services within Sweden (Bäckström et al., 2010; Berglund, Lindberg & Nahnfeldt, 2016).

### **2.2.2 Social movements in civil society**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the peoples' movement tradition (e.g. Labor movements, Temperance movements, Free Church movements) paved the way for what would be a long-lasting tradition of strong Swedish civil society commitment (Persson & Hafén, 2014). Early in the 1900s, activity in the civil society was well underway to try to tackle the socio-economic problems in Swedish society. As malnutrition of newborns became a widely recognized problem in the Western world, citizens mobilized to solve the problem. The association *Mjölkdroppen* ("the drop of milk") was formed in 1903, inspired by the late 1800s French movement "Goutte de Lait", and they focused on the provision of milk to mothers of malnourished children, as well as educating them regarding breastfeeding and child care. The social movement later morphed into the child care centers, called Barnavårdscentral (name change in 1925), which were later to be run by the municipalities after the state decision 1937 to universally ensure this social security (Runesson, 2002). Besides independent associations, the year of 1903 also saw the formation of the Central Union for Social Work (translated from *Centralförbundet för Socialt Arbete (CSA)*) as a response to the social division born as a consequence of industrialism and urbanization. The association aimed at uniting all associations that worked with social problems, *Mjölkdroppen* being one of them, and their mission was to achieve better social reform based on more thorough research into the problem's faced by the Swedish society (CSA, 2020).

### **2.2.3 The Social Democratic Party**

Inspired by Bismarck's social reforms in the 1880s, a very important idea started to develop in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the political struggles that the industrialization had resulted in, with the rise of labor movements, the Social Democrats were able to pursue a welfare state that aimed to provide the same quality and rights to those who were better off in society. In Sweden, the Social Democratic party managed to create a hybrid capitalist and state planned economy, with a strong welfare state, often referred to as the Swedish model (Persson & Hafén, 2014).

#### **2.2.3.1 The Social Democratic Party – The Welfare state ("Folkhemmet")**

In the 1920s and 1930s, an idea was developed in which the state would not only govern by law, but by creating a collective spirit of the nation. This aimed to act as an organic development of society based on citizenship rooted in justice, solidarity, equality, humanity and compassion. The term *Folkhemmet* was introduced in 1928 by the Social Democrats which referred to a society as a good home for all, based on consensus and equality. With this idea, collaborative societal development, with relationships between sectors were promoted and enacted (Gawell, 2014).

Although the *folkhem* was a top-down instigation of social initiatives, where the state knew what was best for the citizens (Ilstedt Hjelm & Mårtens, 2010), these social initiatives were first very much developed by the civil society through bottom-up initiatives (see previous example of *Mjölkdroppar*). This may act as a good model for expansion of state responsibility as it first is rooted in the voluntary action of citizens, by which (the voluntary aspect) acts as a certain estimate to communicating the importance of the social initiative (since people are ready to work without monetary compensation towards an impact). With Sweden staying neutral in the war, the welfare state and *Folkhemmet* were able to develop and grow uninterrupted during the political reign that the Social Democratic Party had between the 1930s to the 1970s.



### 2.2.4 The shift - deregulation and competition of the 80s and 90s

Over time, there were a growing critique against the top-down management of Swedish society and the social engineering (Ilstedt Hjelm & Mårtens, 2010). Starting in the 1980s, ideas of subjugating the public sector and the services of the welfare state to competition, as a tool of development, led to the deregulation and privatization of multiple institutions within finance, education, health care, elder care (Gawell, 2014). New Public Management (NPM), was introduced to the public sector as a means to make the sector more efficient and supervised (Ilstedt Hjelm & Mårtens, 2010).

### 2.2.5 The “new” Swedish model – the green folkhem

Although the top-down management of society had lost some of its traction in the 70s, a new idea and a more global problem started to arise in the political discourse. Sweden took up the environmental challenge and incorporated it into a similar idea as the *folkhemmet*. The new “spirit” called the *green folkhem* was introduced by past prime minister Göran Persson, of the Social Democratic Party, as he was appointed prime minister of Sweden 1996. The idea he promoted was to create a resource efficient society, based instead on a bottom-up approach, where inclusivity was the highest ideal and the environmental movement of public policy was also incorporated (Ilstedt Hjelm & Mårtens, 2010).

Parallel with the Social Democratic Party infusing ideas of environmental issues into their policy during the 90s, the young Green Party (established in 1981) started to get greater support in Sweden. The party was founded not in alliance specifically with either right or left leaning politics, but as party more concerned with issues further into the future, mostly, but not only, of an environmental character (Nilsson, 2010). The party gained great political influence in 1998 when they supported the minority government led by the Social Democratic Party, and currently, the Green Party have been part of the minority coalition government together with the Social Democratic Party since 2014, showing the political importance and power of the Green Party ideals.

## 2.3 The Swedish mentality

Although it is hard to find data regarding how Swedish values have evolved during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we know some from late 20<sup>th</sup> century until now. From a dataset collected on the European countries values 2008 that employ a 0-100 scale, we find all countries ranking the importance of family between 95-100, but at the same time, the Nordic countries in contrast rank somewhat paradoxically low on measures of that the adult child should care for the parent (Sweden scoring 28, contrasted with Germany scoring 64) and also on the duty to provide long-term care for the parent (Sweden scoring 29, Germany scoring 48) (Atlas Of European Values, 2011).

Sweden is also alert to global influences, due to a small domestic market, and is therefore very open to social experiments, making Sweden a perfect testing ground for new social and technological ideas (Berglund & Johannisson, 2012).

Other authors highlight “state individualism” as a key aspect of the Swedish identity, and they go on to state that more than anything the Swede want to be left alone (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2006). Much of the state policy developed enforce state individualism. An example is the difference of state supported childcare of Sweden and the United States, better enabling both women and men to work while having children (Ibid.).

## **2.4 The current Swedish context of the social enterprise**

The development of the Swedish Welfare State created the worldview that the state was to be the sole provider of solutions to social problems. This developed a natural monopolization of welfare, education, health and employment services and also a general disdain towards charity as public money is regarded as more legitimate. This further resulted in associations being held in higher regard than foundations (Stryjan, 2006).

Currently, both private and social enterprises compete for providing social welfare services and they are recognized as subjects of the state economy (Okunevičiūtė & Pranskevičiute, 2018). Civil society, or the “third sector” of society, is seen as separate the state, the market (the two other sectors) and private households. Included in the civil society are citizens that organize themselves and act together towards common goals in entities such as non-profit organizations, charities, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions and more.

Of the 258 000 registered organizations of the civil society in Sweden 2017, about 100 000 were economically active and part of the social economy. Among these organizations are non-profit associations (52.7%; 52,604), housing cooperatives (25.9%; 25,818), foundations (13.7%; 12,614), communities (4.1%; 4,124), private limited companies (2%; 1 985), economic associations (1.8%; 1,777), religious communities (1.2%; 1185) and others (Statistics Sweden, 2019).

The civil society organizations that are part of the social economy are mainly engaged in housing and social care (34.6%), recreation and culture (26.4%), advocacy and opinion making (7.4%), education and research (4.3%) and religious activities (4.1%) (Statistics Sweden, 2019).

### 3. Methodology

This section outlines and critically assesses the research method used in the study. Previously in section 1.1, a literature review was performed that lay as a base for the research question of interest. In chapter 2, an overview of the Swedish context is presented to help explain the contextual aspects that are of importance to the study. In the following sections of this chapter, the research strategy, a systematic literature review, will be explained and the research process will roughly be presented. The limitations and delimitations will also be discussed and the literature selection process will be presented in detail.

#### 3.1 Research strategy - systematic literature review

The author performed a systematic review on the available literature on social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context. Under the category of systematic review, there are several types, or analytical toolsets, that can be applied (e.g. framework based, hybrid, narrative review, theory-based review, meta-analysis, bibliometric review). In this paper, a systematic literature review is followed.

This choice of process includes multiple activities that need to be followed, which consist of:

1. developing a protocol for review,
2. follow steps of the protocol to retrieve literature:
  - a. locate literature,
  - b. screen if the fit inclusion/exclusion criteria (and need detailed examination)
3. extracting data,
4. synthesizing results from the reviewed articles, and
5. reporting the results.

The first two steps are presented in this chapter of the methodology, while the data extracted and synthesized are reported in the next chapter.

#### 3.2 Developing a protocol

The protocol presents the criteria that were used to identify articles for this review. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure the objectivity of the documents gathered by presenting an explicit description of the steps taken (Tranfield et al., 2003). The following steps illustrate these criteria and the research was advanced.

Since the goal is to better understand social entrepreneurship used by different actors within the Swedish context to present a wide array of perspectives, grey literature is deemed to be relevant to the study. Grey literature information that is not controlled by commercial or academic interests (such as peer-reviewed journals) and it includes dissertations, government reports, book chapters and policy documents. In prior systematic reviews done within social entrepreneurship, only published study data was included to achieve high quality of documents (Stephan & Drencheva, 2017; Bansal et al., 2019; Gupta et al., 2020; Phillips et al., 2015). The quality aspect did not seem relevant to factor in with the study question in mind, as it is of higher importance to factor in multiple themes and perspectives in this study.

In order to effectively retrieve documents that fit the scope of the paper, selection of documents was made based on a number of stages where the literature was put through different levels of scrutiny, depending on how evident it was that the document did, or did not, meet the criteria for this paper. The inclusion and exclusion criteria that the documents required to meet were:

### Inclusion criteria

- All types of documents found are included to find a broad number of examples, stretching sometimes beyond peer-reviewed academia and presenting a more nuanced set of examples.
- All sectors are included to allow the full spectrum of terminology related to social entrepreneurship.
- No date restriction is set, as the study intends to capture the historical context of how the terminology has developed.
- Theoretical and empirical studies are included, to encompass all types of documents.

### Exclusion criteria

- The document needs to discuss (and/or exemplify) “Social entrepreneurship” or any term related to these subjects.
- The document needs to be set in a Swedish context or relate to Swedish cases set in the Swedish context. The aim of this is to capture a context/culturally specific view of social entrepreneurship.
- Documents that are available only through physical copies are excluded. This criterion was added when locating the literature. Due to the time constraints of this paper, accessing the physical documents was deemed to be outside of the scope of the study.

To make sure that the keywords chosen for the data search covered the currently, and historically, broad typology of “social entrepreneurship”, research was conducted to expand upon the authors knowledge of terms connected to the subject. Through a search of “taxonomy or typology and social entrepreneurship”, recent work from Erpf et al. (2019) were found and their collected typologies on social entrepreneurship were used to develop a broader list of search-words.

Two databases were used, Scopus and Google Scholar. Scopus search engine has far more options to narrow down searches, whereas Google Scholar contain many more types of documents (Iowa State University, 2020). No boundary was set for a specific frame of time, as the study intend to capture the both the history and the width of the terminology used.

First, the Scopus database was used to search for document related to the research question. No timeframe was set for the search.

Many search words were followed by asterisk (\*) acting as a placeholder for any wildcard terms (e.g. soci\* = social, societal, socially etc.). To explain the search command, the author was searching for a phrase that showed up in the title, the abstract or among keywords (TITLE-ABS-KEY), where the first word (i.e. soci\*, communit\*, non?profit, not?for?profit, nonprofit OR sustainab\*) was directly followed by (PRE/0) the second word (i.e. entrepreneur\*, enterpris\*, business, venture\*, firm\*, organi?ation\* or innovation\*). The title, abstract or keywords also needed to contain Swed\* and entrepreneur\*, so that it contained the Swedish connection, as well as a connection to entrepreneurship in those cases the first phrase did not contain any connection to this topic (e.g. non-profit firm). This search command was as followed:

```
TITLE-ABS-KEY((((soci* OR communit* OR non?profit OR not?for?profit OR nonprofit OR sustainab*)
PRE/0 (entrepreneur* OR enterpris* OR business OR venture* OR firm* OR organi?ation* OR
innovation*))) AND Swed* AND entrepreneur*)
```

Data search was conducted 2020-07-07 which produced 54 articles. Every article was chronologically (dated from oldest to newest) assessed. First grade of assessment was scanning title, abstract and keywords to see if there was a match with research question. If inclusion and exclusion criteria were met, the entire piece of literature was selected to be read. In cases where there existed ambiguity in the first stage of assessment, an in-document (PDF) search for the word “entrepreneur”, “enterprise” and “innovation” was conducted. The researcher scanned for instances where the searched word was preceded by an adjective connected to social entrepreneurship, such as “social”, “community” or “sustainable”.

After the selection of documents through the Scopus database, these documents were complemented with results from a Google Scholar search. Since the search engine is more limited, only words and phrases found in the document were searched for, sorted after relevance. The document needed to be connected to the context of focus (Sweden) and to the subject area (social entrepreneurship), hence this search string was performed:

(Sweden OR Swedish) ("social entrepreneurship" OR "social innovation" OR "societal entrepreneurship" OR "sustainable entrepreneurship")

Data search was conducted 2020-07-29 which produced 16 700 results, out of which the first 50 were assessed chronologically. First, the articles that had already been retrieved through the Scopus search were excluded. Thereafter, the documents were scanned for relevance using the same in-document (PDF) search as described above.

### 3.2.1 Limitations and delimitations

Examining prior systematic literature reviews that has been written on the subject of social entrepreneurship and/or social innovation, there exist a propensity to only consider peer-reviewed articles as the literature reviewed, based on an argument to obtain more high-quality literature (Gupta et al., 2020; Phillips et al., 2015).

Although an argument can be made for including literature written in Swedish, as the author of this paper is fluent in the language, the decision to exclude this literature was made based on multiple reasons. Due to the constrained time-scope of the study, the author chooses to not include another extra set of literature, both in terms of number of extra pieces of literature collected, as well as the extra time to correctly translate the texts. Further, there already exist a discrepancy in the definition of social entrepreneurship as compared to Sweden and other contexts, which would surely be further misconstrued through the use of a second language. Finally, a quick examination of the 50 first pieces of literature produced doing a search with the Google Scholar database, using this exact search:

"socialt entreprenörskap" OR "samhällsentreprenörskap" OR "hållbar entreprenörskap"

The search, of which 41 out of 50 articles were found relevant, produced an overwhelming amount of master and bachelor thesis projects (six and eleven respectively). Since the authors of these pieces of literature can be presumed to not yet have the deepest insight into social entrepreneurship, especially in the Swedish context, this search was further deemed as also lacking in quality.

Furthermore, a final limitation to the systematic literature review is that it will most probably not produce documents of public institutions and private companies. Regarding public institutions, what can be expected to be omitted is documents the main state apparatus or municipalities, while niche state-run organizations, only focusing on entrepreneurship or, more specifically, social entrepreneurship, is probable to be produced by the Google Scholar search. Private company

documents will most definitely not be presented in the searches and might pose a skewed overview of the what themes that are represented in Sweden. This limitation might pose a flaw with the systematic literature review in order to answer the research questions as it potentially neglects many documents and grey literature not found through the most relevant search engines. To produce a sufficient and replicable protocol that would best capture these lost sources could be explored further in future research. It is very possible that the use of this kind of protocol would be too extensive in terms of time why it has not been explored previously and that the solution would be an even more rigorous and specific search engine than the current version provided by Google.

Lastly, a major limitation of the study is that the systematic literature review was performed by a single researcher. This prevented the possibility of cross-checking the execution of the protocol, whereby multiple authors go through the exclusion and inclusion criteria, so as to assure that there exists an inter-observer consistency, increasing the reliability of the selected documents. To allow cross-checking and to decrease researcher bias, the implementation of a review panel was considered, where experts within the area of social entrepreneurship would comment on the exclusion and inclusion of the documents (Tranfield et al., 2003). However possible, this problematic to apply when the research was conducted, as most of the experts in academia was unavailable due to summer holiday season. Furthermore, the author found the protocol implemented to be sufficiently apt in retrieving the intended documents. Only once were the protocol altered, in order to add the exclusion of books that were not available to retrieve, due to time constraints. The alteration of the protocol over the process of the systematic review is seen as allowing the researcher to be creative in the process, as long as the alteration is recorded and explained (Tranfield et al., 2003).

### **3.3 Selection of literature**

The 54 articles produced through the Scopus search were scanned through in-depth reading of the abstracts, and in cases of ambiguity certain search words were used to quickly scan the document for relevance (described above). Out of the 54, six pieces of document were non-retrievable and thirteen were found non-relevant, many which had only briefly mentioned social entrepreneurship or focused only on concepts outside or beside this context. This resulted in 35 documents.

After that, the 50 pieces of literature retrieved from Google Scholar were also scanned in the same way as way. Here, twelve documents already selected through the search through the Scopus database could be found, hence they were excluded. Of these Scopus articles, one showed up three times in differing formats, resulting in two extra search results that were excluded on the same basis. Furthermore, ten documents were non-retrievable, and four were not relevant, most not having Sweden as the context of study.

As a result of this stage, 57 articles were left for further filtration.

### **3.4 Final selection**

At this stage, the full text of the 57 pieces of documents retrieved were read. Irrelevant pieces of documents were filtered out if inclusion or exclusion criteria were not met (three documents were found to be irrelevant) and data was extracted from the documents in accordance with the data extraction form, supplied in Appendix A. In this stage, 54 documents were found to meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria and data were extracted from these.

## 4. Findings

In this chapter, the overall results of the data extraction and synthesis are presented. The data extracted in accordance with a data extraction form (see Appendix A), summarizing mainly bibliographic related information, presenting the number of author contributions, frequency of documents per year, and every different source of publication and the frequency of these documents published there. In this section the frequency regarding type of document, as well as choice of research methodology is also presented. In the second section, the final part of the data extraction is found, as well as demonstration of how the synthesis of the research themes was performed and concluded. The final data extraction done is based on what sector or sectors the document mainly regards, and lastly, specific sub-sub themes were assigned to each paper. These sub-sub themes are then synthesized into more generic themes.

### 4.1 Author, Year, Source, Type of document, and Research methodology

As presented in table 1, of the 86 authors that wrote or co-wrote these 54 documents, only 13 were accredited more than one piece of literature. Most of these authors are professors, predominantly within the field business. Two authors have the title of associate professor and one is a lecturer. Only one within this set was a private actor, Helena Karlberg, who is a very active social entrepreneur and has a background in journalism. Out of these authors, 6 stood out in number of accreditations. Those were Yvonne von Friedrichs, Habib Kachlami and Helena Karlberg with three, Malin Gawell and Bengt Johannisson with four, and lastly, Malin Lindberg with seven accreditations. What the data suggest is that these six authors are most probable to be very relevant voices within the field of social entrepreneurship within the Swedish context. It should be noted that most of the authors are professors at Swedish universities.

**Table 1**

Number of documents written/co-written by authors

Frequency	Author(s)
7 documents	Lindberg, M.
4 documents	Gawell, M. & Johannisson, B.
3 documents	von Friedrichs, Y., Kachlami, H. & Karlberg, H.
2 documents	Berglund, K. A. E., Forsberg, L., Göransson, B., Lundström, A., Persson, H. T. R. , Sundin, E., & Yazdanfar, D.
1 document	Achtenhagen, L., Ahlgren, E. O., Ahonen, A., Alamaa, C., Angelidou, M., Backman, M., Balogh, J., Bank, N., Barinaga, E., Berglund, K.-E., Bergset, L., Björk, F., Braunerhjelm, P., Brezet, H., Dahles, H., Davidsson, P., Einarsson, T., Ekholm, D., Fors, P., Gallo, C., Hafen, N., Hahn, T., Hamilton, U. S., Hansson, J., Heath, S. B., Hermelin, B., Heyer, L., Ilstedt Hjelm, S., Jansson, A. B., Johansson, K., Kanda, W., Krlev, G., Larsson, M., Lennerfors, T. T., Lindström, L., Lordkipanidze, M., Lundborg, D., Lundqvist, M. A., Mecherkany, R., Middleton, K. L. W., Mildemberger, G., Milestad, R., Mora, L., Mårtens, P., Nahfeldt, C., Nikolov, A., Nilsson, A., Obschonka, M., Okunevičiūtė, N. L., Olofsson, L. E., Peterson, T., Pierre, A., Portinson Hylander, J., Pranskeviciute, I., Rusten, G., Schenker, K., Schwartz, B., Selvakkumaran, S., Stryjan, Y., Svensson, K., Tell, J., Ulvenblad, P., Ulvenblad, P.-O., Wahlberg, O., Wakkee, I., Verduyn, K., Westergren, L., Westlund, H., Wigren-Kristoferson, C., Wijkström, F., Vlasov, M., von Oelreich, J. & Öhman, P.

The number of documents that discuss social entrepreneurship in Sweden has rapidly increased during the last decade (2010-2019), matching similar findings of social entrepreneurship analyzed in an international context (Pierre et al., 2011; Bansal, Garg, & Sharma, 2019). In table 2 we see that the number of documents written has accelerated, where the data show only 9 % written between 2000-2009, whereas 80 % were written between 2010-2019, almost a nine-times increase. The big gap

between 1989-1990 and 2005 might either be because of social entrepreneurship not being of focus within Sweden or because the search terms chosen might insufficiently cover the entire terminology used in Sweden. What is clear is that the field of social entrepreneurship is currently of much greater interest within the Swedish context.

**Table 2**

Distribution of documents across years

Year	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1989	1	2%
1990	1	2%
2005	1	2%
2006	1	2%
2008	1	2%
2009	2	4%
2010	3	6%
2011	1	2%
2012	5	9%
2013	2	4%
2014	5	9%
2015	1	2%
2016	9	17%
2017	5	9%
2018	7	13%
2019	5	9%
2020	4	7%
Total	54	100%

Table 3 present us with all the sources of these documents discussing social entrepreneurship and/or social innovation in the Swedish context. This list inform us that the subject area of social entrepreneurship is discussed in both journals and books, with a wide spectra of focuses, ranging from innovation (Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research), education (Social and Economics Education), non-profit (VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations), rural development (Journal of Rural Cooperation), media (Journal of Media Business Studies), public sector (International Journal of Public Sector Management), economics (Small Business Economics), and entrepreneurial behavior (International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research). Although, as previously stated, most authors are professors in Sweden, the texts with a specific Swedish context is published in international publications, but mainly European based channels.

An overview of which subjects these sources are most frequently related to (viewing the titles of publication sources), the majority are seen to be related to the general subject of entrepreneurship, with innovation and enterprising being closely interdependent with this topic. The specific subjects of what these publications seems to focus on differ, ranging from the more generic topics, such as "small business", "social entrepreneurship", "societal entrepreneurship", "social economics", and "entrepreneurial behavior", to the somewhat specific topics of "regional development", "rural cooperation", "sustainability", "inclusive development", "social sciences", "voluntary & non-profit", and "public management", to more specific topics of "education", "sport", "urban planning" and "integrative environmental sciences".



**Table 3**

## Source of the documents

Frequency	Author(s)
<b>3 documents</b>	Entrepreneurship & Regional Development
<b>2 documents</b>	Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy, Lund University - School of Economics and Management, Societal Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, Universities, Inclusive development and Social innovation
<b>1 document</b>	Action Research, Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics, Citizenship, Social and Economics Education, Diaconia - Journal for the Study of Christian Social Practice, disP-The Planning Review, Economic Annals-XXI, EFSEIIS National Report Sweden, European Commission, European Journal for Sport and Society, European Public & Social Innovation Review, Global Transitions, Identity, Community, and Learning Lives in the Digital Age, Industry and Higher Education, International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business, International Journal of Innovation and Regional Development, International Journal of Public Sector Management, International Journal of Social Economics, International Journal of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Journal of Cleaner Production, Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy, Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences, Journal of Media Business Studies, Journal of Rural Cooperation, Journal of Social Entrepreneurship, Kvinnors företagande - den verkliga framtidshistorien, Local Economy, Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Organization & Environment, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Scandinavian Journal of Public Administration, <b>Small Business Economics</b> , Social Enterprise Journal, Social Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprises: Nordic Perspectives, Sport Entrepreneurship and Public Policy, Sport in Society, Swedish Entrepreneurship Forum, Swedish ESF Council, Urban Planning, VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations

Most of what is written about the subject area is found, as table 4 presents, in articles published in peer-reviewed journals. This is to be expected with the documents retrieved from Scopus, since the search engine only include peer-reviewed journals and books. The few documents based on book chapters is both due to few search results provided by the search, as well as obstacles to access these documents easily (digitally). This was found to be an obstacle mostly because of time constraints, preventing the possibility to include these documents and poses a limitation to the study.

Peer-reviewed articles was found to be the type of document most frequently produced through the Google Scholar as well. Here, a problem of access to the books also existed. Although an overwhelming amount of peer reviewed articles was produced through the set of inclusion and exclusion criteria, the Google Scholar search provided a larger number of differing types of documents and grey literature, possibly providing a wider and more complete picture of the entire plethora of definitions surrounding the subject area.

**Table 4**

## Type of document

Year	Scopus	Google scholar	Percentage (%)
Peer-reviewed article	31	9	74%
Book chapter	4	3	13%
Report	0	4	7%
Thesis	0	2	4%
Organization document	0	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 highlight the most popular research methods used by researchers. What can be observed is a substantial use of qualitative research methods, mainly a use of single or multiple case studies. This is expected as it matches with recent studies made on social entrepreneurship research in general (Gupta et al., 2020).

**Table 5**

**Methodology used**

<b>Research methodology</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<i>Qualitative</i>	42	78%
- <i>single case study</i>	16	
- <i>multiple case studies</i>	14	
<i>Quantitative</i>	7	13%
<i>Mixed methodology</i>	2	4%
Other	3	6%
<b>Total</b>	54	100%

## 4.2 Sectors and themes

Using the logic of Grounded Theory, a methodological approach presented by Wolfswinkel et al. (2011), towards inductively finding and presenting themes in the literature reviewed, is applied. In this approach, the literature is analyzed in three steps, using open, axial and, lastly, selective coding.

Themes were first collected through open coding when the documents were read the first instance and sub-sub themes were documented. Then, the literature was revisited (an important part of open coding) and concepts were better redefined to match the discourse in use. Axial coding was then applied to develop higher-order conceptualizations, here labeled sub themes. Finally, a network of main themes was identified through selective coding. In this process, 36 sub-sub themes (table 6), 9 sub theme and 3 main themes were identified (Table 7).

Every document was also scanned to see which sector context it was written in, either being written within private, public, civil sector context or multiple of these contexts. A study based on only a case or cases within one sector where categorized as that sector, while studies with cases within different sectors where categorized as “multiple”. To exemplify,

The sub-sub themes were also coupled with what sector context the document was written in (table 6). Summarizing the frequency of specific sector/context combinations found in the documents (table 6), we see that there are some sector/context combinations that seems to be found multiple times. As per example, the coupling of civil sector, with the sub-sub theme of youth as the marginalized group, where found to be the setting of four documents, and as many documents where written with multiple sectors in mind, regarding the sub theme “rural development”.

**Table 6**  
Frequency of specific sectors and sub-sub themes

Sector	Sub-sub theme	Frequency
Civil	Civil actor - Church	1
Private	Private actor - Cotton products, fair trade	1
Private	Private actor - Media	1
Private	Private actor - Private Sports club	1
Private	Private actor- Multiple	1
Multiple	Discourse - academic	2
Private	Discourse - academic	1
Multiple	Discourse - cross-sectoral actors	1
Multiple	Discourse - critical theory perspective	1
Multiple	Discourse - state level	2
Civil	Environment - food	1
Private	Environment - food	1
Civil	Environment - forest gardening	1
Private	Environment - green IT	1
Public	Environment - incubators of entrepreneurial ventures	1
Public	Environment - renewable energy	1
Private	Environment - finances	1
Civil	Marginalized group - immigrants	1
Civil	Marginalized group - multiple	2
Civil	Marginalized group - national victim support	1
Civil	Marginalized group - women	1
Civil	Marginalized group - youth	4
Civil	Marginalized group - youth (sport)	1
Multiple	Marginalized group - youth (sport)	1
Civil	Multiple types of organizations	3
Multiple	Multiple types of organizations	2
Multiple	Multiple types of organizations - state context	1
Civil	Multiple types of organizations - state development	1
Public	Public sector - Agenda development	2
Public	Public sector - Policy development	1
Public	Public sector - University	1
Civil	Rural development	4
Multiple	Rural development	3
Other	Rural development	1
Private	Rural development	4
Public	Urban development	1

In table 7 and table 8, the summarized frequency of how often sectors and main themes occur is presented, the civil sector being the most frequent setting and the sub-theme of rural development being most written about. The prevalence of sub-themes (rural development, marginalized groups, environment, urban development, multiple types of organizations etc.), as well as that of the sectors, will be further outlined in the analysis in chapter 5.

Three main themes were found in this systematic literature review. The most predominant theme, *Specific SE* (short for social entrepreneurship), refers to social entrepreneurial action of a specific kind and represent 57 % of the documents retrieved. *General SE* discuss multiple types of social

entrepreneurial action and thus incorporate multiple perspectives on what social entrepreneurship is and *specific sector SE* represent sub-themes that are set in a specific sectoral context, where the single actor or initiative of focus are discussed against the specific contextual constraints of a sector. In the last main theme, cases are presented in which no specific cause is of focus for the organization and social entrepreneurship is not typically what defines this organization. This will be further elaborated upon in the analysis.

**Table 7**

Distribution of sectors

Sector	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Civil	21	39%
Public	7	13%
Private	12	22%
Multiple	13	24%
Other	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 8**

Distribution of sub-themes

Sub-themes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Specific SE<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>57%</b>
Rural development	12	22%
Marginalized group	11	20%
Environment	7	13%
Urban development	1	2%
<b>General SE<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>26%</b>
Multiple types of organizations	7	13%
Discourse	7	13%
<b>Specific sector SE<sup>1</sup></b>		<b>17%</b>
Public sector	4	7%
Private actor	3	6%
Civil actor	2	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100%</b>

1. Main theme

## 5. Analysis

This section further goes into the depth of the themes found and sector contexts which they have been depicted in. First, the research themes are further outlined, with the main themes and sub-themes obtained. Here, the sectoral context is further highlighted. Second, use of methodology is analyzed. Finally, important aspects of social entrepreneurship that have occurred more frequent are introduced.

### 5.1 Themes and sectors

The three main themes that were identified within the Swedish context, Specific SE, General SE and Specific Sector SE, will be further analyzed below. The prevalence of sectoral perspectives will also be part of this analysis, incorporated to each analysis of the sub-themes.

#### 5.1.1 Specific type of social entrepreneurship (Specific SE)

Out of all the documents, 57 % was related to a specific kind of social entrepreneurship. These kinds of actions focused on rural development, marginalized groups, environmental issues or urban development.

##### 5.1.1.1 Rural development

As the most recognized sub-theme in the dataset, the importance of rural development initiatives is made obvious within the Swedish context. In many of these documents, we see reference to a specific kind of social entrepreneurship, connected and embedded in the specific area of development. In some cases, entrepreneurs revitalize the area through regular business methods, in others they act as a guarantor for the municipality and community, assuming the previously responsibility held by the state.

The two oldest documents in the data set both refer to a specific kind of social entrepreneurship, called community entrepreneurship (Johannisson & Nilsson, 1989; Johannisson, 1990). This type of entrepreneurship is area specific and is in these articles very much focused on the individual entrepreneur and their action to revitalize an area in need. More than 15 years later, von Friedrichs & Lundström (2016), are on the similar track and investigate social entrepreneurship in similar areas, where the number of inhabitants is less than a thousand (in 4 of their 5 cases studied). Relating to this specific social problem, caused by depopulation and defunding of municipalities, the authors suggest that a Nordic perspective on social entrepreneurship is specifically community entrepreneurship in nations with strong welfare states (von Friedrichs & Lundström, 2016). Sundin (2011) continue on the same track, showing that many community entrepreneurs have a personal connection and insight of the community in question, something the author calls "care for place". Sundin (2011) also show examples of private ventures established out of care and necessity combined, exhibiting both other motivations and venture forms than the traditional non-profit social enterprise template.

Multiple single cases of social entrepreneurship, with the focus of rural development is explored. Johannisson (2018) research the case of *Macken*, an economic cooperative acting as mainly as a work integrative social enterprise (WISE) in the local area, but that also has other initiatives they undertake. Here, the attachment of a single entrepreneur, the "face" of the operation, is explored, as well as the duality in taking on multiple needs to receive legitimacy, but not necessarily having the competence pursue every project efficiently. One of the more extreme cases is of the local table tennis club, Docksta BTK, that over many years developed into a local institution now owning a

school, retirement home, entertainment initiative, sports arena, factory and tenant buildings (von Friedrichs & Wahlberg, 2016). The same authors conceptualize societal entrepreneurship has been described as “social entrepreneurship focusing on local development” (von Friedrichs & Wahlberg, 2016, p. 203). This would make societal synonymous with “local social”.

In four of the documents, authors looked at multiple sectors within a rural region. Lindberg et al. (2019) write about city center attractiveness in rural areas and that it is imperative to actively involve local stakeholders and to create cross sectoral and cross organizational cooperation. This is also expressed by Lindberg (2017) that further expand upon the reinvention of traditional roles of the civil, public and private sector. What is to be noted is that Lindberg (2017) present a case focused mainly on how to counter rural decline, but the marginalized group of rural immigrants are an important part of this initiative. While focused on cases on local and regional development, Gawell et al. (2014) find three central issues connected to who acts, how actions are taken, and different actions and their importance. To elaborate these more, the first issue regards the individual entrepreneur and their virtuous motivation, the second highlight the social bricoleur that does whatever is needed to alleviate recognized problems, and lastly, public entrepreneurship is highlighted with the importance on collective solutions through universities, politics or the public sector. Finally, in their research on multiple regional social enterprises and innovations, Lindberg & Jansson (2016) stress the importance of four main elements of social innovation. These are (1) identification of societal challenge or marginalized groups need that is not met, (2) the involvement of the marginalized group in development of the solution, (3) the intention of creating social value, and (4) the creation of new relations towards the mission of solving the problem.

When studying the social economy in Lithuania, the UK and Sweden, Okunevičiūtė & Pranskeviciute (2018) conclude that it is specifically regional development and social cohesion that is of importance to the civil sector. They see areas that are not reached by the state and avoided by business due to low profitability are the locations where social enterprises emerge, why social entrepreneurship, rural development and the civil sector are largely interlinked and prevalent. Through social enterprises, entrepreneurship is brought to the areas in need of regional development. The authors explain that these enterprises “generate profit in economically weak areas and fuel entrepreneurship into deprived rural territories” (p. 14).

Finally, the odd one out and the only document not categorized by any of the sectors is Lordkipanidze et al. (2005) plan for development of the Söderslätt region in Sweden. It can generally be regarded as an analysis of what action can be made within the region, but it is not really aimed towards any sector. Although the document met the set inclusion and exclusion criteria of this study, in relation to the other documents, it does not add much to further understanding social entrepreneurship.

### **5.1.1.2 Marginalized group**

Specific groups of marginalized people were found to be of the second most recognized area of social entrepreneurship concern in Sweden. A common denominator in all of the 11 document is that all are within the civil sector context. Barinaga (2013) focuses on social entrepreneurial efforts towards immigrants in three cases, where the ideological and political implications of different actions are highlighted. Multiple authors wrote about cases of youth development in the form of open leisure activities (Lindström, 2016), sports clubs (Ekholm, 2017; Peterson, & Schenker, 2018), the combined music center and WISE called *mejeriet* (Heath, 2009) and the multi-activity organization *Fryshuset* (Westlund & Gawell, 2012). Positive aspects generated both focus on the individual, fostering their growth (Ekholm, 2017; Heath, 2009), as well as the fostering of citizenship,

entrepreneurship and democracy in youth, anticipated to benefit society (Lindström, 2016; Peterson, & Schenker, 2018).

Svensson & Gallo (2018) study of a national victim support groups initiative is the only document that is to a greater extent focused on the individual entrepreneur. Lindberg, Forsberg & Karlberg (2016), focusing on women as the marginalized group, aided by the network organization Magma, write about the importance of highlighting neglected forms of innovation, opposite to the currently masculine innovation focus on technology and a rational mindset. The work integrated social enterprise is used as a single case study (Hermelin & Rusten, 2018), and this specific type of organization is present in the final two documents (by the same author) in which multiple civil sector organization, focused on different marginalized groups, are exemplified through the WISE organizations *Vägen ut!*, *Kuling* and *Criminal's Return to Society (CRIS)*, and the advocacy organization *Attac Sweden* (Gawell, 2013; Gawell, 2014).

### **5.1.1.3 Environment**

Environmental issues are more recently being highlighted in social entrepreneurship literature, as these six documents published 2016 and after demonstrate. Most are based on qualitative case studies, but the sectoral focus is from all three sectors. All documents, except for one, discuss sustainable entrepreneurship as the process and term of importance regarding these cases researched. In the documents, social entrepreneurship is sometimes discussed, but only subordinate to sustainable entrepreneurship.

Fors & Lennerfors (2019) discuss a case of environmentally sustainable computing, targeted to an entire industry. They present sustainable entrepreneurship (in their sense synonymous with ecopreneurship) as a force against a currently unsustainable business and entrepreneurship landscape, and they suggest ethics of care as relevant when researching the phenomena. In another document, the food industry and the non-profit foundation *Biodynamiska Produkter* is researched, where the idea of sustainability entrepreneurship is applied as well (Larsson et al., 2016). Here the contrasts are sharper than in the previous document, with environmental entrepreneurship defined as "focused on integrating environmental goals with the business case as a strategy to make profits" (Larsson et al., 2016, p. 3) and sustainability entrepreneurship is defined as "sustainable development in a broad sense and generates a reinforcing cycle of benefits to the entrepreneur, to other people and to" (p. 3). Bergset (2018), focused on the financial barriers of green start-ups, also use sustainable entrepreneurship, and the author convey that it is both building upon environmental and social entrepreneurship literature and that the concerns of the sustainable entrepreneur lies both in environmental protection as well as social equity. In Selvakkumaran & Ahlgren (2020), the focus lies on social innovation and municipality initiatives to increase individuals purchasing of solar panels and biofuel or electric vehicles.

The documents that is farthest away from the others on environmental issues and entrepreneurship is a paper focused on an individual entrepreneur and his activities of forest gardening (Vlasov, 2019). The paper also highlights a gives warning (similar to what was found here in a prior document presented) of a discourse approach of innovation that is exclusive of other marginalized approaches. In the paper, anthropocentrism, meaning to put human needs above anything else, is seen to be currently held as the dominant approach and that this approach is a root cause of negative environmental externalities being created.

Entrepreneurship that focus on positive environmental impact is often found to be referred to as sustainable entrepreneurship. In the case of sustainable entrepreneurship, the goal to create environmental value (or avoid creating negative externalities depleting existing value) is sometimes

singular or the goal is combined with economic and/or social value creation to a wide varying degree. What can be found in the documents regarding sustainable entrepreneurship is that, unfortunately, this is one of the vaguer terms related to social entrepreneurship that is used in the literature and it is often not obvious what it really eludes to. It has been connected to typical environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and natural resource depletion, but also the constraints of economic and social systems, the financial crisis of 2007-2008 being a prime example (Bank & Kanda, 2016). Bank & Kanda (2016) describe sustainable entrepreneurship in the wide terms of having the “potential positive effects with regard to the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainability” (p. 268). At the same time, the authors underscore that the key tool of sustainable entrepreneurs is development and dissemination of eco-innovation. This form of innovation has the intended result to reduce environmental risk, pollution and the negative impacts of resource use, at least compared to relevant alternatives. Environmental performance is highlighted, but the phenomenon requires economic viability and social responsibility in order to be adopted.

#### **5.1.1.4 Urban development**

Finally, as a bit of an outlier, urban development is discussed by Angelidou & Mora (2019). The document, focused on policy development, discusses the problems of the social economy in cities, posing affordable spaces for social enterprises to be a crucial issue. One thing to note is that the authors of this document are not themselves Swedish or situated in Sweden. The assessment is not that their analysis and discussion regarding social entrepreneurship is irrelevant, but that this indicate an even lesser importance of urban development issues among Sweden situated authors.

### **5.1.2 General approach to social entrepreneurship (General SE)**

In the general approach towards social entrepreneurship, here there is no specific sector or issue is of focus, and a broader understanding of the phenomena is applied. This broader approach correlate well with the fact that the majority of quantitative data research is found here.

#### **5.1.2.1 Multiple types of organizations**

Many of the authors of these documents aim to find more general insights within the wide plethora of social entrepreneurship initiatives in Sweden. First and foremost, we have multiple quantitative studies that have been carried out, which will now be further elucidated.

The first three, all written or co-written by Habib Kachlami, use measure of social enterprises in Sweden based on Statistics Sweden’s data on non-profit associations (*ideella föreningar*) which are contrasted against all for-profit organizations. In the first study, Kachlami (2017) find data that supports a balanced approached towards entrepreneurship policy, where conventional, as well as social entrepreneurship should be supported, as decreased competition between the two types can increase the total number of ventures within an area. In the second study, they find (all in line with their seven hypotheses) that “regions with higher proportions of males in the workforce, more entrepreneurs, more educated individuals, higher income per capita, higher unemployment, higher proportions of elderly people, and higher urbanization also tend to experience a higher rate of social venture creation” (Kachlami et al., 2018, p.724). In the final study, Kachlami et al., (2020) highlight that there may exist an ignored aspect of social firms, regarding their economic value to the market. Their findings support that “on a per firm basis, their net employment effect is on par or above that of new commercial firms and collectively they account for a respectable share of the total variation in regional employment creation” (p. 13).



The two other documents with quantitative research, base their data set on a smaller number of firms that are part of public organizations datasets (e.g. Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional growth list). Alamaa's (2014) report on social entrepreneurship in Sweden gives a good insight into many dynamics of the Swedish nation, with demographics, institutions and history included. An important finding is that we spot a general trend to focus more on Swedish issues rather than international aid. Finally, Mecherkany (2010) employ a survey, based on a little more than 50 of enterprises on the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional growth lists of social enterprises (220 in total). Of the companies that answered the survey, about half considered themselves to have an equal social and economic contribution, a fifth had more social than economic contribution and another fifth had mainly social contribution. Financing the venture was by far the biggest impediment for the social enterprises. Most of the enterprises saw themselves as highly innovative, and the two types of innovation that was overly predominant in the results were the offering of new services and deep knowledge into the area of which the enterprise operates.

There is one important thing to note, regarding the two different measures used. The definition of social enterprise by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional growth is narrow, only referring to work integrative social enterprises (WISEs), representing ventures that focuses on improving employment prospects for those furthest away from the labor market. Using every non-profit association, as done in the studies of Kachlami, might neither be the best source, although it is possibly the best estimate available.

The final two documents with this sub-theme use qualitative research methods to retrieve their data. Stryjan (2006) use examples of civil and civil/private organizations that all use cooperative principles where resources are pooled together, available for the members to access in pursuit of a common goal. The organizations studied are parent cooperatives for day-care provision, a WISE for handicapped, with industrial carpentry as the main activity, the independent living cooperatives *STIL*, for gravely handicapped, and lastly *Medvind*, a community enterprise ("*Gemenskapsföretag*"). Lastly, Ilstedt Hjelm & Mårtens (2010) focused on multiple innovations that many aims to influence the public sector. In every case, the public sector is highlighted, but the action is mostly done by actors in the civil sector (potentially the private sector as well). They also elaborate on some history on large projects of the public sector, mainly on their development of the *folkhem*.

### **5.1.2.2 Discursive**

The discursive documents are specifically aimed towards a better understanding of how we define social entrepreneurship, social innovation and related concepts today and how we could and/or should define it. Most of the documents are aimed towards a multisectoral understanding of the phenomena and one (being Sundin, 2009) is only focused towards expanding the understanding in regards to the private sector.

Half of the discursive documents are rooted in an academic understanding of social entrepreneurship, and emphasize popular definitions that has emerged within the field of social entrepreneurship academia (Dahles et al., 2010; Sundin, 2009; Berglund & Johannisson, 2012). Seven terms are put forward by Dahles et al. (2010) to be of most importance to understand social entrepreneurship within the Swedish context. These seven are *civic and/or community entrepreneurship*, *community entrepreneurship*, *public entrepreneurship*, *social entrepreneurship*, *social economy*, *corporate social responsibility (CSR)*, and *traditional entrepreneurship*, while *societal entrepreneurship* is seen as the superordinate term since the seven subordinate terms is seen as having the goal to provide some societal value. Sundin (2009) discuss commercial entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship and societal entrepreneurship, applying a rationality of care analysis to

commercial enterprises and argue that there can be something social in commercial entrepreneurship. However, Berglund & Johannisson (2012), similar to Dahles et al. (2010) holds societal entrepreneurship at the epicenter of research, but they describe social entrepreneurship as the thing that is juxtaposed against commercial entrepreneurship.

Two of the documents are written specifically for state organizations. In the first, Braunerhjelm & Hamilton (2012) provide an international perspective on social entrepreneurship, in relation to Swedish development on social entrepreneurship. The authors find four important and distinctive schools of thought, two American (*Innovation School of thought* and *Enterprise School of thought*) and two European (*Emergence of Social Enterprise (EMSE) approach* and *UK approach*), that reveal different perspectives and preferred points of reference. In the other document, Persson & Hafen (2014) report on the entirety of the Swedish context and how social enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship are defined. They find that there seems to be a necessity in academia to both differentiate variations of a similar phenomenon, as well as to distinguish themselves from their peers.

Finally, Berglund & Wigren-Kristoferson (2012), in a think-tank with a group of government commissioners, civil servants and established societal entrepreneurs, critically assesses the discourse regarding societal entrepreneurship. Concluding remarks were that every participant was to some extent oppressed by the current understanding of entrepreneurship. Another aspect to note is that the document does not ever declare what societal entrepreneurship is or on what basis the societal entrepreneurs that participated are to be seen as this.

### **5.1.3 Specific sector where social entrepreneurship is researched (Specific sector SE)**

Within the category of the last main theme, we find 17 % of the documents (nine in total), and these represent documents focused on cases of social entrepreneurship, set in specific sectors.

Furthermore, what is deemed to be the thing that is deemed social entrepreneurial is not something that defines the organization that enact it. Many of these specific actors within the different sectors vary on the scale of having primarily a social goal. In this last theme, among many very specific types of social initiatives, we will be introduced to examples social entrepreneurship acting as something that can boost the organizations brand value.

#### **5.1.3.1 Public sector**

Göransson (2016) researches the university setting, looking at social innovation and inclusive development strategies that need to be incorporated into policy and practices at the universities. The inclusive aspect is stressed in the study and through data, as they call to attention an imbalance in regards to immigrant school attendance and also women holding less powerful positions among professors. Furthermore, an in-depth policy analysis is done by Krlev et al. (2020) regarding the policy development in relation to social innovation within nine European countries, Sweden being one of them. Their conclusion was that since “social innovation was hardly referred to at all explicitly in policy documents” which one might presume means that “social innovation is not a subject which national policymakers care about or are especially aware of, or a matter that lies within their area of responsibility” (p. 467). Although Sweden’s policy documents did not show much, Lindberg & Portinson Hylander (2016) find more in Swedish agenda documents. They detect an interesting bias where, as they say, “welfare innovation is specifically highlighted as a social innovation form, the academic and civil sectors are more focused than others, users and customers are the primarily acknowledged groups of people to involve in social innovation processes, and the importance of social sciences and humanities is stressed more than engineering and natural sciences” (p. 178). These biases seem to exist generally in the field of social innovation and social entrepreneurship in

Sweden, although it might be more prevalent in certain contexts. Lastly, Björk et al. (2014) present a strategic agenda, geared mainly towards the public sector. They look at what Sweden need to improve in order to become a world-leader within social innovation in 2030.

### **5.1.3.2. Private actor**

Schwartz (2012) sheds light on the ethical dilemma of the entrepreneur selling fair trade cotton products. The problem here lies with the Swedish company that want to assure certain conditions and Indian producers that are more focused on profit. The phenomenon, and unique term among the documents, media entrepreneurship is studied by Achtenhagen (2008). Here a social entrepreneur signifies the social value created by media organizations. Although a distinct group is the focus of the social entrepreneur, mainly immigrants, what is stressed is the new ways to reach people. Lastly, Nikolov & Westergren (2017) investigates corporate social entrepreneurship (CSE) within two initiatives working with Swedes and two more international, working with farmers of coffee and milk. Here, CSE is contrasted with CSR and is proposed to be a more credible, potent and effective way of a private company to create social value.

### **5.1.3.3 Civil actor**

As explored in the introduction, the Christian church has long been part of the state institution in Sweden and is still a major actor of social initiatives in the nation. Although the Church of Sweden is used as a case example in Lindberg & Jansson's (2016) document, and the initiative on regional development studied by Lindberg (2017) is financed by the social welfare organization of Germany's Protestant churches, it is the document by Berglund et al. (2016) that specifically look closer at the social initiatives provided by the Swedish church. An important reflection that the authors provide is that most examples reflect the "dual normativity" that all initiatives of the Church provide, in that "the Christian perspectives emphasize existential meaningfulness, social community and social participation while the perspective (of the Swedish government) primarily emphasizes rehabilitation and labor-market participation" (pp. 14-15).

The case presented by Ahonen & Persson (2020), of a Swedish professional sports club, give us an example on what a non-profit organization that, similar to previous illustrations of private companies CSE, work toward a better brand image. In this example, the football team's efforts to provide social value outside of their traditional operation is stressed, since the team already provide social value through initiatives of cups and training that are considered within the realm of what is expected (not entrepreneurial).

## 6. Discussion

In this chapter, the data collected through the systematic literature review, presented in chapter four and five, will be discussed in regards to the literature review in section 1.1 and the specific contextual setting presented in chapter 2. Following will be a short restatement of the main points of section 1.1 and chapter 2.

In the first chapter of this study, multiple aspects of the social entrepreneurship concept are explored. The nature of “social” is analyzed, presenting the difficulties of “wicked problems”, the degrees of altruism, as well as complementary terminology to “social” entrepreneurship. The idea of degrees of entrepreneurship is also presented, altered on the basis of newness. In the most influential works, multiple structures and sectors of operation, intention and morality, value creation, networks, are all important areas of discussion, with the importance of the social mission regarded as an essential component among all authors. Three different forces of social change, social engineer, social constructionist, and social bricoleur, are also presented. Finally, the importance of context is advocated and stand at the base of this study.

In the second chapter, the Swedish context is outlined. What is presented is a country with vast areas that are scarcely inhabited, a long ideological history of a strong welfare state, historical civil movements that inform public action, the deregulation of state activities of the 80s and 90s and the recent green movement in the political sphere. The cultural mentality of individuality through state security is also further advanced and finally, the current state of social enterprises and the civil sector is also presented.

The goal of this paper was, for one, to answer the question of *how is social entrepreneurship academically applied or researched in the Swedish context?* This question is primarily answered by the by the findings in chapter 4, as well as the analysis in chapter 5. The author of this study has also posed two sub-questions: (1) *What themes are found in the application or research of social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context,* and (2) *Are there any gaps to be found in the application or research of social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context?* These sub-questions act to better answer the main research question. The discussion of this paper is aimed towards answering these sub-questions in relation to the general literature on social entrepreneurship and the parameters of the national context. Lastly, in section 6.4 an important aspect to social entrepreneurship, not presented in the literature review but found in the data, is discussed.

### 6.1 Discussing the “social” in social entrepreneurship - Impact today or future impact

The nature of “social”/wicked problems and the degrees of altruism, will all be discussed in relation to the broader terminology of social entrepreneurship. The Swedish context will also be taken into account when discussing this topic. To begin, an interesting dynamic that is found in the literature is the duality of either creating social impact today or in the future (often seen as negative externalities avoided). What is observed is potentially a divide where social entrepreneurship is represent impact today, while societal and sustainable entrepreneurship rather represented (potential) future impact. The two terms, societal and sustainable entrepreneurship will now be further explored separate of each other.

First of all, societal entrepreneurship in Sweden seems to have some commonalities in what defines it, but no real consensus can be found. Berglund & Johannisson (2012) reference the work of Gawell et al. (2009), stating that “societal entrepreneurship is about initiating and promoting new innovative ways of creating an economically, socially and ecologically sustainable world” (p. 19). Dahles et al.

(2010) in a similar notion, but with an important distinction, present a wide spectrum of societal entrepreneurship as a category that includes, among many, traditional, public, as well as social entrepreneurship. von Friedrichs & Lundström (2016) explore a more specific understanding of societal entrepreneurship, saying that "successful soci(et)al entrepreneurship is local and community-based, with networking activities involving actors from private, public and civil sectors in collaborative models" (p. 174), supported with prior notion that "community-based entrepreneurship implies long-term oriented activities" (p. 158). In the documents of Berglund & Wigren-Kristoferson (2012) and Gawell et al. (2014) other understandings of "societal" entrepreneurship are presented, which will be discussed in later sections of this chapter. What is clear is that the use of the adjective "societal" support a use of a wider spectra of change, encompassing economic, social and environmental value created (or not destroyed). What is utilized in these documents are a multiple sectoral perspective, and also the private sectoral perspective. Using multiple sectoral perspectives matches the understanding of the concept presented by the authors in section 1.1. One thing that can explain the specific private perspective is that authors try to highlight the strong social purpose of these for-profit enterprises, where the social mission might not be explicitly stated or held central. The case of Docksta, held as a prime example by multiple authors, show an organization to which they pursued opportunity within a community and gradually they expanded the organization based on a wide variety business that created social value within the community (von Friedrichs & Lundström, 2016). The organization, similar to the example of Peredo & McLean (2006), needed to subsequently establish a for profit company in order to further achieve their social mission.

The second terminology that is frequently used is sustainable entrepreneurship. As the analysis in section 5.1.1.3 present, this terminology applied uses the similar wide spectra that societal entrepreneurship have, but the term is used referring to more environmentally focused enterprises and innovations. Although crystal clear that "sustainable" predominantly has an "environmental" focus in the documents, what is discussed to also be part of the equation (which often is social and sometimes economical value creation) is unfortunately vaguely represented by the cases. Fors & Lennerfors (2019) suggest that the sustainable entrepreneur "see the environmental and social aspects of their practice as their 'core objective and competitive advantage" (p. 2) while presenting a case where the social aspect is not obvious, but the environmental is. Similarly, Bergset (2018) when presenting the case of green start-up financing, the sustainable entrepreneurship is explained as the conjunction of social and environmental entrepreneurship, but the social aspect is not reported on. What is referred to as social value creation by Bergset (2018) is sustainable development by means of social equity. When discussing sustainability in food production Larsson et al. (2016) quote Schaltegger & Wagner (2011) that describe sustainable entrepreneurship as "attempts not only to contribute to sustainable development of the organization itself, but also to create an increasingly large contribution of the organization to sustainable development of the market and society as a whole" (p.224). The question that is never really answered by any is by what measurement something is considered to be sustainable.

During the past decade, a discursive change seems to have occurred with the focus shifting from societal entrepreneurship, represented by Sundin (2009), Dahles et al. (2010), Berglund & Johannisson (2012), Berglund & Wigren-Kristoferson (2012), Schwartz (2012), Gawell et al. (2014), towards sustainable entrepreneurship with Larsson et al. (2016), Bank & Kanda (2016), Bergset (2018), Ulvenblad et al. (2019) Vlasov (2019), Fors & Lennerfors (2019). Looking to the ideological and political development in Sweden, the relevance of the Green Party indicates the growing importance of environmental issues. A further possibility for the changed focused could be of more

enterprises focusing on environmental issues, but this would probably not cause the omission of discussion of societal entrepreneurship.

The question of measurement, what and how value creation is measured, seems that it should be essential in the discussion of societal and sustainable entrepreneurship, but it is surprisingly absent. As the case of wicked problems presented by Rittel & Webber (1973), these are hard to evaluate since the effects of possible solutions can't be measured directly. What makes societal and sustainable entrepreneurship more wicked is that to measure them would be to measure (1) what is valuable for a society or (2) what is truly sustainable, both things which are incredible hard to even evaluate beforehand. These concepts seem to be presented sometimes as the representation of innovative actions that is not harmful to society, and that are not unsustainable, which is easier in some cases to show. However, this is not fully apparent, especially in the case of what an organization can measure. Looking toward the degrees of altruism, both these perspectives seems to try to expand the idea of altruism, by expanding the scale of how many people one can potentially impact. The idea would be that there are degrees of how one can profit society, where structural impact on social relations as well as global environmental impact is seen as "better". The problem is that it is not necessarily properly anchored with sufficient measurement tools. Comparing this with the altruism scale of social entrepreneurship in Appendix B, this gives the notion of altering how the entrepreneur "profits society", since the scale is much larger. However, what should be remembered is that "profit society" can and should be measured and not merely hinted at, which seems to be the case in these documents within this study.

To summarize, these all-encompassing terms seems to be too broad, at least in terms of how they have currently been used in the Swedish context. The action and effect become so separated that any correlation becomes close to impossible to measure, hence proof of impact becomes very indistinct

## **6.2 On what basis are these documents discussing "entrepreneurship"**

Since social entrepreneurship is mainly focused on people and the relationship between them, how much newness is there to the field actually? What many of the documents provide are perspectives where there really isn't that much newness towards the actual process. What we see in the documents are mostly groups that previously has been neglected or are neglected in specific areas of the country, and a social entrepreneur sees the opportunity to meet the need(s) of this specific, or multiple groups, through an old idea, tailored specifically the group in question. In many cases, we see that it is the social entrepreneurs that is the key, not through their innovative idea, but through their capacity to build networks supporting their cause. This idea, to some extent, support Dees' (1998) idea of the social entrepreneur as someone special, capable of more than others. These causes are often depicted in the documents as creating work in sparsely populated areas, sometimes specifically focused on certain marginalized groups, but also to causes that support and bring forward ideas and opinions of marginalized groups.

Mostly, the newness of what the social entrepreneur is doing specifically is not of focus, but the fact that they operate towards a cause, within an area that has not been attempted by anyone before, and that they do this successfully. Although entrepreneurship should not have success as a parameter needed for it to be studied (Tan et al, 2003), why social entrepreneurs successfully manages to run these organizations with social missions is hard to evaluate based on a specific innovative part of the organization. The criterion for "newness" seems to be put simply that the manage to operate successfully where others did not. To capture exactly how they have succeeded

carry to many parameters to break down into something that can be used, it seems. This is to be expected as the success of social networks not necessarily something that can be taught.

### **6.3 The relationship towards the most influential works**

In this section, the aspects presented in section 1.1.3 will be applied and compared with what is found in the documents collected through this study. What will be discussed is the importance of social mission, the structure and sectors of social entrepreneurship, the aspects of intention and morality, value creation and networks.

#### **6.3.1 The social mission**

The importance of the social mission is clearly supported by the documents and all the different terminologies that the authors use. However, as discussed before, in sustainable entrepreneurship it seems to be prioritized after the environmental mission. Furthermore, as discussed in section 6.1, what is “social” is debated among the authors. To help marginalized people attain work opportunity seems to be a widespread social action that is shared throughout the sectors. A speculation is that the social solutions that can be measured and proved are generally more accepted as legitimate social missions. The author of this study argue that this would explain the use of “social entrepreneurship” towards established problem areas of rural development and marginalized groups, but using “sustainable entrepreneurship” when the impact is environmental and potentially social.

#### **6.3.2 Structural and sectoral dynamics**

In the following section, the structural and sectoral dynamics will be discussed. This discussion will be separated into the private, public and civil sector, as well as the dynamics between them.

##### **6.3.2.1 Private sector**

It is quite obvious that the private sector is not very much discussed or held as of much importance regarding social entrepreneurship and social innovation. One thing that is becoming clear is that, not so many actors (if any at all) that represent this sector, write the literature. The authors of the documents collected are mostly professors, hence having the state as their employer, implying that private sector research might not be of as high importance. We find that the documents written with a private sector perspective, mostly focus on actions of rural development and environmental issues, rather than with marginalized groups. This may be due to a more technology-based nature of these organizations that engage combine social and economic value creation.

Similar to authors generally meaning business entrepreneurship when discussing “entrepreneurship” (Gedeon, 2010), it can be argued to exist a tendency to generally mean non-business/non-private social entrepreneurship when “social entrepreneurship” is discussed in the documents. This would partly explain less private sector perspectives when discussing social entrepreneurship.

The example put forward by Peredo & McLean (2006) of social entrepreneurs adopting the form of a private company to achieve their social mission or to achieve social impact, was found explored by von Friedrichs & Wahlberg (2016) in the case of Docksta. They reached an opportunity to create social good that was brought to attention by the community. To pursue it, they needed to start a limited company (*aktiebolag*). Furthermore, Sundin (2009) challenge the idea of private companies without a social mission not being seen as social entrepreneurship. In her study, she outlines cases where the choice to start a new venture, with a profit focus, can be made from a belief to create social value for the persons workmates, family, the locality or for a vulnerable group.

### **6.3.2.2 Public sector**

As stated previously, most of the authors are based within this category. Multiple of the documents were also written for the state-owned organizations, which might further influence certain bias. Most of the documents that discuss social entrepreneurship and the public sector mostly do this in terms of policy and agenda development (see Björk et al., 2014; Lindberg & Portinson Hylander, 2017; Angelidou & Mora, 2019; Krlev et al., 2020). In other words, these documents are aimed towards politicians to change the landscape for enterprises within the civil and private sector, with the intent of enabling the creation more ventures that can create more social impact through social innovation. In these policy and agenda documents, no specific social innovation is discussed and they also do not cover any cases of “social public entrepreneurship”.

Of the two documents that do focus on social public entrepreneurship (not explicitly defined as this in the documents), both focus on environmental impact, one indirectly through the incubation of sustainability focused start-ups (a similar absence of public innovation as the previous documents in last paragraph; Bank & Kanda, 2016) and the other focus on social innovation within the field of energy transition on county level (Selvakkumaran & Ahlgren, 2020). In the latter example, social innovation is seen as “the social practices and new activities” (Ibid., p. 99), which could be argued to be a very weak definition as compared to the other documents in this study.

A reason why social entrepreneurship has the weakest connection within the public sector is probably since this sector represent institutional order and in many ways the antithesis to innovation, which is generally sprung out of chaotic idea creation and testing. The historical development of the welfare state in Sweden also suggest a relationship of the state acquiring the services that society support through civil action (i.e. they are willing to give time towards a venture without any monetary compensation).

### **6.3.2.3 Civil sector**

Some of the authors are found here. The perspectives from this sector is held high by the public sector actors and authors. In accordance with Peredo & McLean (2006) statement, we find that social entrepreneurship is mostly seen as non-profit phenomenon. Further, the importance for the social enterprises of monetary means towards reaching an economic viability, suggested by Mair & Marti (2006), is not widely discussed in the documents. In contrast to this, Alamaa (2014) present in her paper that of the sample studied, the social enterprises gain about 75 % of their liquidity through *Fees for Services or Products*. A reason for a minimal discussion on the importance of fees may be that the authors focus more on the innovation that is achieving the social mission rather than more mundane aspects of a balance sheet.

### **6.3.2.4 All the sectors**

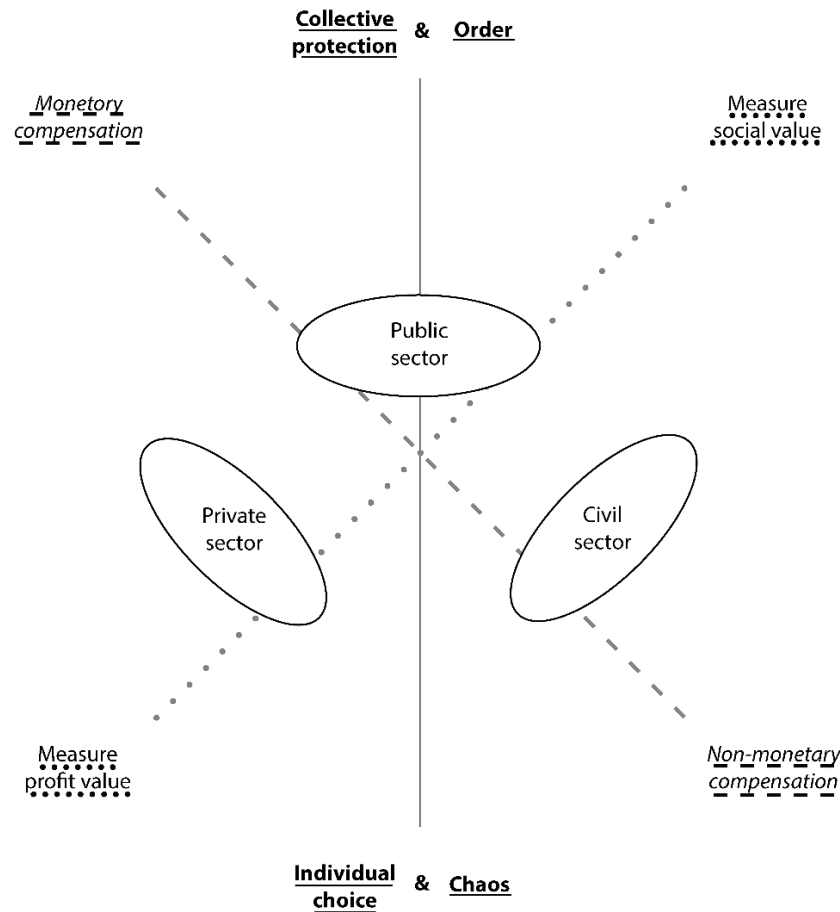
Even if the civil sector may overrepresent social entrepreneurship, they are not confined to this sector. What is overwhelmingly found in the literature located here is the blurring of boundaries between the public, private and civil sector, as well as for-profit and not-for-profit ventures, suggested by Peredo & McLean (2006). A resounding message from the authors of the documents is that cross boundary collaboration is held essential within the field of social entrepreneurship.

When “societal” entrepreneurship was discussed previously, the term was concluded to be to general. What can be found to be distinct with the concept is authors insistence of relating it to cross-boundary initiatives. Among these documents, this aspect is predominantly supported in relation to societal entrepreneurship, as compared to social entrepreneurship. Berglund & Wigren-



Kristoferson (2012) highlight the goal of societal entrepreneurship to develop society and further specify it “address an increasing need to rely on citizens’ ability to reorganize in order to create structures that move beyond the traditional divisions into public and private sectors” (e.g. Giddens, 2003; Berglund & Wigren-Kristoferson, 2012, p. 278). Other authors discussing specifically societal entrepreneurship see the importance of not “getting ‘stuck’ in a certain institutional settings” (von Friedrichs & Wahlberg, 2016, p. 203). Lindberg & Jansson (2016) found that the cross-sectoral element was essential in social innovation processes, “where actors from various societal sectors interact in identifying and addressing societal challenges and social needs by innovative measures” (p. 7). The separation of societal challenges and social needs is interesting, suggesting an attempt to divide social problems either by scale or impact. Gawell et al. (2014) highlight societal entrepreneurship as being a cross-country force, essential in local development and that it offers “a more holistic approach to development” (p. 124). Lindberg & Portinson Hylander (2017) find that multiple case studies call for “cooperation across multi-stakeholder environments in order to identify and address social needs and societal challenges” (p. 171) and they recommend a transition from the traditional “triple helix model” (cooperation of private, public, and academia sector), to a “penta helix model”, where the civil sector as well as the individual (entrepreneur, activist, bricoleur, brokers, assembler) is included. How these authors present societal entrepreneurship appear to be best summarized by Berglund & Johannisson (2012), clarifying that “this perspective rather stresses the importance of processes that work against specialization and differentiation, separating sectors and actors from each other” (p. 24).

In order to separate and connect the sectors, in an attempt to highlight central forces that are relatively more or less predominant within each sector, three different spectra have been found by the author to act as a good representation of how the sectors generally differ from each other, and how this highlight the important combination forces that each sector generally represent. To best explain these forces, found on three different spectra of three dualities, a triangular figure has been created where each sector is set within (figure 1). These dualities do not mean that a sector is totally devoid of a certain aspect, only that the sector tend towards a greater representation of one or the other forces on the three spectra. Presented in the figure, the three spectra are represented with an intact, dotted, and dashed line, with the dualities that opposes each other are underscored with matching line. Each sector is represented by three of these opposing dualities being more or less predominant, as for example, the civil sector is represented by individual choice & chaos, non-monetary compensation, and measuring social value. It should further be noted that the duality specifically of order and chaos is rooted in the psychological and historical understanding of this duality (Peterson, 1999), both representing positive and negative aspects, the positive with order being to maintain good structures and creating predictability, and the positive with chaos being represented by creatively manifesting new and more valuable ideas that the world can benefit from.



**Fig. 1.** Sector dynamics represented by multiple dualities

A short elaboration of the dualities will follow here and the figure can be understood by explaining the duality that is singularly represented by a sector. First, *Collective Protection & Order* (public sector) represent the idea that certain things need to be decided for everyone in society and protected by institution that preserve a predictability and reliability. Opposed to this is the *Individual Choice & Chaos* supporting the freedom of each individual to know and chose what is best as well as the chaos of exploration. Chaos represent the area in which innovation prosper. Second, *Measure Profit Value* (private sector) is the notion that value created is best measured in terms of monetary means. Why this phrasing is used is because it does not necessarily hinder the objective to create social value or having a social mission, only that there is a predominant idea to measure monetary profit. Opposed is to *Measure Social Value*, where a deeper focus is on social value created and where softer measures are often used. At this end of the duality, narrative results can be seen to be more used as intended impact can be hard to measure monetarily. However, a movement towards more hard measures is found supported within the institutional context of Sweden (MSI, 2018) which can indicate more monetary measurement tools. Finally, *Non-Monetary Compensation* (civil sector) highlight the prevalence of action taken that is compensated with other things than money that is valuable to the person and that this person might not make a living based on these actions. Using this duality, there seems to naturally exist more altruism here than in the other sectors, which the author suggest that the literature supports. Opposed to this is *Monetary Compensation* of which many expect to make a living based on the work they achieve.

What is clear is that there do not seem to exist clear boundaries between the sectors and the dualities, specifying social entrepreneurship as characteristics it can and cannot have. In agreement authors, a perspective is advocated where there exists shift from the “either/or” division (often

found when debating social or economic value created) to an approach of “both/and” (Nicolopoulou, 2014). The discussion of dualities found inside sectors moves us forward to the dualities that can be found within organizations and within the individual social entrepreneur.

### **6.3.3 Different intentions and morality behind the social entrepreneur**

Regarding the intention and morality of an organization or individual, Dees (1998) provided a more idealized definition, presenting the entrepreneur with terms of a “relentless pursuit”, as being “courageous”, and having “a profound sense of accountability” (p. 4). And although motives of personal fulfilment, explored by Mair & Marti (2006) are not explicitly found researched in the documents, there certainly exist multiple perspectives documented that support motives beyond ethical and moral responsibility to explain why individuals pursue social entrepreneurship.

The ethical shortcomings and the problems of corporate oversight that is discussed by Zahra et al. (2009) is not found to be analyzed in any of the documents. This would be an area of great interest to further explore to better understand social entrepreneurship, as the literature is only focused on the positive aspects of the phenomenon.

In an attempt to expand the concept of social entrepreneurship into the private sector, the idea of *rationality of care* is explored by Sundin (2009; 2019) as care for the disenfranchised community or a group is explored. The author also explores the social indication of caring for one’s workmates, friends or family. The latter groups of the persons closest kin are fairly absent in the literature, which can be explained by the cultural and political idea of the state supporting general care for all.

Another interesting and unique idea explored in the literature is based on ethics of care (Fors & Lennerfors, 2019). This sound similar to the previous idea, but has a quite different focus. Ethics of care is opposed to a rationalistic view of why actions are taken, and also a view that only positive emotions is what motivates us and what should motivate us. In relation why and how an individual pursues a social mission, a similar the authors suggest that it is the “emotional base of mothering that allows for reasoned, caring actions to be enacted and evaluated” (p. 5). This means that a range of emotions and modes of reasoning are enacted to support the social action which provide a more nuanced perspective to the intentions and actions of the social entrepreneur.

### **6.3.4 Different value created**

In the literature review, what was previously documented were cases of social entrepreneurship that target “customers” who are willing to pay, but are unable to (Mair & Marti, 2006; Austin et al., 2006). What is found is that this do not seem to be a universal aspect, especially in the case of Sweden. Many of the customers, those that need what the social enterprise is providing, are often not unable to pay, at least not in a similar way to the cases that the authors refer to. The poorest in Sweden still has a relatively high access to money and initiatives guided to these groups of people is often supported by government funds or programs, giving them an ability to pay.

In a similar vein of the discussion in 6.3.2.3, Zahra et al. (2009) highlight the need for social enterprises to measure both social and economic value, an aspect that is not thoroughly explored within the Swedish context.

### **6.3.5 The importance of networking**

Networking is highly connected to the idea off cross-boundary collaboration, but it is also presented to be important in less ambitious examples. In the cases of rural development, the ability to manage resources outside of one’s own control, discussed by Austin et al. (2006), is seen as crucial. This

support the individual ability to network, but in these areas the ability for all actors to engage in dialogue is also discussed where the public sector is seen to act as mediators that enable and promote networking between actors to solve community problems.

In the earliest document related to social entrepreneurship, networking is seen as the cornerstone upon which social innovative initiatives are realized (Johannisson & Nilsson, 1989). Stryjan (2006) see social entrepreneurship as the act of building networks that provide the desired resource-mix by converting social capital into economic resources, and vice versa, to achieve the social mission. The idea of *social capital* is applied by multiple authors (Westlund & Gawell, 2012; Stryjan, 2006), and has been presented as being the most important aspect of social entrepreneurship (Westlund & Gawell, 2012). Social capital is explained as a product of both the social networks, as well as the norms and values, that has been established and allow for human resources to be employed by the organization. As most social enterprises are within the civil sector and also do not offer much monetary compensation, social capital (seen as an extension to networking) becomes crucial. The importance of social entrepreneurs to build networks is also stressed by Braunerhjelm & Hamilton (2012), von Friedrichs & Wahlberg (2016), Johannisson (2018), and Ahonen & Persson (2020). Johannisson (2018) present summarize this aspects importance by elaborating that “as a social enterprise usually draws upon resources from all three sectors, each with a unique logic, networking therefore becomes a very delicate thing. Especially in the public sector, a major stakeholder in most social enterprises, and where personal connections are improper” (p. 403). This notion is supported by the view presented by Dacin et al. (2010) of the social entrepreneur being more aware of external resources, circumventing environmental barriers and using creative new ways to create social value. What can be argued is that it is mostly this new way to circumvent barriers and to find external resources to use that is what is often deemed to be “entrepreneurial” with social enterprises, which seems to be supported by the documents of this study.

### **6.3.6 Types of change**

In this section, the different types of social change (presented by Zahra et al., 2009), social constructionist, social engineer or social bricoleur, are discussed in relation to how they are represented in the literature collected.

#### **6.3.6.1 Social bricoleur**

The idea of the *social bricoleur*, understood as opportunity best being best known to and acted upon by local actors, using whatever resources or means one has at hand, is commonly referred to in the Swedish literature on social entrepreneurship. When Gawell et al. (2014) explain societal entrepreneurship, they emphasize the “engagement in and for the community, or more generally society, combined with an entrepreneurial action” (p. 111). This advocate the notion of social entrepreneurship being something that is best understood within the context of which it is manifested and that actual contextual constraints provide the opportunity of social actions specifically. Much of rural development is based on a notion social bricoleurs taking action in response of the changing demography and political landscape which create challenges that are specific to these specific areas. In both papers by Hermelin & Rusten (2018) and von Friedrichs & Lundström (2016), a Nordic perspective is discussed (mostly referring to Sweden, Norway and Finland) since these countries share a similar geographical, demographical and political landscape with the historical development of more sparsely populated areas with an increasingly diminish state presence. What would be interesting for further research would be to see if these similar national contexts have comparable prevalence of the themes explored in this study.

### **6.3.6.2 Social constructionist**

The idea of social entrepreneurship as a force towards a state of equilibria, exemplified by the *social constructionist*, is what most of the examples in these documents represent. The mending of the existing system's imperfections and the supplementation of what is missing is overly represented in the literature collected and are the initiatives that the majority of actors within the private, public and civil sector enact. The idea is largely based in that some structures, good or bad, are not able to support all equally, why extra initiatives and actions are needed to cover needs that remain unaddressed. The work integrative social enterprises represent this category, as well as many of the environmental cases found. These examples are no real threat to other actors in the market (as the case with the *social engineer*). With this said, an interesting dynamic is found in qualitative studies by Kachlami et al. (2020), showing that on a macroeconomic level, social enterprises compete with commercial enterprises, and that the former has the benefit of being somewhat protected by the virtue of their mission, making it hard for a commercial enterprise to publicly outcompete them.

### **6.3.6.3 Social engineer**

A very few organizations work on a basis of radical Schumpeterian change. A few examples could be found related to immigrant advocacy groups. What could be argued though is that many of the authors of the documents try to act as social engineers. Through the large institution of academia (and sometimes media) the author can potentially challenge the perspectives of an entire nation, perspectives that benefit actors that would like to keep them unchallenged. As this is the purpose of the social engineer, two perspectives found extra prevalent will be discussed, those being authors criticism of capitalism and the use of critical thinking (a criticism of dominant gender norms).

First, what is identified by the author are multiple articles discussing and criticizing capitalism in relation to the study of social entrepreneurship. This is shown in some authors underlying disdain towards entrepreneurs and enterprises with for-profit motives. Such things as "capitalism", "growth", "Western" and "profit" are seen as bad in it themselves and need to be counteracted. We have a few examples. Berglund & Wigren-Kristoferson (2012) call out the importance of "how entrepreneurship (more than being an engine in a capitalist society) together with civil action cultivate solidarity in disclosing new worlds". Göransson (2016) propose that inequality within and between nations, regarding development and growth, can be counteracted with innovation and inclusivity. Johannisson (2018) differentiates between people that "practice either egoistic commercial entrepreneurship or altruistic social entrepreneurship" (p. 399).

We can see that sustainable entrepreneurship is to a greater extent set against the idea of classical entrepreneurship. Further feelings-based arguments are presented from Björk et al., (2014) that conclude that "not many would conceivably argue that the path we are on, as a global society, is a sustainable one, neither environmentally nor socially" (p. 14). Schwartz (2012) connects loosely to some "Western ideology" in the what seems to be an attempt to blame the profit seeking behavior of Indian manufacturers, saying that "The Fair Trade paradox shows that the concept is framed in the economic discourse despite what its companies in Sweden want. The economic discourse has its roots in the Western ideology of industrialization but is well adapted by companies in the Indian context." (p. 13)

What is problematic is that more often than not, the definition of entrepreneurship is presented as static and determined. Fors & Lennerfors (2019) contrast sustainable entrepreneurship against conventional entrepreneurship, but avoid the current discussion that is being held about the term, being that entrepreneurship is understood by many as driven singularly by profit motives.

Secondly, multiple authors apply the literature of the academic field of critical thinking, highlighting how the perspective of gender norms lead to social exclusion (Bank & Kanda, 2016). Berglund, K., & Johannisson, B. (2012) pinpoint that “Consequently, critical thinking is required to free us in the Western world context from an oppressive discourse and replace it with a view that acknowledges each and everyone’s enterprising capacity in the contexts they are familiar with.” Further, Lindberg, Forsberg & Karlberg (2015) suggest a conceptual framework towards the implementation of more inclusive gendered social innovations that will help contribute to the eradication of segregating and hierarchical gendered structures in organizations and society.

#### **6.4 Ownership of the idea - make oneself redundant**

One aspect that the author of this study finds to be very relevant, but not discussed in the main works on social entrepreneurship, is the idea of the redundancy of the innovator. Regarding networks, Dacin et al. (2010) hint towards something related to this when explaining the social entrepreneurs’ networks to be based more on a collaboration than competition with resources can be shared between organizations. This is not only showing trust towards potential competitors as well as allies, but it also is based on the idea that it does not really matter if great social innovation is copied by others – this would be the goal. Some similarities is also found as the authors mention social entrepreneur’s predisposition to share the knowledge of their labor (Austin et al., 2006; Dacin et al., 2010), but it is not explicitly stated.

What is found in multiple documents, highlighted by Sundin (2011) is this illustration: “The social entrepreneur does not want to “protect” the idea, but rather the other way around – to invite as many as possible to join in” and “a successful social entrepreneur makes her/himself redundant” (p. 215). This idea of making oneself redundant is found in works as early the document of Johannisson (1990). Furthermore, it is believed that the success of the cause is more important than the success of the business. The organization is believed to continue through resilience, allowing for adaption and ensuring high levels of trust and credibility (Larsson et al., 2016). Kachlami (2017) emphasize that social ventures do sometimes act as “the agent of institutional change creating new framework for market transaction, which can later be exploited by commercial ventures” (p. 1124). Sundin (2009) also state that “social entrepreneurs do not want to “protect” their idea, but rather the other way around – to invite many to share” (p. 36).

## 7. Conclusion

Matching with the global research, discussion in of social entrepreneurship in Sweden has grown substantially during the last 10 years. The study found that a couple of authors has published multiple studies within the area, but that it is fairly many that has contributed to the discussion. A vast majority of the empirical work carried out in the documents has been based on case studies and qualitative data covering the experiences of social entrepreneurs and social enterprises. There is an evident need of more quantitative empirical data collection on the subject in Sweden, as is the case generally of the social entrepreneurship field.

The study identifies and analyze 3 different main themes of social entrepreneurship research within Sweden, with more than half of the documents focusing on a specific type of social entrepreneurship, a quarter exploring multiple types of social entrepreneurship, and about a fifth focusing on social entrepreneurship within a specific sector. In the discussion, a better understanding of social entrepreneurship is explored, related to the literature presented in section 1.1 and the Swedish context in chapter 2. What is also identified is several gaps in the literature that need further exploration.

The aim of this paper has been to find what is written regarding social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context and through this systematic literature review, the author plan to answer the main research question:

*(RQ) How is social entrepreneurship academically applied or research in the Swedish context?*

To more specifically target the main research question and to clarify in what manner the author of the study attempt to answer the question, two additional sub-questions were constructed, which are:

*(SQ1) What themes are found in the application or research of social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context? (SQ2) Are there any gaps to be found in the application or research of social entrepreneurship in the Swedish context?*

The research question will be answered in the following two sections, with the first sub-questions being answered in the first section, and the second sub-question will be answered in the last section.

### 7.1 Social entrepreneurship in Sweden

Through this systematic literature review, the author find that social entrepreneurship is mostly explored within peer-reviewed articles, with the predominant use of a qualitative methodology, mostly through a case study approach. The sectoral perspective that is mainly considered is that of the civil sector, and second most the authors regard all three sectors. The main theme found most prevalent in the documents is that of discussing specific types of social entrepreneurship, represented by more than half of all documents, with the two types of social entrepreneurship, focused on rural development and marginalized groups, dominating the literature. Another important and reoccurring type is that of environment targeted social initiatives that are fairly recent documents written, representing the growing interest of environmental issues. The second largest theme of documents discuss multiple types of social entrepreneurship actions and the remaining documents discuss concern organizations where social entrepreneurship is not found as what defines the entity.

To answer how social entrepreneurship has been academically applied or research in the Swedish, the themes discovered and discussed provide the large part of this answer. There are multiple areas

of interests that has been covered in the discussion. First, the dichotomy of present social impact and future social impact has been discussed, the latter predominantly found in relation to societal and sustainable entrepreneurship. Then the existence of newness has been debated where many examples seem to relate to the ability to manage an operation, not necessarily innovative, in an area and under difficult constraints that has not been successful to others in the past. The newness is here found in an ability to piece together a puzzle through ingenuity and successful networking. Furthermore, the social mission is largely found to be essential, as suggested in the literature review. Regarding the sectoral and structural dynamics, attempt is found to a further extent include the private sector into the concept of social entrepreneurship. The public sector is mainly found as a mediator of the social innovation created by other actors. The civil sector is, as expected, highly represented, but there a need is identified to explore the negative aspects of organizations within this sector, as compare to the private and public sector. Considering the dynamics of all sectors a figure is presented, visualizing the sectoral dynamics of multiple dualities found between the sectors. Furthermore, the intentions and morality of organizations and social entrepreneurs are discussed. Here, the author recognizes an opportunity to further research the ethical shortcomings of social enterprises (suggested by Zahra et al., 2009), as well as further research that challenge Dees (1998) heroic view of the social entrepreneur, further exploring negative emotions that support the social entrepreneur in their pursuit of a social mission. Concerning the value created by through social entrepreneurship, an interesting contextual link is found where the stakeholder that lack an ability to pay is not as prevalent in the Swedish context. Networks are found to be very important, as previous literature suggest, and it is especially important within the civil sector, where monetary means usually can be less used as compensation for individuals' social actions. Reviewing the three different types of change, social bricoleur is found a lot in the documents, social constructions is the overall majority of the cases, and social change through social engineering is not directly found in the documents, but it is suggested that academia and public institutions act as to change the discourse regarding social problems, mainly in the areas of criticizing the economic structure of capitalism and through applying critical theory. Finally, an area that is found to be neglected, but proved to be of importance, is the idea that the social entrepreneur aims to make oneself redundant and that the social innovation is intended to be shared and adapted by society.

## **7.2 Gaps and recommendations for future research**

There is a need for more quantitative research. This may be hard to achieve because data constrictions, but the Nordic countries, in particular, can be seen as a prime research area due to government institutions being fairly cooperative with the national data collected. More authors should explore the systematic literature review as an approach both in the area of entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurship in particular. Furthermore, similar research on different nations should be conducted and a cross country comparison of this research can further give insight into the how context shape social entrepreneurship and the understanding of the phenomenon. This would need an extensive research group, possibly multiple research groups with separate studies on the nations, subsequently followed by an analysis of these studies together. The newness of social enterprises should also be further evaluated as to assess whether or not social enterprises meet the criteria of actually being entrepreneurial. In regards to the dynamics in and between the private, public and civil sector, the author suggests that the multiple dualities between sectors are further explored and more accurately identified. The social engineer should further be explored as this was not found to be represented in the documents. The author presents an idea of academia and public institutions acting as social engineers to an extent, in order to break the traditions of current discourse surrounding social problems. Finally, the aspect of making oneself redundant, should be further



explored, as this is found to be important, but not represented in the literature of the most influential works on social entrepreneurship.

## 8. References

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## Appendix A – Data extraction form

- Author;
- Year of publication;
- Title of document;
- Source of the document;
- Type of document (peer-reviewed article, book chapter, report, thesis, etc.);
- Research methodology used;
- Sector of operation: private, public, civil or multiple.
- Theme of the document

## Appendix B – Degrees of altruism in social entrepreneurship (based on Tan et al., 2003)

