Organic farming and agricultural transitions

Understanding the role of agricultural space in Halland, Sweden

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis aims to investigate the attitudes towards organic farming and how agricultural space is understood among organic farmers in the Swedish region of Halland and then to relate this to the ongoing discussion on multifunctional agricultural transition. The research is based on a field study on nine different organic farms in Halland, where qualitative interviews have been conducted for the creation of the empirical results. Using the theory of planned behavior and the concept of the “good farmer”, the thesis has revealed that the organic farming community in Halland is heterogeneous and different perspectives and attitudes are expressed about organic farming and agriculture. While the farmers are driven by many aspects of organic farming, the attitudes towards agriculture are often in line with traditional productivist ideals highlighting clean fields and high yields, even though many organic farmers have started to question the traditional norms often due to the different conditions met by organic farmers. Due to the various attitudes represented, the range within the multifunctional agricultural spectrum is rather wide were some organic farmers understand agricultural space more in line with productivist ideals while others express attitudes in line with organic farming principles, suggesting a strong multifunctional understanding of agricultural space.

Keywords: Organic farming, multifunctional agriculture, agricultural space, agricultural change, farmers’ attitudes, good farmer, Halland.
# TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................. 4

2. AIM ..................................................................... 5

3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ........................................... 7

3.1. AGRICULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS OF ORGANIC FARMING ............................................. 7
3.2. ATTITUDES AND TRENDS IN ORGANIC FARMING .......... 8
3.3. PRESENT AGRICULTURAL CHANGES ......................... 10

4. ORGANIC FARMING ............................................... 13

4.1. ORGANIC FARMING, A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE .......... 13
4.2. ORGANIC FARMING TODAY ..................................... 14

5. SWEDISH AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT .................. 16

5.1. SWEDISH AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT THE LAST 100 YEARS ................................................................. 16
5.2. AGRICULTURE IN HALLAND ...................................... 17

6. THEORY ............................................................. 19

6.1. A MULTIFUNCTIONAL AGRICULTURAL TRANSITION? .... 19
6.2. FARMERS’ ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS .................. 24
6.2.1. THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR .................... 25
6.2.2. THE CONCEPT OF THE “GOOD FARMER” ............... 26

7. METHOD .............................................................. 29

7.1. UNDERLYING RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY ...................... 29
7.2. THE RESEARCH METHOD ........................................ 30
7.3. THE RESEARCH PROCESS ........................................ 31
7.3.1. SAMPLE ......................................................... 31
7.3.2. THE INTERVIEWS ............................................ 32
7.4. INTERPRETATION .................................................. 34
7.5. ETHICAL ASPECTS ................................................ 34
7.6. THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER .............................. 35
7.7. LIMITATIONS ...................................................... 35
7.8. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

8. RESULTS

8.1. CONVERSION AND CHANGES ALONG TIME
8.1.1. THE ECONOMIC ORIENTED ORGANIC FARMER
8.1.2. THE ENVIRONMENTALLY ORIENTED ORGANIC FARMER
8.1.3. THE RESPONSE TO PUBLIC OPINION
8.1.4. THE INFLUENCE FROM OTHER FARMERS
8.1.5. IMPLICATIONS OF ORGANIC FARMING

8.2. THE CONCEPT OF THE GOOD FARMER
8.2.1. THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN FIELDS
8.2.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF MIXED FIELDS
8.2.3. ORDER AND MANAGEMENT OF THE FARM
8.2.4. THE GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FARM

8.3. ROLE OF (ORGANIC) FARMERS

9. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

9.1. UNDERSTANDING THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND ORGANIC FARMING
9.2. UNDERSTANDING THE ATTITUDES TO FARMING
9.3. A MULTIFUNCTIONAL TRANSITION AND THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURAL SPACE

10. CONCLUSION

11. REFERENCES

11.1. WRITTEN SOURCES
11.2. INTERVIEWS
Agriculture and rural areas are constantly developing and changing. During the last 100 years, agriculture in Sweden has changed dramatically, from low productive subsistence farming, based on small family farms, to a high productive market agriculture (Steen, 2005, p. 93-98). However, this high-productive, almost industrialised agriculture has been questioned, mainly due to environmental concern (Lindholm, 2005, p. 159, Darnhofer et al., 2010) and policies in many countries have come to seek for more sustainable agricultural practices (Lamine, 2011, Burton et al., 2008). Within academia, there is an ongoing discussion about a current transition in agriculture, with Western societies in the middle of such transition. The main purpose for agriculture has, according to this debate, shifted from solely food and fibre production to involve a more diverse set of important aspects related to sustainable agriculture (Wilson, 2007, Kaltoft, 2001).

Usually an agricultural transition is associated with a complete shift in the overall agricultural practises. However, there are weaker and stronger evidence of such shift. As Wilson (2007, p. 242) has summarised from various studies, organic farming is often seen as a strong indicator for a changing behaviour in agriculture, advocating environmental protection, small scale farming, extensification and diversified agriculture. Furthermore the Swedish government uses organic farming as one aspect to reach the country’s environmental targets (Naturvårdsverket, 2014a). Organic farming is accordingly seen as a distinct way of farming with particular advantages making it possible to improve the sustainability of agricultural practises. Therefore it is highly promoted both by the Swedish government and by the European Union. Sweden has put up a target of increasing organic agricultural production to 20 percent of the total agricultural area (Naturvårdsverket, 2014a) with the justification that it will contribute to improve the rural environment and enable the reach of several of the environmental goals of the country. Even though Sweden has experienced an increase in certified organic farmers for many years, there are still much left before the target is reached.

Organic farming is one of the most institutionalised alternative ways of alternative or environmentally friendly farming. The International Foundation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) is an agency that develops principles of organic farming. Organic farming in Sweden is characterised by a strict set of rules and regulations both from the EU and from the dominating private certification body KRAV, both basing their regulations on the IFOAM basic principles of organic farming (see IFOAM, 2015). Furthermore, the organic farmers are entitled to several kinds of financial contributions from the EU, as a way to stimulate the organic production. However, organic farming is more than only a set of rules for farmers to follow to obtain financial support developed by formal institutions. It emerged out of the critique towards the conventional farming methods for being unsustainable. Coming from a grassroots, bottom-up perspective, the organic farming movement have been formed by individuals critical to the industrialised agricultural sector.
2. AIM

The characteristics of agriculture and how agriculture is developing is dependent on many actors. Policy makers, consumer demand and large corporations are all agents having the possibility to change the overall conditions in which agriculture takes place. Many studies on agricultural change have focused on these influences, where top-down, policy based approach, focusing on large powerful actors, are used to understand the situation and the changes taking place (Wilson, 2009). However, equally important to understand is the perspectives of the practisers themselves and to obtain the grassroots perspective of agricultural changes (Wilson, 2009). According to Sutherland (2013), identifying farming norms is important to understand agricultural changes. Similarly, attitudes, identities and land use management have been important component in understanding changes in agriculture (Wilson and Burton, 2015). It is therefore necessary to understand the norms and attitudes dominating in the organic farmer community to understand the influences it has on agricultural change.

The reasons to why some farmers choose to convert to organic farming and why some decide not to have been widely researched (e.g. Darnhofer et al., 2005, Lamine and Bellon 2009). However, there is a lack of academic research on how the attitudes of farmers in general, but organic farmers in particular, are formed in Sweden. Organic farmers are usually understood as a homogenous group when referring to agricultural changes and environmental agricultural progress. Furthermore, the discussion about attitudes towards agriculture and agricultural transitions have had a large focus on the UK, leaving many other places under-researched. To contribute to the theoretical understanding of agricultural transitions, but also to understand the situation outside the UK, there is a need for empirical research also outside the UK.

The overall aim for this thesis is therefore to investigate how organic farming and agricultural space in the Swedish region of Halland is understood and related to an agricultural transition. Organic farming is advocated among policy makers for their environmentally friendly practises. It is therefore important to understand the organic farmers themselves and to investigate what ideals they are striving for. As will be described further down, farmers’ attitudes are often dependent on other actors. As Halland is a region with a relatively high number of farmers, but low number of organic farmers, it is interesting to see how attitudes towards agricultural land are developed in an area with few organic farmers. For a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes and how they are formed, the reasons behind a conversion to organic farming and the attitudes towards agricultural land are to be revealed. This will bring light on the present situation of organic farming in Halland, how organic farming relates to agricultural land and how they adhere to expectations expressed by the EU, the Swedish government and the public opinion.

To reach the aim, the following questions will guide the thesis:
- Why did the farmers chose organic farming methods?
- What attitudes do organic farmers have to agriculture and their own farming practises?
- How can organic farming be understood in the light of the ongoing discussion of agricultural transition?
To clarify the aim it is necessary to define and distinguish between agriculture, agricultural land and agricultural space. First of all, agriculture is here understood as the practise of producing food and fibre through farming and cultivation. This means that other activities taking place in a rural environment is not included in the understanding of agriculture. Neither is forestry, that in one sense can be understood as fibre production, but that differs from agriculture mainly due to forestry’s much longer rotation periods (see Committee on Forestry Research, 1990, p. 15-16). Agricultural land is therefore defined as land used for agricultural production. However, the overall aim is to understand how agricultural space is understood among organic farmers. The concept of agricultural space will be inspired by the concept of multifunctional agricultural and rural spaces which will be presented in detail further down. Wilson (2007, 2009) distinguishes between multifunctional agricultural space and multifunctional rural space. Multifunctional agriculture concerns spaces where food or fibre production takes place in some way, while multifunctional rural space could include all spaces in a rural setting, not necessarily used for food or fibre production. Agricultural spaces thus includes areas and actors being part of the production of food and fibre. The aim for the thesis is therefore to understand how spaces in which agricultural fibre and food production takes place are understood by organic farmers active in these spaces.
3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This section will primarily focus on previous research done on organic farming and agricultural changes. The effects of organic farming will be presented, both from a natural science and a social science point of view. The section will then continue to describe the previous research done on conversion to organic farming and what factors are influencing the farmers. Finally a summary of the research on agricultural changes will be presented but will also be further elaborated on in the theory section.

3.1. Agricultural and environmental implications of organic farming

Numerous studies have been carried out about organic farming, both with social science and with agricultural or natural science perspectives. This section will briefly present the more natural and agricultural dimensions of organic farming. Many natural science papers focus on the environmental implications of organic farming (e.g. how organic farming contributes to more biodiversity (Bengtsson et al., 2005) and the effects on eutrophication (Thomassen et al., 2008)) but also how the production is affected by changing agricultural practises, looking at for example yield (de Ponti et al., 2012).

There are no coherent explanations on how organic farming affects the yields or how it contributes to environmental sustainability. Studies have shown that in general, organic farms have a lower yield than conventional farms (de Ponti, et al. 2012). Comparing various studies on the topic, de Ponti et al. (2012) have shown that for organic farming, yields are on average 80 percent of the conventional farming yields. However, the different sizes on yields are dependent on both the geographic region and the type of crop cultivated. Areas with very high conventional farming yield, close to the theoretical maximum yield for the crop, tend to have larger difference between conventional and organic farming yields. Also tropical regions, where the crops are exposed to many diseases and pests that are difficult to combat with organic farming methods, tend to have larger differences in yields (de Ponti et al. 2012). The evidences of lower yields is often used for criticising organic farming methods. Bergström et al. (2014) argue that due to the lower yields of organic farming, the desired increase in number of organic farmers, advocated by policymakers, would result in the need of more area for agriculture or alternatively an increase in food import. An increase in organic farming would accordingly result in less global food security and an export of agricultural environmental problems to other places would occur.

For the environmental effects of organic farming, there is no complete consensus among the many studies done on the topic. To assess organic farming and its effects on different environmental aspects is very difficult (Nilsson, 2007, p. 7). Just as the yields differ depending on location, so do the environmental impacts of organic farming (Nilsson, 2007, p. 8). As organic farming is removing chemical pesticides and is dependent on a long and diverse crop rotation cycle, the environmental benefits would imply better conditions for the environment. Nevertheless, there are both positive and negative environmental aspects of organic farming depending on what is measured (Tuomisto et al., 2012). Biodiversity, as mentioned by several of the farmers as one of the main environmental advantages of organic farmers (Farmer 1, 2015, Farmer, 2, 2015, Farmer, 9, 2015), is increasing with organic farming, although being very dependent on the
species and areas measured (Bengtsson, et al., 2005). Similarly, the climatic impact of organic farming compared to conventional farming is very much dependent on the type of crop and the place specific characteristics (Cederberg et al., 2011, p. 57). Despite these varied results from environmental and climatic research, Nilsson (2007) has found that organic farming is valid for eleven out of fourteen of the Swedish environmental goals dependent on primary production. Organic farming is therefore promoted as an environmental way of agriculture where the environmental advantages of the farming method is highlighted.

3.2. Attitudes and trends in organic farming

There is a wide range of research done on organic farming from a social science perspective. Research on more overarching trends include market issues for organic producers (Navarrete et al., 2014), policy implications (Stolze and Lampkin, 2009) and a possibility for rural development (Pugliese, 2001). Studies have also focused on a more individual level where reasons for conversion (Danhofer et al., 2005, Lamine and Bellon, 2009) and the trends and attitudes within organic farming (Sutherland, 2013) have been covered. For the purpose of this thesis, the main focus will be on the latter two where a more thorough review of the existing literature relating to conversion to organic farming and individual attitudes will be made.

There are often a number of reasons as to why farmers choose to get involved in organic farming and one farmer might have completely different reasons than another. Padel (2001) argues that the reasons for a farmer’s conversion to organic farming are complex and that it is not only dependent on the individual’s attitudes towards organic farming but also on many external factors such as policy support and market opportunities. Nevertheless, a prime prerequisite for a farmer to consider organic farming is that it must be regarded feasible by the farmer itself (Danhofer et al., 2005). Danhofer et al. (2005) have in their research in Austria found that there are two tendencies within the conversion to organic farming: Farmers either choose to convert to organic farming due to economy or due to ideology. These are classified into two types, either as pragmatic or committed organic farmers.

Pragmatic organic farmers are farmers who regard organic farming as a way to secure income. These farmers are not inspired by the suggested environmental and health aspects of organic farming but see organic farming mostly as a financial tool for their farm business (Danhofer et al., 2005). Likewise, Fairweather (1999) in his research in New Zealand, has found that some organic farmers are driven particularly by the financial advantages of organic farming and they do not exclude conventional farming as an alternative if the financial conditions would change. The committed organic farmers, on the other hand, are driven by the ideological foundation of organic farming, where environmental concern, fairness and ethical consideration are important concepts. For these farmers, the financial aspect of farming is less important (Danhofer et al., 2005). Also Fairweather (1999) identified those farmers that were driven by traditional organic farming ideologies. Moreover, he identified a third type of reasoning among organic farming where farmers were dissatisfied with conventional farming rather than driven by organic farming ideals. While some organic farmers are concerned about the environmental aspects of organic farming, concern has been raised around previously
conventional farmers who are believed to convert only because of the financial gains, not adhering to the original organic farming principles (Lockeretz 2007, p. 7).

Research on organic farming conversion in Sweden has been carried out by Andresen Nylén and Hult (2004) where they, similarly to results from other places in the world, have found that the economic reasons are essential for many converters to organic farming. They argue that the reasons for conversion are very context specific and complex. Corresponding to the findings in both Austria and New Zealand, the Swedish study also highlights reasons such as environmental concern and resource efficiency. Other values too, such as global justice and self-dependency were also found to be important factors. Unlike the previously mentioned studies, Andresen Nylén and Hult (2004) argue that due to the complexity of factors, it is not useful to simplify and categorise the results. Similarly, Danhofer et al. (2010) have criticised the categorisation of organic farmers’ motivation as these studies do not consider the learning process that takes place when the conversion has occurred, possibly influencing the attitudes for organic farming.

As mentioned by Padel (2001), there are both external and individual factors influencing the conversion to organic farming. The policy framework has been shown to be important in increasing the number of organic farmers in a study in Denmark (Daugbjerg and Halpin, 2010). In this case, the state has developed clear regulations and certification for organic products, which have been important for the possibility for producers and consumers to be aware of the standards of the products, creating successful markets. Furthermore, the surrounding social environment has been studied in both Norway (Bjørkhaug and Blekesaune, 2013) and Denmark (Risgaard et al., 2007). Both these studies show the importance of the social environment for farmers to consider organic farming. Risgaard et al. (2007) argue that the local social environment is important and that this can explain the geographic difference in the number of organic farmers in Denmark. A mix of historical aspects, the existence of organic neighbours and motivated advisors impact on the distribution of organic farmers. Also in Norway, Bjørkhaug and Blekesaune (2013) find the importance of neighbours and having organic farmers in the vicinity. Organic farmers affect each other and Bjørkhaug and Blekesaune (2013) talk about a neighbourhood effect that would explain the geographic difference in the number of organic farms in Norway.

Research has not only focused on the conversion itself, but also on how organic farming has come to develop. Morgan and Murdoch (2000) argue that organic farmers have the potential to take control over their own production again. They are suggested to be “knowing agents” where local knowledge is once again important and where farmers themselves are the experts on their farm. However, as organic farming has developed and become more widespread, the heterogeneity of organic farming has been stressed (Darnhofer et al., 2010, Läppe and Van Rensburg, 2011). Läppe and Van Rensburg, (2011) have shown that there are wide differences in a number of factors between early and late adopters of organic farming. Others claim that as more and more conventional farmers have chosen to convert to organic farming and as organic farming has become more mainstream, there is concern that the basic principles of organic farming are lost (Darnhofer et al., 2010). In addition, organic products are reaching a larger range of customers and are often marketed and sold at the major supermarkets. There is however
a fear that organic farms are going the same way as conventional farms, being dominated by intensification, specialisation and with less care for environmental issues. Padel and Lampkin (2007, p. 95) ask themselves whether organic farmers convert out of the right reason and whether the organic farming movement has been weakened due to the institutionalisation of organic farming by the EU and other government agencies. Buck et al. (1997) introduced the conventionalisation hypothesis of organic farming and claim that organic farming is losing its roots and its potential to be a countervailing trend within the agricultural sector. Guntham (2004) means that the organic farmers are following the regulation for organic farming but lack the conviction of its ideals. Additionally, organic farmers are today met by a downward pressure on prices, previously seen within conventional farming. Slight and Cieprka (2007, p. 30) argue that due to external pressure, organic farming has come to be more in line with agri-business. This goes against the original visions of the pioneer organic farmers who saw their way of farming as a distinct alternative to agri-business and the conventional way of farming (Slight and Cieprka, 2007, p. 39). Lamine and Bellon (2009) have also found that organic farmers today are more integrated into conventional agro-food systems where they are characterised by large scale structures, often associated with conventional farming systems. Darnhofer et al. (2010) have taken the idea of a conventionalisation of organic farming to studies on the farm level. They find that there are changes taking place that undermine the principles of organic farming in favour of economic values. At the same time, it is stressed that changes are important for the survival of organic farming. Farmers today face a different reality than what the first organic farmers did. More regulations, better developed market, higher competition, more scientific and practical advice are some of the changes that have occured (Darnhofer et al., 2010). As a consequence, Darnhofer et al. (2010) have identified a wide spectrum of organic farmers, from organic light to those organic farmers going beyond organic, highlighting the heterogeneity of organic farmers.

On the other hand, turning the conventionalisation hypothesis around, Sutherland (2013) has shown that organic farming has had an influence on the attitudes and the performances of conventional farmers who have started to adapt more environmentally friendly practises. She also highlights the attitude changes among both organic and conventional farmers so that symbols associated with organic farming, such as environmental concern and increased biodiversity, have been incorporated into the ideas of a ‘good farmer’. According to her, organic farming has become mainstream but it has also meant that the principles of organic farming have become more accepted among more farmers.

3.3. **Present agricultural changes**

Over the last half century, there have been large changes in agricultural production (Wilson, 2007, p. 3). The industrialisation of agriculture that took off after the Second World War increased the possibility to avoid time and space for agriculture. With the use of chemical pesticides and artificial fertilisers, farmers could increase their production and in some places an overproduction, never seen before, started to emerge (Steen, 2005, p. 95). The agricultural era after the Second World War is often called a productivist era during which agriculture became industrialised and where production maximisation and intensification were key components (Wilson, 2007, p. 3).
When the externalities of this highly productive agriculture became visible, with environmental degradation as a particularly negative consequence, there was a change in how agriculture was regarded, especially among policy makers. Contrary to the previous understanding of infinite resources, among some, there is now a tendency for an understanding of a finite world, where resources can actually run out (Wästfelt, 2012, p. 85) and policy documents highlight how agriculture is related to new values (Potter and Tilsey, 2005). Much of the research on these changes have been characterised by a top-down perspective (Wilson, 2009). Marsden (2013) argues that agricultural systems are dependent on these top-down approaches. The way policies are formulated and the way governance of agriculture are constructed have a large influence on how agriculture develops. For agriculture to be developed in the desired direction, Marsden (2012) means that policies have to be specific to place and context as agriculture cannot be separated from the culture or ecology that is specific to a location. The research has consequently shown the importance of policies and returned to an understanding of the importance of place in understanding and changing agriculture. Moreover, market demands have been seen as a driving force for agricultural change. In light of the health and environmental trend experienced in many places, the demand for alternative agricultural products, mainly organic products and locally produced food have increased dramatically ( Lockerets, 2007, p. 4). A growing demand increases prices which makes it more prosperous to invest in alternative and environmentally friendly production.

There is also research done with a more bottom-up approach where trends in farmers’ perceptions and attitudes have been studied. Wästfelt (2004, p. 66) means that physical changes in the landscape are preceded by changes in attitudes and values of land use. There is a trend that attitudes among farmers have been influenced by the suspicion towards artificial input and the industrial intensification in agriculture. Farmers accordingly change their way of farming to include less chemical pesticides and artificial fertilisers, often as a result of the influence of organic farmers (Sutherland, 2013). This pattern has been seen in Sweden as well where the usage of pesticides has decreased steadily during the last 20 years, even though there are large regional differences in this trend (SCB, 2011).

Furthermore, Granvik et al. (2012) have found that the policy reforms that have taken place within the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have influenced the attitudes of the farmers. Diversity in farming practises is favoured among many farmers. Others have on the other hand found that even though the policy framework is changing to favour methods for conservation and environmental care, the attitudes of the farmers have not changed in any significant way (Burton et al., 2008). In an UK context, many of the voluntary attempts to change farming behaviour have had little success, a failure explained by economic or structural factors. However, as Burton (2004a) claims, the failure is also due to loss of social and cultural rewards. Often, the environmental schemes promoted by the EU for improving the environment do not allow farmers to show their farming skills as many of these schemes promote non-productivist methods. Burton et al. (2008) can therefore show that the attitudes of the farmers do not always correspond and change in accordance with the intentions of the policymakers.

Within the research of agricultural changes, there has been a lot focus on the changes based on compliance with regulations. In studies of organic farming, the conversion is
often seen in the light of the legal requirements for organic farming (Lamine and Bellon, 2009). Lamine and Bellon (2009) have shown that there are different degrees of both organic and conventional farming but highlight the importance of changes that occur on a farmer level over time. Individual development and changes do not cease only because the farmer has fulfilled certain pre-decided requirements. Attitudes and perceptions of agriculture are constantly changing also after the initial legal change has taken place (Lamine and Bellon, 2009). Many times, it is not until the legal conversion has taken place that many farmers really understand what organic farming implies. Consequently, there are farmers who are not prepared for the new kind of practices and therefore go back to conventional farming methods (Sahm et al., 2013).

The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is influential for the Swedish agricultural development. Within the EU member states, the EU has been a strong actor in driving rural and agricultural change. Agriculture and rural development is the largest budget post in EU and accounts for approximately 40 percent of the total EU budget (Sveriges Riksdag, EU-upplysningen, 2015). From being purely focused on maximising agricultural production in the 1960s and 1970s, CAP has come to look at and promote the whole rural community to ensure environmental advantages and a living rural society together with agricultural production. Consequently CAP has gone from a sectorial focus (i.e. focus on the agricultural sector) to a more territorial focus where the rural as a whole is regarded as an important target for development and where agriculture plays an important but not exclusive role (Granvik et al., 2012). This has resulted in a step away from a productivistic policy framework towards a more multifunctional policy framework. A development that will be discussed in more detail further on in this thesis.
4. ORGANIC FARMING

To understand organic farming’s role in the agricultural space and agricultural change it is vital to have a thorough understanding of the foundation of organic farming as well as how organic farming has come to develop. In this section a historic background to the roots of organic farming will be given and an explanation in how organic farming has come to be framed today.

4.1. Organic farming, a historic perspective

The origins of what can be called an organic farming movement emerged during the 1920s and 1930s as a counteraction to the more and more industrialised agricultural system that was about to emerge (Lindholm, 2005). A considerable part of the agricultural sector in many Western countries was by then transformed and the dependence on high technological machinery and large amount of external input was increased (Lindholm, 2005 p. 162). For the early pioneers of organic farming, a revulsion to use mineral fertilisers and chemical pesticides and herbicides was one of their main motivations (Kirchmann et al., 2014). According to Vogt (2007, p. 9) the organic movement was first noted by a larger public after World War I when both soil fertility and food quality decreased. Organic farming could then offer a science based alternative to industrialised agriculture.

The organic farming movement developed around the same time both in Germany and the UK but there are two larger movements that are said to have influenced the current organic agricultural practises. Early in the 20th century ‘natural farming’ emerged, promoting agriculture without artificial fertilisers and where composting and organic soil were important elements. This was to some extent a science based alternative to the industrialised conventional agriculture. The early pioneers regarded this way of living as a holistic concept including a vegetarian diet and in the beginning also a rejection of animal farming (Vogt, 2007). This was later abandoned and instead agriculture based on natural processes was advocated. The other influential movement emerged in the 1920s and is called biodynamic agriculture. This is a more spiritual inspired agriculture where cosmic and earthly powers are important in the production of healthy food. Important here is the fact that no external input is accepted but everything needed for the farm is to be created on the farm. The farm is regarded as a living organism where each part of the farm is seen as an organ contributing to the functions of the whole organism (Vogt, 2007).

Today’s organic farming has obtained influences from both of these major trends but there are still examples of pure biodynamic farming. These farms are usually driven on a smaller scale, though many of these farmers are affiliated through the Swedish Demeter organisation. The pure biodynamic farmers still regard the farm as an organism and have regulations stretching further than institutionalised organic farming (Svenska Demeterförbundet, 2015). However, it is the concept of ‘organic farming’ that has come to be the most widespread and which is institutionalised both on a national and an international level.
4.2. Organic farming today

There is still today criticism of the intensive agriculture based on industrial production principles and its effects on natural resource degradation and biodiversity (Lamine, 2011). Even though biodynamic farming and other kind of alternative farming is present, it is organic farming that has come to be the dominating alternative way of farming in the Western world. Organic farming has been institutionalised into powerful governing bodies such as the EU where standards, rules and policies are developed. Being a very influential body for organic farming policies, the International Foundation for Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) has a leading role in developing principles for organic farming. These principles are followed by many governing bodies when developing rules and regulations. The IFOAM principles of organic farming consists of principles of: fairness, ecology, health and care and represents the advantages that organic farming should and could bring to the world through agriculture (IFOAM, 2015). There is no complete consensus on how to view and understand organic farming though. Wilson (2001) expresses that in some places farming has been organic due to economic reasons for thousands of years. Thus implying that organic farming is emerging from agricultural traditions long back in time. Similarly Kaltoft (2001) express how organic farming in some cases are pre-modern in the sense that organic farmers are bound by pre-modern traditions and that the organic movement is longing and striving for the past. However the institutionalised organic agriculture is regarded as a technical solution for environmental problems and as a way for individuals to choose a specific lifestyle. Slight and Cierpka (2007, p. 32) summarise this well and explain how organic farming can be understood as a mixture of ancient principles and practices from recent scientific discoveries.

The interest for organic farming on an EU-level emerged during the 1980s (Padel and Lampkin, 2007, p. 93). Today organic farming is part of strategies for ensuring that agricultural space is not only contributing to food production but also enables other desired outcomes of agriculture (Jordbruksverket, 2014a, European Commission 2014b). Principles of organic farming in Sweden are framed on an EU level through two regulations, one from the European Commission and one from the European Council. These are based on the principles developed by IFOAM. The EU principles stress the use of organic farming for environmental goods, animal care and rural development but also the possibility for organic farming to serve a growing market of environmentally friendly products (European Council, 2007). Organic farmers in Sweden can be certified according to EU standards, where they receive an EU-label to prove their organic certification. However, there is also a national, private certification called KRAV which is based on EU standards but with some tougher rules on animal care, the environment and social responsibility.

In Sweden, as in many other places in Europe, the organic farming sector has increased last years and the proportion of organic farmers is increasing, even though the increase has slowed down recently. Sweden is among the countries with a high proportion of organic farmers and had in 2013 around 15 percent organic farmers, compared to 5.4 percent in EU in general (European Comission, 2013b, Jordbruksverket, 2014b). The growth in the EU is spatially different with some European regions having very small increase while other regions have seen an explosion in number of organic farmers. The
Increase is explained as a combination of consumer demand, policy support and economic problems in conventional farming (Padel and Lumpkin, 2007). There is also an increase in public concern of the environment and food safety that has affected the willingness for conversion to organic farming. Furthermore, one has seen a personal concern among farmers for their own health, which is influencing farmers’ efforts to change from conventional to organic farming (Locke retz, 2007). Organic farming is supported by the government as it is believed to contribute to environmental and climatic gains, animal health, and rural development (Regeringskansliet, 2015, p.326). As within the European countries, there are regional differences in the proportion of organic farmers also within Sweden. The Swedish Board of Agriculture has proposed a target to increase the amount of organic farmers to correspond to 20 percent of the total number of farms in Sweden (Wallander et al., p. 116-117). While some regions have already reached this target and some, such as Värmland and Jämtland, have a very high proportion of organically farmed land, other regions are lagging far behind. Skåne, Halland and Blekinge are the southernmost regions in Sweden, and are the regions with the smallest proportion of organic farmers (Naturvårdsverket, 2014a).

Organic farming is generally seen as environmentally sound among policy makers (Regeringskansliet, 2015, p. 326), and the EU has created regulations that aim at including environmental considerations in farming. As organic farming is seen as a way to increase environmental consideration within agriculture, organic farming is included in a number of rural development programmes (Darnhofer, et al. 2005, Regeringskansliet, 2015, p. 326). To stimulate an increase and a conversion to organic production, but also to pay for the loss of production due to organic farming practices, it is possible to obtain money when converting and organic farmers obtain financial contribution for their organic production. This money is seen as a way to promote environmentally friendly agriculture but also to mitigate the risks associated with organic farming (Regeringskansliet. 2015, p. 326, Darnhofer et al., 2005).

Whether it is sustainable to rely on subsidies in the long run is questioned by some authors who mean that a dependency culture is created where the environmental returns are dependent on state subsidies (Granvik, et al., 2012). However, with the organic product certification, organic farmers are able to market their products in a more efficient way. By having a uniform certification standard, consumers can easily understand what the products stand for (Sutherland et al., 2012). This is one of the larger difference compared to conventional farmers within other environmental programs as they do not have the opportunity to market their product in any different way than regular conventional farmers. Within the larger agri-business market, organic farming can be seen as a niche market with premium quality products and higher prices contributing to the financial possibilities of organic farming (Rosin and Campbell, 2009). De Ponti et al. (2012) mean that if organic farming is to become successful, it has to be economically competitive with conventional farming. However, Ahnström (2009, p. 52) argues that one cannot regard organic farmers and conventional farmers as two separate types of farmers. Even though some farmers are entitled to be certified for their organic farming and therefore need to follow a certain set of regulations, farmers are better understood as a continuum, where aspects are overlapping between conventional and organic farmers. Consequently, following this reasoning, one cannot talk about one type of organic farmers but have to be aware of the diversity within the organic farming community.
5. SWEDISH AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

To understand development and present changes one have to understand the historic background that has laid the foundation to how present day agriculture and rural areas are functioning. In this section I will present a brief historic background of the Swedish agriculture and explain the historic and current characteristics of the agriculture in Halland, the region which is the site of this study.

5.1. Swedish agricultural development the last 100 years

In the Swedish industrial revolution, agriculture was an intertwined part of the transformation. With the industrial revolution, the agricultural sector was potentiated as machinery and other tools were used in the agricultural production. This lead to a surplus of farmers who left the countryside and ended up in cities working in the factories (Lindholm, 2005, p. 162). In the beginning of the 20th century, Swedish agriculture was very dependent on the surrounding environment, it was rather low productive and was mainly set up of family farms. During this period, approximately 75 percent of the Swedish population worked in the agricultural sector (Steen, 2005, p. 93-94). Large developments occurred in the agricultural sector during this time, the crop sequence was improved and plant breeding was intensified. The introduction of artificial fertilisers had also a big impact on the agricultural production (Steen, 2005, p. 94). A more market oriented agricultural sector was emerging in the 1920s and 1930s when tractors and other machines made the work less labour intensive, making it possible to produce more food than what was consumed within the family. Higher yields, intensification and specialisation are important concepts in the mid-20th century Swedish agriculture where market orientation was a key objective for the agricultural sector. This industrialisation of the agricultural sector also meant an increase in the need of external input (Lindholm, 2005, p. 162) and around 1950, artificial fertilisers were being widely used (Björklund et al., 2009, p. 82). The increase in land used for agricultural production increased until the 1920s, after that the high production meant that the increased amount of food needed could be produced on the same or smaller area (Björklund et al., 2009, p. 82). Another change that occurred with the use of artificial fertilisers was that farms could be specialised in a specific product and the need for both animals and crops on the farm disappeared. This resulted in a high concentration of animal production in the south of Sweden while the crops for animal feed were concentrated to the middle part of Sweden. A farm could therefore not supply the complete food supply needed for a family but was to contribute to the national or international food supply instead (Björklund et al., 2009, p. 86-87).

From the 1980s, the public opinion had become more aware of the environmental problems associated with agricultural production and environmental protection became important within agricultural and rural policies. The environmental risks with agriculture had been neglected for years and by this time the negative consequences had started to become visible. Measures to decrease the negative impacts of agriculture began and was included in many policies. Nevertheless, still today, the unsustainability of agriculture is highlighted and Marsden (2013) means that present conventional agricultural practices are not socially or environmentally sustainable.
5.2. Agriculture in Halland

In this section a brief presentation of the region in which the organic farmers in this study operate will be given. It will both give an explanation of the natural conditions and briefly describe the agricultural development and the present situation for agriculture in the region.

Halland is located in the south-western parts of Sweden, bordering the regions of Västra Götaland in the north, Småland in the east, Skåne in the south and the sea Kattegatt in the west (see fig. 1). The region has a coastal climate with mild winters and much precipitation all year around (SMHI, 2014). There are only small differences of the climate between north and south, instead the largest climatic differences can be found between the west and east with coastal lowlands in the west and higher altitudes further east. The landscape can be divided into three parts. The coastal part, which is characterised and dominated by plants planted to keep the sand in place. The cultivated plains that are dominated by farmland and cultivated land. The further east and north in the region, the more dominating is the forested areas, characterised by forests, mires and heather moorland. It is within the plains that most farms are located (Olsson, 2015) and it is also here most of the organic farmers in this study are found.

Halland has a long history of family farming and has for decades had a larger proportion of farmers than the Sweden in general (Wiking-Faria, 1993, p. 84). Even though most farms are located on the low laying plains, most farms have tended to be smaller than farms in other similar areas in Sweden. In 2012, 2.3 percent of the total regional population was employed in agriculture, compared to 1.26 percent in Sweden in general (SCB, 2014, p. 142).

Looking at the agricultural production in Halland, dairy farms, beef production and pig farms are common in the region. The most produced farmed crops are haying and ley, primarily used to feed the livestock and other animals. Grains, potatoes, oil plants (rapeseed), sugar beet, peas and beans are other crops found on the Halland countryside (SCB, 2014). Still most of the farmland is cultivated in a conventional way. Only 7.7 percent of the total agricultural crop production in Halland was certified for organic production in 2013, compared to 14.6 percent in Sweden in general, but the proportion of land cultivated organically is slowly growing in the region (Naturvårdsverket, 2014b). The organic dairy production is following the same pattern, being far below the average of Sweden. 12.7 percent of the Swedish dairy production was organic, but only 4.8 percent in Halland in 2013. Moreover, in contrast to the rest of Sweden, the amount is decreasing (Naturvårdsverket, 2014c). Also other type of animal production is far below the average in Sweden, the only part where Halland shows a better record is within the production of lamb meat where Halland has a production of organic lamb meat higher than average (Naturvårdsverket, 2014d).
Fig. 1. Map of southern Sweden. The region of Halland is here found within the red line on the map. (Source: Google maps, 2015).
6. THEORY

The thesis will have the political and academic debate of rural and agricultural transitions and in what direction Western agriculture is moving, as an overall framework. Organic farming will then be put in the context of this ongoing debate about the role of agricultural spaces and the debate will be used to situate the context in which organic farming operates.

This section will present the theories used to understand organic farming and their relation to the agricultural space by first introducing the concept of multifunctional agriculture and agricultural transition and further down present the two theories used for analysing attitudes and behaviour of the organic farmers.

6.1. A multifunctional agricultural transition?

The thesis will take as departure point the ongoing discussion about rural and agricultural change, transformation and transitions. Within rural geography and agricultural studies there is currently a discussion about how to understand and interpret the present rural and agricultural development and what trajectories are dominating the changes of today’s agriculture. The absolute majority of agricultural land and agricultural production is located in rural areas and consequently the majority of the world’s food and fibre are produced here (Woods, 2011, p. 1). This has of course an influence on rural areas as the landscape is dominated by agricultural production. In rural development strategies, agriculture has often a major role to play. Granvik et al. (2012) express how the focus within EU rural development strategies has been largely directed towards farmers and the agricultural sector, furthermore, the absolute majority of the financial rural development support is directed towards farmers (Granvik et al., 2012). Therefore agricultural changes do not only have large roles for agriculture itself, but also for the rural areas in which agriculture takes place.

A change to a more sustainable agriculture and rural space has been on the agenda within the CAP (European Commission, 2013a) and also from the Swedish government for a long time now (Jordbruksverket, 2015). Within academia, agricultural changes and transitions can be understood through a transition theory framework. Geels (2002) and Kemp et al. (2001) have described how transitions within different technological regimes take place. It is argued that changes within a sector and of societal technological elements normally are path dependent and are formed within certain trajectories that characterises the existing regime in which they operate (Geels, 2002). These regimes are made up of rules of production and technology in which a specific sector operates. They are built up by the relationship between different actors and sectorial rules. Science, technology, routines, practises, norms and values all make up a particular regime (Kemp et al., 2001, p. 272-273) and in the current agri-food regime, different actors in the supply chain are together part of upholding the dominant agricultural regime (Marsden, 2013). It is the relationship between these aspects that creates stability of a particular regime and in which trajectories for changes and innovations are normally shaped (Geels, 2002). Even
though development occurs within the trajectories of a regime, exogenous factors might affect a regime, making the regime unstable (Geels, 2002). What usually has the potential to change a regime is niche innovations that change and question the perception of the dominant regime. These niche innovations are developed outside the influence of the dominant regime, usually protected by subsidies or state research programs (Kemp et al., 2001, p. 275). In order for a regime to change, the niches must be supported by both entrepreneurs and formal institutions (Kemp et al., 2001, p. 276). However, it is not uncommon that niches with potential of changing a dominant regime instead are incorporated into the regime, losing its potential for contributing to any transitional change (Marsden, 2013). Marsden (2013) means that for a fully developed transition, both practises and values of the involved actors must be changed. Within the agri-food regime, Marsden (2013) has identified two specifically important components influencing the regime. The first being space, because even though agriculture is affected by global actors, agriculture is still bound to the land for its production. The second being government and formal institutions. Agriculture has for long and is still dependent on governmental regulations.

For the reason mentioned by Marsden (2013) above, research about agricultural changes and transitions has often had a policy perspective. There has been a large focus on macro-scale explanations, often using structural, political economy perspectives where top-down approaches are important explanatory factors (Wilson and Burton, 2015 see also e.g. Bjørkhaug and Blekesaune, 2013, Marsden and Sonnino, 2008). However, looking at the grassroots level and at the individual actors can also be useful for understanding changes in agriculture and rural areas. Some researches mean that it is first when one can see changes in attitudes at an individual farmer level that a transition can be completely understood (Burton and Wilson, 2006). Focusing on individual actors and their spatial and temporal relation can be useful to complement the otherwise very structural driven analysis of changes (see Wilson and Burton, 2015).

For the purpose of my thesis the discussion about a multifunctional transition will be used. To fully understand multifunctional agriculture a background to how the concept has emerged will here be given and later how it has come to be theorised and conceptualised by mainly Wilson (2007, 2009). Rural space and agriculture has for long been developed hand in hand and agriculture has had a large influence in how whole rural areas have developed. Woods (2011, p. 30) argues that rural spaces are not static but formed and changed by the creation of images and discourses. Rural spaces are therefore not the same everywhere. While the rural has been associated with images of wilderness or been portrayed as an idyllic place, the introduction of capitalist thinking into agriculture was intensified after World War Two, when the main and almost the sole purpose of rural area was to produce food and fibre to the nation (Woods, 2011, p. 67). Many countries had before the Second World War suffered from hunger and lack of food for parts of their population. Emphasising the importance for rural areas to produce food was a way to ensure national food sovereignty (Wilson, 2007, p. 80).

This resulted in a period of what has been called productivist agriculture and productivist rural space. A productivist agriculture is characterised by an intensification of agriculture, with high yields and intensive production. It is associated with industrialised and expansionist agriculture where high and increased production was the main objective.
This productivist agriculture is supported by governmental agencies to uphold national food sovereignty, but also other agencies related to agricultural production (Lowe et al. 1993). Wilson (2007, p. 80) relates a productivist agriculture to Fordism, where food and fibre production was the main and only purpose of agriculture. As summarised by Woods (2011, p. 68-69) after Ilbery and Bowler (1998), there are three main characteristics of a productivist agriculture. Firstly, intensification was widespread as external inputs and technology could replace human labour, making production cheaper. Secondly, agriculture was characterised by concentration, meaning that farmers were fewer but farms were larger. Thirdly, specialisation became important, where a farm specialised on a few or a single crop. Thus, through an industrialised agriculture the production of large quantities of food were the main objective. Burton (2004a) has also argued that the productivist agriculture was incorporated into the identities of farmers who adopted ideals of production maximisation and industrialised aspects as visual proof of good farming. Not only farmers, but the whole countryside was affected and involved in this productivist discourse, and the countryside became synonymous with intensive food production (Woods, 2011, p. 68).

Using a European perspective, the era of agricultural productivism is argued to have ended around 1985 when policy documents argued for an abandonment of facets important for a productivist agriculture (Wilson, 2007, p. 88). Agriculture had been synonymous with production maximisation and state support for food production. This however created a surplus on many agricultural products and people started to question the focus on production maximisation and its consequences for the environment, animal welfare, but also how economically sustainable the state financed overproduction was (Woods, 2011, p. 79). In the 1980s agriculture started to become decoupled from the food production oriented state support (Kvakkestad et al., 2015). Policy makers on a national and international level started to advocate a change in the perception of agriculture and rural spaces where attention should be paid to both agriculture and environment. EU, in the Cork declaration in 1996, declared how the European Commission stressed a multifunctional agriculture with multiple roles for agriculture (Gorman et al., 2001). As a result, since the 1990s, there has been a discussion within rural and agricultural studies on how to interpret the ongoing changes in agricultural and rural space and whether this change is a move away from intensification and focus on yield maximisation (Wilson and Burton, 2015).

A concept that developed during the 1980s and 1990s is post-productivist agriculture and rural spaces. The term implies rural and agricultural practises after the productivist era and highlights the declining role of food and fibre production in agricultural practises in favour for environmental concern (Evans et al., 2002). There is not really any coherent definition of the proposed post-productionist agriculture but Ilbery and Kneafsey (1998) emphasise the smaller focus on quantity and larger focus on quality in agriculture at the same time as an increase focus on environmental issues could be seen (Evans et al., 2002). Extensification of agriculture, on-farm diversion and income diversion are other components important for this suggested turn in agriculture (Evans et al., 2002). With a post-productivist agriculture, the previous support for agricultural food production has shifted to support for agricultural and environmental management (Mather et al., 2006). More simply, post-productivism can also be understood as the contrary to productionist agriculture and rural space, namely representing extensification, dispersal and
The concept of post-productivist agriculture and rural spaces has been challenged and criticised for not being applicable to the complex processes going on within agriculture (Evans et al., 2002, Wilson, 2007). According to Wilson (2007), structural perspectives have been too dominating when arguing for a post-productivist agriculture and policy and institutional discourses have obtained too much focus. Hence, individual and actor perspectives have been rather neglected in the research about post-productivism (Wilson, 2007, p. 85, Wilson, 2009). Only looking at policy discourses might show a post-productionist transition, but Wilson (2009) claims that in order to understand agricultural changes and how they are taking form, a farm perspective can give vital comprehension of the changes. Wilson (2001) argues that changes cannot be understood unless endogenous factors, such as changing attitudes and perceptions are included. Similarly Burton (2004a) and Burton and Wilson (2006) have argued for how actors’ attitudes, together with exogenous factors contribute to a changing agriculture. Being further theorised and problematized, the concept of post-productivity has been criticised and is not valid to explain the general present state in agricultural areas (Wilson, 2007). Wilson (2007) argued that agricultural transitions are not temporarily linear, as suggested by the notion of post-productivism, neither is it geographically generalizable. Instead Wilson (2007) suggests the concept of multifunctional agriculture to better describe the current agricultural changes.

Previously not being very well theorised, multifunctional agriculture has many definitions depending on who is defining it (Wilson, 2007, p. 185). What has contributed to the multiple definitions of the concept has been the simultaneous development within both policymaking context and academia, meaning that it was just until recently that the concept started to become incorporated into the academic debate (Wilson, 2007, p. 182). From a policy maker’s point of view, multifunctional agriculture is mainly a goal for agriculture to have multiple functions, to not only focus on producing food but also to strive for environmental awareness and living rural areas. Already in the Cork declaration, multifunctional agriculture was mentioned as a goal within EU (Gorman et al., 2001). Today, multifunctional agriculture is not literally mentioned within agricultural EU policies, but the ideas of an agriculture with multifunctional functions are very much present (European Commission, 2014a). Also OECD has proposed multifunctional agriculture. They understand multifunctional agriculture mainly from an economic point of view where agriculture has multiple economic objectives to contribute to societal progress. These objectives include food production, land conservation, sustainability, landscape structure and economic vibrant rural areas (OECD, 2001).

Marsden and Sonnino (2008) have identified three competing interpretations of the multifunctional agriculture concept based on different understanding of agricultural
processes. Under the agro-industrial paradigm, where agricultural changes are understood as being dependent on farmers’ surviving strategies, multifunctional agriculture is seen as a way for farmers to enhance their economic returns. Under the second, post-productivist paradigm, there is a more land-based approach relating to different functions of rural land. Multifunctional agriculture is in this case seen as a diversification of ideals for rural land where several different values are important. In the third way of understanding multifunctional agriculture, as suggested by Marsden and Sonnino (2008), emerging from a rural development paradigm, multifunctional agriculture is seen as a strategy for sustainable rural development.

Wilson (2007) has conceptualised multifunctional agriculture to use it as a concept to understand agricultural and rural changes. Multifunctional agriculture, in contrast to the concept of the productivist/post-productivist transition, better describe the different aspects of agricultural change (Wilson, 2007). Wilson, (2007, p. 214) means that the concept of multifunctional agriculture should be understood as the processes of agriculture within a spectrum of, on the one side a productivist agriculture and the other a non-productivist rural space (the concept of post-productivism is instead referred to as non-productionist, to avoid the understanding of something coming after productivism (Wilson, 2007)) (see fig.2). Wilson (2007, 2009) distinguishes between multifunctional rurality and multifunctional agriculture, the latter referring to food or fibre production in some way, while rural multifunctionality can include aspects outside agricultural production. While the spectrum close to productivist agriculture tend towards intense farming associated with what is described above about productivist agriculture, the non-productivist side of the spectrum tend towards among other aspects; environmental concern, local embeddedness, short food chains, low intensity farming and high degree of diversification (Wilson, 2007, p. 215). Agriculture tending towards the non-productivist side, i.e. strongly multifunctional, tend to have multiple functions and is not solely focused on food production. Practises that has characterised agriculture since the Second World War is reluctantly used within a strong multifunctional agriculture and instead the environment plays a big role (Wilson, 2009). However, an action or though related to farming and agricultural space is almost always influenced by both non-productivism and productivism (Burton and Wilson, 2006), therefore a spectrum is, according to Wilson (2007, p. 216), most appropriate for understanding agriculture and agricultural transitions.

The use of multifunctional agriculture is thus better for capturing the multifaceted aspects of agricultural change. Changes can occur at different scales, i.e. global scale, national scale, regional scale, rural community scale and farm scale. The closer to the farm level, the more direct expressions will multifunctional agricultural take (Wilson, 2009). Wilson (2009) argues for multifunctional agriculture as a territorial expression where different actors implement multifunctional agriculture dependent on the spatial conditions. Within the concept of multifunctional transitions, agriculture does not go from one regime to another, agricultural practises should instead be regarded as temporally and spatially heterogeneous, where both productivist and non-productivist expressions exist simultaneously (Wilson, 2007).
Furthermore, Wilson (2008) argues that it is possible, not only to see the spatial and temporal development within agriculture through the multifunctional agricultural spectrum but also to see how different groups of actors are placed differently along the spectrum. Wilson (2008) has found that multifunctional agricultural transitions on a farm level is path dependent and bounded by certain transition corridors in which changes can occur. Decisions on a farm level is thus bounded by productivist and non-productivist thought and actions, therefore different actors have different possibilities for multifunctional transitions.

To further understand agricultural transitions, the concept of neo-productivist spaces has been introduced. Still within a framework of multifunctional agricultural transitions, neo-productivist spaces are understood, from a spatial-agency perspective, as areas that have previously transformed towards more non-productivist practises but that for external or internal reasons reverted back and transform practises towards weaker multifunctional agriculture (Wilson and Burton, 2015). Neo-productivist spaces can therefore be used to understand the actions of some farmers and could be related to the conventionalisation debate within organic farming, where it is proposed that organic farming is changing towards agricultural practises more in line with conventional agriculture.

6.2. Farmers’ attitudes and perceptions

To understand organic farmers, their behaviours, attitudes and perceptions, I will use a framework based on two slightly varied theories; the theory of planned behaviour developed by Icek Ajzen and the theory of forms of capital developed by Pierre Bourdieu
for the concept of the good farmer. Both frameworks deal with farmers’ attitudes but using slightly varied parameters and explanations.

6.2.1. Theory of planned behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour is developed as a social psychology theory that aims to explain intentions and behaviours based on peoples’ perceptions and attitudes towards aspects of a specific behaviour. The theory investigates the intention and the understood possibility for an individual to perform the action and is consequently not a theory to assess the actual possibility for the behaviour (Ajzen, 2005, p. 118). The theory is valid in cases where developments of intentions and behaviours are to be understood and it has come to be used in various disciplines (Ajzen, 2005, p. 119). It is frequently used for predicting behaviour but its primary objective is to understand behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

The theory has been used for understanding farmers’ behaviour in relation to various outcomes (Price and Leviston, 2014, Borges et al., 2014, Läpple and Kelley, 2013, Sutherland 2010, Sutherland, 2011). This has mostly been done through a quantitative method, however Sutherland (2010, 2011) has shown that the theory is useful also for qualitative studies and particularly to find the multiple reasons for decision-making among farmers. Ajzen (2005) claims that behaviours are dependent on intentions of the individual actor. These intentions are however developed through three elements:

**Attitudes towards the behaviour:** This is the personal attitude and reasoning around the behaviour (in this case organic farming). The individual actor’s attitudes and beliefs about how a certain behaviour will result in different outcomes is important for how the actor will behave. A behaviour is thus evaluated according to different outcomes and the attitudes are dependent on how the actor understands the outcomes and whether he/she thinks the behaviour can lead to desirable outcomes or not (Ajzen, 2005, p. 123).

**Subjective norms:** Relating to the surrounding social environment, intentions are affected by how the actors understand the attitudes of other individuals or groups. Whether the individual believes that actors or groups, important for the actor itself, approve or disapprove of the behaviour will affect how the intentions are formed. Social pressure and influence is thus influencing the individual behaviour (Ajzen, 2005, p. 124). Borges et al. (2014) mention how friends and neighbours, but also other actors are important for the farmer and for how the subjective norm is formed. Different actors have different strength in affecting the farmer and belief of negative attitude among important actors can impede a behaviour while positive attitudes might be encouraging for the farmer (Borges et al., 2014, Burton, 2004b).

**Perceived behavioural control:** The influence of the resources the actor is believed to have is the third element that influence intentions and behaviour. Based on previous personal experience, but also on secondary sources from other actors, the understanding and belief of how easily the behaviour can be performed and whether there are factors facilitating or impeding the behaviour influences the intention. Perceived control is therefore the highest if the actor feels that it has the means to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 2005, p. 125).
To fully understand a behaviour, it is thus not sufficient to look at the intentions of an actor but to understand why people hold these specific attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2005, p. 123). However, all three elements do not always have similar importance. Depending on the individual farmer, the behaviour might be influenced primarily by one or two of the element, just as all three elements might be important for the behaviour (Sutherland, 2010). However, going even one step further in the origins of a behaviour, Ajzen (2005, p. 134) also admits that background factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, religion etc. can influence how attitudes, subjective norms and behavioural control are understood. Despite the inclusion of these background factors, the theory is focused primarily on the individual actor and the attitudes and understandings he or she possesses. As a consequence, the theory has received criticism for not accounting for macro-scale influences when explaining behaviour (Sutherland, 2010). Furthermore, it is also criticised for being too simplistic, especially in relation to how cultural norms are developed and influence behaviour (Sutherland, 2010). In her use of the theory of planned behaviour, Sutherland (2011) discusses the usefulness in basing the analysis solely on the three above mentioned elements to explain agricultural behavioural changes. Moral norms, affective judgement and past behaviour are elements that might affect changes in behaviour as well but are not included in the theory of planned behaviour. She especially distinguishes between substantive norms which focuses on the perceptions on beliefs of others and the self-identity of the farmer focusing more on the beliefs about one self. As there has been so many other studies focusing on farmers’ behaviour using a macro approach, the fact that the theory is focusing on the individual actor is here an asset. However, to account for the other criticism, I will include the concept of the good farmer into the analysis using the theory of forms of capital. This will give me a more complete framework to understand organic farmers’ attitudes and perceptions not only to organic farming and agriculture but also their understanding of agricultural space and hence allow me to connect their attitudes to the debate about agricultural change.

6.2.2. The concept of the “good farmer”

The second theory is developed through Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of capital and attempts to capture the norms and social pressure influencing the attitudes and understandings of the organic farmers. The concept has been used by several authors to understand the cultures through which farmers attitudes are formed and how this affects the success in changing behaviour and implementing agricultural policies (Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011, Burton et al., 2008, Sutherland, 2013, Sutherland and Burton, 2011, Hunt, 2010, Burton and Wilson, 2006, Sutherland and Darnhofer, 2012).

According to the conceptualisation of capital by Bourdieu (1986, p. 243), there are three types of capital; economic, social and cultural capital. The capital is transferable between the different types through symbolic capital. The focus for the studies of farmers has most often been on the cultural capital and how cultural capital can generate symbolic capital, through status and prestige, and how this contribute both to improved economy and social relations. Burton and Paragahawewa (2011) mean that cultural capital is essential as it creates symbolic capital that generates social relations. Bourdieu (1986 p. 243) claims there are three states of cultural capital:
- **Embodied culture capital**: These are personal skills and knowledge acquired during a longer period of time (Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011). It is often associated with the ability to use objects important for the culture (Sutherland, 2013). Burton and Paragahawewa (2011) mention ploughing, managing of farm animals as examples of embodied cultural capital.

- **Objectified cultural capital**: Made up of material objects associated as important for the culture (Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011). These objects are often more transferable to other types of capital (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 246). However, it is not the objects itself that gives cultural capital, but rather whether the object is used according to the norms for its usage, thus reflecting the embodied capital of the person (Burton, et al., 2008).

- **Institutional cultural capital**: This kind of cultural capital is acquired through formal institutions. Often in form of certification, through institutionalised capital, an individual farmer can show its competence through channels recognised by many actors (Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011).

Furthermore, cultural capital is thought to be inherited from one generation to the next, so that skills, knowledge, attitudes and preferences are passed on to the next generation as a type of cultural capital called ‘habitus’. This means that a farmer inheriting a farm from its parents, tend to have obtained the cultural capital associated with the parents and the farm. This capital does not only include skills and norms, but also any reputation gained throughout the years follows from one generation to the next (Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011). Furthermore, Burton (2004a) and Sutherland and Darnhofer (2012) suggest that symbols differ with regions and the meanings of symbols have a regional rootedness. In a changing environment with policy and financial incentives to change the farming practises, farmers would have the economic incentive to change their practises. However, as Burton (2004a) argues, symbolic and cultural values have been created for so long, that a change will be resisted due to culture. Farmers therefore need some time to accustom to new systems, but when they are, new symbols will be created and old ones will be forgotten. Sutherland and Darnhofer (2012) mean that a struggle between different symbols take place and that new symbols are introduced, especially in places where the rules for farming changes.

The theory of cultural capital has been used for identifying “the good farmer” which is believed to be influenced by the possibility of a farmer to obtain cultural capital through its farming practises. By identifying good farmers ideals, it is possible to understand how different farming practises and values are impeding or facilitating different behaviours (Burton et al., 2008), but also how changes in the conditions of farming can change how cultural capital and its symbols are framed (Sutherland and Darnhofer, 2012). Burton et al. (2008) connects the good farmer concept with embodied cultural capital and the possibility for farmers to show their skills through their farming. Therefore the activity must be of a nature where it is possible to distinguish good farming and the outcome must reflect the skills of the farmer. Furthermore, in order to generate the cultural capital, other farmers must be able to see the skills (Burton et al., 2008). Sutherland (2013) have shown that being seen as a good farmer is important for all kinds of farmers. She describes how traditionally, good farming has been associated with high yields and how this has been closely connected to economic capital. Both Burton et al. (2008) and Burton and Paragahawewa (2011) have shown that good farming is often associated with
conventional farming methods as the norms within the farming community is focused on visual elements of high production. However, owing to the close connection between economic capital and good farmer ideal, Sutherland (2013) suggests that changing economic conditions would lead to changes in the values of farming symbols, consequently leading to altered characteristics of cultural capital and good farming. Sutherland and Darnhofer (2013), on the other hand, acknowledge the habitus within the farmer community and mean that it takes time for changes to be incorporated into the farming norms and thus regarded as good farming. Lamme (2011) has further suggested that organic farming is not keeping up with the demand on organic products due to the fact that organic farming is not recognised among professional farmers.

Using the concept of good farmer is thus useful for understanding the attitudes of the farmers and how these attitudes are framed through a set of symbols generating cultural capital. Using this concept on organic farmers will reveal how they build their cultural capital and towards what farming ideals they are striving for.
7. METHOD

In this part, I will develop and explain why and how the methodological choices are made. The focus is on the practical methods used to collect the empirical material that is to be the foundation for the analysis in the thesis. However, I will also explain the methods and underlying assumptions that are used for the analysis of the material. To fully understand the methodological choices, I will start with an explanation of my research assumptions that will lay the foundation of the whole analysis and thereafter present the choices for the creation of primary data. This chapter will finish with a reflection on the ethical implications and the limitations of for this study.

7.1. Underlying research philosophy

The aim for this thesis is to understand organic farmers’ attitudes towards agricultural space and how this relates to other ideas of agricultural spaces and how they are changing. As all human geographic research is based on philosophical assumptions (Graham, 2005, p. 8), to describe which research philosophy this thesis is based on is therefore of importance. To understand the attitudes and the role of agricultural spaces I depart from a belief that the world and spaces are socially constructed by actors operating within them. Inspired by a post-structuralist approach within human geography, spaces are regarded as social constructions, where both space and identities are produced and reproduced through social relations. Nothing is therefore fixed or constant but everything is created through the mediation of human understanding and social relations. Understanding the dominating discourses and how the identity is created is important within post-structuralism (Del Casino, 2006). Due to the understanding of a socially constructed reality, there is no objective truth, and the interpretations of a phenomenon are affected by the social influences in which the actors are part of (Woodward et al., 2009). This also means that both I as a researcher and the interviewed farmers are influenced by the context, which influences the results of the study.

In accordance with the understanding that space is dependent on the identities and discourses among the actors, the empirical material for this thesis is obtained through the same way of thoughts. Knowledge and empirical material are thus not waiting to be discovered but they are constructed along the way of research (see Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 71-72). As knowledge and understandings are dependent on the context in which they originate from, I use hermeneutic philosophy as a way to understand the processes and actions that take place among the organic farmers in Halland. With hermeneutics, the interpretation of texts and actions are related to the surrounding context and dependent on the circumstances in which they take place (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 74). How hermeneutics is used for the analysis of the material will be developed further down in this chapter.

Entering a field without any preconceived understanding of the field is almost impossible. There is research done on organic farming and a current discussion about agricultural transitions is taking place, furthermore, theories regarding behaviour have been thoroughly developed. I therefore adhere to an abductive approach where theory is used
to enrich the understanding of the empirical material but where the empiric material is used to refine the theory (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008, p. 55-56). Within this approach, theory and empirics are used simultaneously throughout the research process and using existing knowledge and theories will facilitate the analysis of the phenomenon (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008, p. 57). An abductive approach is also concurrent with a hermeneutic research design. As I will describe further down, through a hermeneutic approach, the research object is understood through a combination of preconceived understanding and new empiric material. For the purpose of the thesis, my preconceived understandings will come from previous research about organic farming, especially in relation to conversion and attitudes towards organic farming. Moreover, theories of understanding behaviour and attitudes are used to deepen the understanding of the farmers’ actions and thoughts. The claim of an ongoing agricultural transition acts as a preconceived understanding that sheds a light on attitudes and behaviour among the farmers. In this study I therefore argue that the pre-understandings give me possibilities to bring the analysis further, and also contribute to developing the theories used.

7.2. The research method

A qualitative research method is used for the creation of primary material. In particular semi-structured deep-interviews are used. With a post-structuralist inspired approach, it is the farmers themselves that construct their reality. It is therefore essential that their own words are used as the basis for the analysis of their attitudes to agriculture and how this relates to their understanding of agricultural spaces and agricultural changes. Semi-structured interviews are sometimes compared to a normal conversation between two people. They have the advantage that they can capture complex perceptions and relationships between different actors. In addition it gives me as a researcher the possibility to remain flexible for new information and adapt the questions to the answers of the informant (Legard et al., 2003 p. 141).

Surveys have previously been widely used when researching farmers’ motivations for organic farming. While surveys and more quantitative methods have the advantage of reaching many farmers, making the possibility for generalising the results greater, it also offers limited insights into important relationships and loses the complexity of farming attitudes (Darnhofer, et al., 2005). As the aim of the thesis implies a need to understand perception of organic farmers and with a theoretical approach focusing on individual perception, a qualitative approach is the most appropriate. This enables me to capture different perceptions, outcomes, thoughts and attitudes that the farmers hold and will not limit me to my own preconceived understanding of organic farmers.

As a contrast to quantitative methods, where data is collected to be analysed first after the collection is completed, the qualitative interview is regarded as a two way dialogue where the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee creates the empirical material (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 233). As a result, it is important that I as a researcher am aware of my influence on the interviewee. I am to understand the attitudes of the farmers and through which ideas these attitudes are built up by. It is therefore highly relevant to enable a flexible and reflective approach where ideas can be expressed and developed freely by the interviewee. Equally important is that I can easily adapt to where the
interview is going and not steer the answers in any direction even though the interview itself must be steered so that relevant topics are covered.

7.3. The research process

7.3.1. Sample

In contrast to quantitative research where a probability sample is necessary, a non-probability sample is most often used within qualitative research (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 77). As the aim in qualitative research differs from that of quantitative research in terms of generalising and representing the data, there is no need for large samples based on criteria of statistical probability. In this thesis a purposive sample strategy is chosen, meaning that the interviewees are chosen based on their specific characteristics (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 77). I choose the informants within the subgroup of organic farmers. This is done as the focus of the thesis is on organic farmers, as they are believed to represent a more multifunctional and environmentally friendly attitude towards agriculture. However within this subgroup of organic farmers a heterogeneous sample (see Richie et al., p. 79) is used. Particularly a spread of the year the farmers converted to organic farming is aimed at. This is important as previous studies have shown that the year of conversion has an influence on how the farmers reason around organic farming (Läpple and Van Rensburg, 2011).

Other than this, a kind of opportunistic or convenient sampling is used, which means that characteristics such as the type of products, sex and size of the farm have been neglected in the selection process. While this might have added to the understanding of the heterogeneity of organic farming attitudes, no previous studies have shown the relevance of these aspects. Furthermore, most of the farmers in Halland are men and many of the farms engage both in animal husbandry and growing crops.

To find informants I primarily use an online list of organic KRAV-certified farmers in Halland. This list can be compared to a directory of organic farmers that lists their name, address and telephone number. Furthermore, the list also presents the type of activity the farmer was certified for. Unfortunately, it lacks information of the year of conversion. Telephone directory and similar sources have been used widely as a cheap and easy accessible source of informants but has also been question as a sampling source due to a bias towards larger scale businesses (Burton et al, 1999). This type of sampling is also a bit problematic as the refusal rate might be high (Valentine, 2005, p. 116). Furthermore, although KRAV is by far the most common certification among organic farmers in Sweden, basing the sampling on this record might lead to an exclusion of organic farmers only certified by the EU certification. To complement this sampling method, I use a snowballing sampling where interviewees help me identifying new farmers to interview (Valentine, 2005, p. 117). While this is convenient as the organic farming community in Halland is rather small and many of the farmers have good knowledge of their colleagues, there is a danger that diversity will be lost as I might end up interviewing people within the same circle of acquaintances (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 94). This problem was minimized by combining the two methods.
The practical realisation of the sampling process was done through a short telephone interview. All the farmers were contacted by phone, where a small number of clarifying questions were asked and where the purpose of the research was shortly presented. The telephone interviews were mainly done to find interested interviewees and to obtain information about the type of agriculture and the year of conversion.

7.3.2. The Interviews

Before the interviews took place, an interview schedule was constructed with themes and overarching questions to be asked to the farmers. This was constructed with inspiration from different literature works dealing with constructing interview schedules for semi-structured interviews. Even though semi-structured interviews were chosen to be able to remain flexible, a schedule with the most vital themes was needed to keep the focus during the interviews. As new information emerged during the interviews, interview schedule was slightly modified along time as important issues were brought into light in the first interviews which I wanted to be included in all the interviews.

A wide range of topics were covered during the interviews in order to obtain a holistic picture of how the farm is managed and to understand how attitudes and personal understandings were reflected. The major focus of the interviews has however been on themes such as conversion to organic farming, the role of the organic farmer for themselves and in a larger perspective, their attitudes towards agriculture and agricultural land, the understanding of a successful and a good farmer and the present situation for organic farmers.

Eleven organic farmers on nine organic farms were interviewed in March and April 2015 (see table 1). These interviews took place at the farm where the farmers lived and where they had their farming business. The visits were in most cases started or finished with a small tour of the farm and the interviews themselves were mostly carried out around the kitchen table in the farmer’s home. All the interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. In addition to the eleven farmers interviewed, one interview was made with an employee of the County Administration of Halland and one advisor/agronomist at an agricultural company in Halland. These interviews were not transcribed and will not be used for the analysis as such, but have served as a way to obtain knowledge and inspiration about the local situation in Halland.

The number of farmers to be interviewed were not decided in advance but remained open to see how many that were needed. In qualitative methods, it is not the amount of informants that is the most important but the number needed is dependent on the aim of the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 156). I have mainly relied on the law of diminishing returns to determine when sufficient interviews have been made. The law of diminishing returns suggests that sufficient interviews have been made when a new interview will only marginally contribute to new knowledge (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 156). Already after the sixth or seventh interview I noticed that the same pattern was repeated in the answers, therefore nine interview is sufficient for the aim of the thesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmer 1 (male)</th>
<th>Type of farm activity</th>
<th>The year of conversion/y ear of taking over the farm</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
<th>Extra information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crop production (grains and lay)</td>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>March 17, 2015</td>
<td>Did previously also have dairy production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer 2 (female)</td>
<td>Pig farm and crop production (grains and lay) for feed to the pigs</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>March 19, 2015</td>
<td>Was not raised on a farm, only EU-certified pork-production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer 3 (y) (male) and farmer 3 (x) (female)</td>
<td>Dairy farm and crop production (grains and lay) for food to the cows</td>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>March 20, 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer 4 (male)</td>
<td>Dairy farm and crop production (grains and lay) for feed to the cows</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>March 23, 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer 5 (y) (male) and farmer 5 (x) (female)</td>
<td>Beef production and crop production (grains and lay) for the feed to the cows</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>March 24, 2015</td>
<td>Did previously have pork production and have tried various sorts of crops, e.g. carrots and potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer 6 (male)</td>
<td>Crop production (grains and lay) and a few cows</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>March 31, 2015</td>
<td>The farm was already organic when it was taken over by his parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer 7 (male)</td>
<td>Dairy farm and crop production (grains and lay)</td>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>April 1, 2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer 8 (male)</td>
<td>Dairy farm and crop production (grains and lay)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>April 1, 2015</td>
<td>Took over organic farm from his parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer 9 (male)</td>
<td>Dairy farm and crop production (grains and lay)</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>April 7, 2015</td>
<td>Has tried many types of organic crops and has also had other organic animal production</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** Organic farmers interviewed
7.4. Interpretation

The transcribed material has been read through thoroughly, the material has then been categorised and interpreted into different categories depending on the similarities and differences in the respondents’ answers. This has mainly been done to give a consistent overview, but also to make the analysis more efficient. Even though coding and categorisation of results have met some critique also from a post-structuralist perspective as it inhibits the representation of the real results, categorisation for the sake of order and overview can help the analysis (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 242-243).

As mentioned before, a hermeneutic inspired analysis is carried out on the empirical results from the semi-structured interviews. Characteristic for a hermeneutic analysis is that one is looking at different parts of a phenomenon to eventually understand the whole phenomenon as such. When new understanding of a phenomenon is reached, this understanding can be used to continue to analyse the different parts, which can give even deeper understanding for the phenomenon. Preconceived understanding is often used for further understanding of a phenomenon. Sometimes, the analytical process is compared with a spiral where deeper knowledge is created by going back and forth between results and theory. Originally hermeneutics was used for interpretations of texts, mainly the bible, but is now used also for spoken language and even actions (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 74). Important for hermeneutic analysis is the context in which the interviews take place and the context in which the actors operate. This mean that the analysis is not objective, but dependent on the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and their interaction to the surrounding world (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 253) and the interviewer is taking part in creating the material that is to be interpreted (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 245). Different interpretations of a material are therefore not only allowed but expected in a hermeneutic analysis.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2014) distinguish between an analysis that focuses on the meaning of the interview and an analysis that focuses on the language of the interview. I have focused on the meaning of what has been said rather than how it has been said, as is more common in text and discourse analysis. This implies that I have focused on what is meant by the farmers and how this can be interpreted in the context they act and live in.

7.5. Ethical aspects

Qualitative research and in-depth interviews tend to be unstructured and within this method, unexpected and sensitive information might be obtained. It is therefore important to consider the ethical aspects of the research (Lewis, 2003, p. 66).

First, informed consent of the informants is vital for an ethical research process. In this case, the informants consist of organic farmers who were contacted by phone. In order for them to consider their participation in the study I provided them with the purpose of the study, information about the reasons for their participation and how the interviews are used in the thesis. However, as Lewis (2003, p. 67) argues, one has to have a balance in how much information is provided. As I wanted the farmers to answer spontaneously, I
provided a general explanation of the research aim before the interview and after the interview was finished I explained the aim of the research in more detail.

Another ethical aspect to consider is anonymity of the informants (Lewis, 2003, p. 67). To ensure that the informants feel that they can express their thoughts freely, anonymity has to be ensured. As some farmers talk about other farmers both in positive and negative terms, it could imply social problems if their identity were revealed. Therefore anonymity is important. As a result, no names of the informants will be published, furthermore, other attributes, such as name of the farm will not be used. However, as some aspects of the farms and farmers are important for the analysis, such as type of farm and year of conversion to organic farming, complete anonymity is therefore difficult to obtain.

7.6. The role of the researcher

It is very difficult, practically impossible to step out of the context in which one lives and acts in. In a reasoning inspired by Foucault, a researcher is caught in the surrounding discourses and is therefore unable to freely formulate research questions (Allen, 2003). Consequently a researcher will be affected by his/her preconceived views and understandings. Therefore, it is difficult for the researcher to remain objective towards his/her research subjects, but, as mentioned before the researcher is in qualitative interview interacting with the interviewee and they create the material together. This is of course a weakness if the aim is to be as objective as possible but also a strength as a closer understanding of the informants can be obtained.

My own background might also have an impact on the interviews. Coming from an academic background I have another background than many of the farmers. The risk is both that the power relation between me and the interviewee will be skewed but also that I am regarded as an outsider, and that the willingness to talk and share experiences will be lower. The fact that I live in a larger city, and particularly Stockholm might rise some suspicion. It was therefore important to play down these aspects and instead point at my origin from the region and my interest in their activities. However, it is not only positive to have the same background as the informants. Because even a researcher is living in a socially constructed reality, coming from the same kind of environment might obstruct the understanding of explanations and issues that might be taken for granted.

One problem with interviews is that the informants might answer what they think is expected by them. As they were informed about my background as a geography student interested in organic farming these might affect their answer. As a result, I tried to remain as neutral as possible and not reveal my own opinion about the issues discussed.

7.7. Limitations

The results of the study will also be dependent on the limitations for this thesis which will both reflect the resources available for conducting the research but also be influenced by what I as a research regard as important in relation to the aim. Limitations will therefore be dependent on my preconceived views. To ensure valid limitations, an extensive review of the existing literature on the topic has been done to guide the limitations. First of all,
the thesis is limited to investigate the attitudes of organic farmers instead of farmers in general. While I might lose the possibility to contrast different types of farmers against each other, it gives me time to look at diverging attitudes among the organic farmers themselves. Furthermore, a geographic limitation has been made, both due to time constraints and limited resources but also to be able to focus on the conditions within a specific region which will contribute to a deeper knowledge of the situation at this particular place. Even though two representatives from formal institutions were interviewed mainly as a background material, it could have been interesting to obtain the attitudes towards organic farming and understanding of agricultural space that is prevalent among policy makers and expert but also among the general public as there are several aspects influencing the attitudes to organic farming and their understanding of the role of agricultural space. However, this thesis has taken a farmer perspective as there has been a lack in studies of agricultural change with a bottom-up approach.

7.8. Reliability and validity

Even though the aim of this thesis is not to find any general truth or to generalise my results to all organic farmers, it is important to be aware of the reliability and validity of the results obtained. Reliability is according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2014, p. 295) a question about whether the result can be reproduced by other researches. As the result is produced through an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, a complete reproduction will be almost impossible. However, in order to increase reliability, the framing of the questions can have large impact on the results they give (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 214). Therefore it has been very important to avoid leading questions and to remain as neutral as possible in the interview situation. To ensure this, I have taken a role where the farmers are to develop the interview, within the topics of interest. I can then adapt to what is taken up by the farmers themselves and my influence on the issues discussed will be minimised.

The validity of the thesis is mainly based on how the material is used to draw conclusions (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 296). As I am more interested in the experiences rather than finding a specific truth of the situation of organic farmers, it is less relevant to double check the answers (see Kvale and Brinkmann, 2014, p. 301). Instead it is important that the material has been acquired in a valid way and that the conclusions are logical in relation to the material. The process of preparing the interviews, interviewing the farmers and analysing the results is of great importance in this case. Developing my research topics through a comprehensive understanding of the existing literature on the topic and analysing the results through a well-developed theoretical framework will ensure the validity of the conclusions drawn in this thesis.
8. RESULTS

This section will present the results from the interviews made with organic farmers in Halland in March and April 2015. As the aim of the thesis is to understand attitudes towards organic farming and their understanding of agriculture space, the first part focuses on the reasons behind the conversion and what has been driving the farmers to start with organic farming. This part will also focus on the implications and effects that the farmers feel organic farming has had on their farm activities. Secondly, the farmers’ response to the concept of good farming is presented and will eventually be used for understanding how attitudes are created and how they can be related to an ongoing agricultural transition. Important to note in this chapter is that all quotes were originally in Swedish and have been translated to English by the author.

8.1. Conversion and changes along time

The reasons for farmers to convert to organic farming is often generalised to either economic or ideological reasons (Fairweather, 1999, Darnhofer et al., 2005). Nonetheless, there are mostly not a single reason for conversion to organic farming, not within the organic farming community but neither for the individual farmer (Andresen Nylén and Hult, 2004). Instead, various factors are often influencing and contributing to the decision. Consequently the reasons behind the conversion are complex, especially when trying to understand organic farmers as a group. In the following paragraphs, the results will be presented and I will try to capture the complexity of the results to demonstrate the different reasoning of the farmers.

8.1.1. The economic oriented organic farmer

Similar to many other studies (Darnhofer et al., 2005, Andresen Nylén and Hult, 2004), economic reasons have come up as a major reason for many farmers who have converted to organic farming. Darnhofer et al. (2005) and Fairweather (1999) have identified and named these farmers “pragmatic farmers”. Farmers who mainly regard organic farming as a business opportunity and see the new possibilities of increasing income and reaching new markets, inaccessible with conventional farming methods.

Various farmers proclaim the difficulty of finding ways to run conventional farming with a profit. Production subsidies are now abolished and as the farmers are, after the EU-entry, more exposed to international trends in the agricultural market, the domestic prices on especially dairy products are low. Periods of difficult times in profitability in conventional dairy production made farmers forced to find new strategies to ensure profitability in their farming “Why we chose to do it then [convert to organic farming], I guess it was due to the economy. It was actually quite bad, with conventional dairy farming when we converted” (Farmer 3 (x), 2015). In this case, the farmer had done thorough calculations on how organic farming would affect their economy. This farmer is primarily driven by the problems in conventional farming and regarded organic farming as a surviving strategy. Other farmers focus on the possibilities of organic farming in terms of increasing revenue and regard organic farming more as a profit maximising strategy “there were so large economic advantages with organic farming” (Farmer 8,
Farmer 8 thus chose organic farming methods not due to bad results in conventional farming but because he saw economic potential in organic farming. Similarly, Farmer 2 saw the possibility to sell her products to a higher price and consequently saw the potential in the organic product market to increase her income. Here both the higher prices of organic products and the financial compensation obtained from EU through the national rural development program constitute important roles for the farmers. These farmers can easily be categorised into the category of pragmatic farmers identified by Fairweather (1999) and Darnhofer et al., (2005), where economy is important and where organic ideology play a minor role for the farmers. However, as should be shown further down, these farmers are not the only ones that could be classified into the pragmatic farmer category and many of the farmers have multiple reasons for converting to organic farming.

In fact all the farmers interviewed can in some way be classified as more or less pragmatic, arguing for the importance of economy when deciding to farm organically. Even though not all farmers are driven primarily by the economic aspects when converting to organic farming, all farmers mention financial aspects as an important part of their farming. Financial viability is a pre-requisite for the farmers to even consider organic farming methods. All but one of the farmers interviewed are full-time farmers and the organic production is therefore vital for the farmers’ income. If the financial possibilities would not have been there, none of the farmers interviewed would have had the possibility to consider organic farming as a choice on their farm. This shows how important the financial aspect is, also for the organic farmers. It also brings light on how organic farming and farming in general is considered among the organic farmers. The focus on income that is prevalent among the farmers highlights that the organic farmers are also businesspeople who run their company for the sake of income. Agricultural space is thus seen as a space for business and income making. When the farmers point to the fact that the economic possibilities are important, they mention particularly the importance of the certification as a vital component for the conversion. The standardised certification has enabled the farmers to enter a niche market where their products can be sold as high quality products for higher prices. This has enabled the farmers to benefit from the demand on niche products. As have been presented, the market opportunities have been important for many of the farmers and also determining for a few. This together with the financial compensation from the EU make organic farming financially feasible which is attractive to some farmers. Farmers are not only affected by exogenous influence, such as favourable market conditions or generous financial EU compensation. Also endogenous conditions on the farm have been important for some of the farmers. With higher demand on animal care with the KRAV regulation, dairy farming need to be run more extensively as it is difficult to handle too many animals in accordance with the regulation. The smaller amount of dairy cows is economically possible as the price on the products are higher with organic certified products. Due to the characteristics of the farm, Farmer 7 saw it more suitable for organic farming to ensure a good income. “I had too little land to make any large extensions with many cows, but I like to think in other ways, so if I keep my 50 cows and increase the output […] then I don’t have to make any large investments but can still continue with farming” (Farmer 7, 2015). In this case it was still the economy of the farm
that was important when converting to organic farming but the economy was influenced by the farm characteristics of the farm and the possibilities it gave for farming.

Economic reasons are thus important for many of the farmers when considering converting to organic farming. However, how these reasons are developed differ between the farmers and are influenced by both farm specific factors and more exogenous factors outside the control of the individual factor. Therefore it is important to acknowledge the different perspectives on the economic possibilities of organic farming and how and from where they have been developed. For some however, the economy did not have any major influence when the decision was made to convert to organic farming. Instead environmental concern and reasons, more in line with the principles of organic farming were of importance.

8.1.2. The environmentally oriented organic farmer

Organic farming is built on four overarching principles: principle of health, principle of ecology, principle of fairness and principle of care (IFOAM, 2015). The farmers being convinced by these more morally and ethically influenced principles when converting to organic farming has come to be classified as committed farmers (Darnhofer et al., 2005, Fairweather, 1999). These principles are based on the critique towards the industrialised, production maximising agriculture where chemical pesticides and external artificial input are common.

Farmers tending to be driven more by ideological issues regarding organic farming emphasise the environmental advantages with organic farming. “I never liked chemical pesticides and things like that, thought it was disgusting. I had a machine station here that sprayed [chemical herbicides] all the time. This started in the 1960’s or 1970’s and maybe until the 1980’s, we used 24D [a herbicide], it was called ‘the yellow compound’ by the farmers. It was a yellow sludge, sticky, really disgusting. He [the man who controlled the sprayer] took a lot of snuff all the time, he took a pinch of snuff and this yellow thing dropping from his hand. ‘This, you can eat this’ he said. I can still remember the feeling of disgust” (Farmer 1, 2015). Chemical pesticides have come to symbolise the environmental disadvantages of conventional farming and several farmers express a relief when not having to use chemical pesticides anymore. “Then it was this with crop spraying, it wasn’t that good, did not feel well about it” (Farmer 9, 2015). Similarly Farmer 6 argue about the negative effects the chemical pesticides have on the environment. Chemical pesticides are often connected to feelings of disgust or distaste and the negative effects this might have on the environment. The concern for what the use of chemical inputs could imply for the environment and for human health was therefore a major cause to why they started with organic farming. Furthermore, working with organic farming has been a way to live and farm with, instead of against, the nature. Working in symbiosis with the nature is important and one way to facilitate this is to do organic farming (Farmer 1, 2015, Farmer 2, 2015). Organic farming is most often associated with environmentally friendly practises and the concern for the environment is one of the founding principle of the organic farming movement. The farmers driven by the environmental aspects of organic farming can therefore be understood as capturing the principles of organic farming.
Few farmers neglect the environmental or other more ideology related aspects of organic farming but may not be driven by them or mention them as reasons to convert to organic farming. Instead the environmental advantages come as a positive side-effect from their choice of way of farming. “Then it was this with the environmental impacts, that one is not doing that big marks, and then with chemical pesticides as well” (Farmer 3 (y), 2015). The farmers were thus very aware of the environmental advantages. Even though Farmer 3 regards environmental advantages mostly as a way to meet the demand from environmentally concerned consumers, the ideological values are present even among those driven by economy. Furthermore, many of those that were primarily driven by the economic advantages of organic farming have experienced positive effects of organic farming themselves and have then become more convinced about the advantages of organic farming, not only due to the economic advantages but also by more ideological ideas. “The first years it was nice not having to pay the bill for the crop-spraying, but now it feels like it is an important part, the thing that I behave a little better” (Farmer 4, 2015). This shows that even though organic farming is advocated as a financial asset among some farmers, the positive environmental effects are acknowledged by all farmers. For many, the fact that they are contributing to an improved environment make them proud in front of the customers and in society. As a result it can be problematic to group the organic farmers into distinct categories as most farmers are converting to organic farming for several different reasons, both economically and ideologically to a stronger or weaker extent. In addition, the public opinion regarding farmers seems to have had an important influence on many of the farmers.

8.1.3. The response to public opinion

According to several of the interviewed farmers, the farmer’s movement experienced and is still experiencing negative critique for their way of farming and for the negative effects agriculture might have on animal health and on the environment. Furthermore, the fact that there was an overproduction of many agricultural products, products that were piled in large storage rooms to no use, fuelled the criticism. In order to justify the farmer profession, some farmers felt that they had to change their behaviour in order to be accepted among the general public. “During the 1990’s, the agriculture should be deregulated before entering the EU, some years there was an enormous overproduction with food products [...] then you have to apologise for producing” (Farmer 1, 2015). Similarly Farmer 9 describe the negative tone on the farmer’s movement and the pressure he felt to abandon production of food and fibre. He therefore chose organic farming as an alternative to give up farming completely. In that sense he could still be a food producing farmer but avoid the criticism that targeted the conventional farmers at the time. Also Farmer 5 expressed the critical public opinion during the 1980’s and 1990s as a reason for him to try alternative methods in agriculture. "It doesn't help to only defend oneself, but to be trustworthy in the debate and if one want that people's attitudes should change, you have to start with yourself [...] there was especially a harsh critique against pig-stock breeding and caged hens, so we tried and we bought 30 piglets” (Farmer 5, 2015). Hence, the farmers are exposed to the trends and attitudes within society as a whole. A negative attitude from the public or from policy makers towards one type of behaviour seems to have the potential to influence the farmers to change their farming methods. Evidently, farmers do not live in a vacuum free from attitudinal trends, but are part of society as any other individual. When pressure from the outside is put on the farmers, it might influence
their way of farming. The understanding that organic farming is more in line with public opinion is regarded as positive by other organic farmers as well, even though it was not a cause to why they converted to organic farming. Both Farmer 3 and Farmer 4 mention the public opinion as motivating now when they are organic farmers. They find it more appealing to produce food in a way that is promoted by various customer groups and by national and international institutions.

8.1.4. The influence from other farmers

While external influence and opinion are important, equally or maybe more important for some is the influence from other farmers.

A profound difference meeting those farmers that were early to adopt organic farming methods compared to those later adopters is the fact that there are more farmers to be inspired by now. Several of the farmers that have converted to organic farming lately have been influenced by a neighbour or other organic farmer close by. These farmers have advocated for the advantages of organic farmers and the interviewees have had the possibility to see for themselves how organic farming works in reality. Farmers 3 express the support and the influence a neighbour had on their decision to start with organic farming: “And then, the neighbour here has been an organic farmer for many many years [...] he meant that it is probably not that bad if we did it as well” (Farmer 3 (y) 2015). “And we have seen that he has done very well. On some, one can see that the production of the animals decreases to very low levels, but he has had very high levels. So we thought it would work” (Farmer 3 (x), 2015). “He really braced us” (Farmer 3 (y), 2015). These farmers were not driven by the ideological aspects of organic farming but put much weight into the economic aspects. Therefore it was important for them to see that it worked financially before taking the step to convert themselves. Also the fact that it is acceptable among other farmers played a role here. Similarly Farmer 7 obtained important inspiration from a neighbour and friend who had been an organic farmer for several years. Seeing that he succeeded in getting a good economy and output out of the organic farming was important when deciding to change. Also Farmer 6 and Farmer 8 were inspired by other organic farmers close by. This shows that even though the public opinion might be strong in advocating organic farming, the influence from other farmers and acquaintances where the farmers can personally see how it can works is important. Furthermore, it shows the importance of the opinion of colleagues and friends for the farmers to dare to take the step to convert.

The earliest organic farmers met another reality when they decided to start with organic farming. Farmer 1 explains the situation in the beginning of the 1990’s “Around here were no neighbours that were organic. There was one, halfway to Falkenberg who wasn’t any role model, he never succeeded with what he was doing” (Farmer 1, 2015). Instead of being a role model to be inspired by, the organic farmers close by were rather a discouragement for Farmer 1. There were in general very few organic farmers to look up to during the 1980s and 1990s, and instead those that converted were met with suspicion. Both Farmer 1 and Farmer 5 have experience resistance from other farmers who thought about them as if “he is a hippie, he is not sane” (Farmer 1, 2015) and Farmer 5 explains how they “were often associated with Palestinian scarfs and round glasses” (Farmer 5,
2015). So while the late converters were often influenced and inspired by other organic farmers and found encouragement from other farmers as important, the early converters were either driven by individual conviction or by an opinion on a higher level often pertaining to politics or public opinion.

Summarising the reasoning behind conversion to organic farming one can say that farmers are driven by four elements:

- Economic reasons, either as a surviving strategy, as a way to maximise income or as a way to adapt to the physical characteristics of the farm itself.
- Environmental reasons where the reluctance to use chemical pesticides are the most common aspect.
- The want to live up to the expectations of the public opinion or by politicians.
- The influence and general opinion of other farmers close by.

### 8.1.5. Implications of organic farming

When converting to organic farming, several farmers identify an increased importance of the characteristics of the farms and the surrounding areas and activities. When removing chemical pesticides and artificial fertilisers the farmers are more exposed to physical, biological and environmental aspects and have therefore been forced to adapt the production to the characteristics of the farm to a larger extent. Apart from Farmer 7 who saw the characteristics of the farm as a main motivator for converting to organic farming, several others have had to adapt their production to the conditions on the farm. Farmer 5 explained how their farm was more suited for cattle than pigs and that is the reason why he now has an organic cattle farm instead of a pig farm. Similarly, Farmer 6 has decreased the number of animals because the sprawled farm, together with the requirement to keep the cattle outside, made it impossible to take care of all the animals in a good way. The KRAV regulation implies that the animals have to be outside as much as possible, making it important to be able to monitor them. Also Farmer 2 has had to deal with the characteristics of the farm. As KRAV-regulations force the farmers to have the pigs outside, she could not see how she would be able to have enough pigs to make a sufficient income out of it. She has therefore chosen to become EU-certified organic pig farmer instead of using the more rigid KRAV regulation. Consequently, the combination of rules for organic certification and the characteristics of the farm put constraints on how and what can be done on the farm. Additionally prices on input products are often more expensive for organic farmers than for conventional farmers, this contributes to the fact that the characteristics of the own farm become more important as the farmer is forced to produce more of the products needed on the farm itself, particularly feed for the animals.

Due to the higher prices on input, closeness and cooperation with other farmers, both conventional and organic farmers, is important for exchanging and buying manure and feedstuffs for the animals. With close cooperation with other farmers, the organic farmers can reduce their costs for external input as the need to buy from large feedstuff business is reduced. Also the geographic proximity to a slaughterhouse has been mentioned by Farmer 4, Farmer 5 and Farmer 9. All these farmers had organic pork production and due to the KRAV regulations it is hard to run a large scale pig farm. Transport costs cannot be too high in this case and a slaughterhouse close to the farm is important. Previously, there was a slaughterhouse in Varberg where these farmers could take their pigs. This
slaughterhouse was shut down as the activity was to be concentrated to a few places to take advantages of economies of scale. However, this resulted in that all these farmers abandoned pork production and started with cattle instead. Evidently, the proximity to services necessary for running an organic farming business is very important, especially when smaller production makes transport costs a heavy burden.

The fact that organic farmers cannot use external input to the same extent as conventional farmers implies that they have to adapt to natural conditions. Nevertheless, it also means that they are not dependent on the large agri-business to the same extent as other conventional farmers are. “The conventional farmer has to realise that he is a pawn in a game. He has no farm boys on the farm, but he himself has become a farm boy to the chemical companies who has control over the whole production chain” (farmer 5). Farmer 2 (2015) expresses similar feelings. There is thus a feeling among several farmers that due to their reduced dependence of artificial fertilisers or chemical inputs, they feel freer and do not have to plan the production on the premises of the chemical companies. Being an independent farmer is thus important and is a feeling that adds to the advantages of organic farming and to the quality of life as a farmer.

8.2. The concept of the good farmer

All the farmers were asked to define a good farmer and good farming and were left to freely associate around the concept. Even though the understanding of a good farmer differed among the farmers, it is possible to see some similar elements of a good farmer among several of the farmers. Using the concept of the good farmer can bring further light on how the farmers reason around, and are influenced by the surrounding environment. While the reasons behind the conversion to organic farming is important for understanding the farmers’ intentions, the thoughts about good farming can reveal underlying perceptions among the farmers for understanding their attitudes towards agricultural space.

Often, but not always, the findings show that the characteristics of the good farmer are associated and symbolised with physical aspects of the farm. To structure the results from in accordance with the concept of good farmer they will be presented and categorised through how they are symbolised.

8.2.1. The importance of clean fields

Similar to previous studies on farmers’ attitudes and understanding of good farming (Sutherland and Darnhofer, 2012, Sutherland, 2013), high yields and clean fields have been mentioned by most of the farmers as one important indicator of a good farmer. One common symbol mentioned by several farmers is the clean fields with as little weeds as possible, with strong plants and crops and with order and tidiness in the crop rows. "One want as little weeds as possible […] It is not fun with a field full of scentless mayweed, it is not fun, it feels like a failure, there is a vocational pride in having good crops” (Farmer 3 (x), 2015). Similarly Farmer 4 expresses the norm of tidy field among farmers and how all, conventional and organic farmers, strive for this ideal "It should look the same [as conventional fields], that is the norm [with clean fields], and it is towards that that also
organic farming is striving for, but with other means. All farmers know how it should look like" (Farmer 4, 2015). There is no clear tendency in what kind of organic farmer who regard clean fields as good farming. This attitude can be found in both late and early converters and among organic farmers who converted mainly due to economic reasons and due to organic farming ideals. Both Farmer 5, who was one of the pioneers in Halland and Farmer 6 who describe himself driven mainly by organic farming ideals mention the importance of clean fields. "I mean the one who has a really good winter weed crop, say a conventional farmer who produce 10 ton per hectare, it’s fantastic to see" (Farmer 5, 2015), "Clean fields indicate high yields, it is more difficult to handle them if there are a lot of weeds, it takes nutrition, sunlight and space if you have too much weeds, but I am not perfect either" (Farmer 6, 2015).

Most often, clean fields are symbols of high yields and a good outcome from the fields. Almost all farmers tell about a tradition among the farmers to measure success in yields and outcome rather than measuring it in economic profit or any other way related to economy. Clean fields have higher potential to result in high yields than fields full of weeds and a clean field is therefore a proof of a farmer who has high yields. Having clean fields and high yields is also important as an indication of knowledge and motivation. Both Farmer 3, Farmer 5 and Farmer 6 regard this as evidence for that the farmer has what is needed to run a farm. Those having clean fields and high yields put a lot of work to the farm and have the knowledge required to ensure a good outcome. The use of land in an efficient way is also a reason to why high yields and clean fields have become important for good farming. Farmer 6 expresses how the scarce land must be used in an efficient way, and therefore yields and clean fields are important as it shows that the farmer uses the resources well.

Even though high yields and clean fields are mentioned as important by many of the farmers, they are also aware of the limitation upon farming. Several of the farmers mention the relation between yields and external input and acknowledge that it is indeed possible to obtain high yields, but one have to look at the cost of obtaining high yields. As Farmer 4 expresses it: You should get as much output as possible with as little resource waste as possible and destroy as little nature as possible (Farmer 4, 2015). While high yields is an ideal for many of the farmers and represent good farming, these farmers do not want high yields at any price. A good farmer is therefore one that can obtain high yields with a limited amount of resources. This further shows good farming knowledge as it is required more from the farmer to obtain higher yields with less input.

8.2.2. The importance of mixed fields

Despite acknowledging the tradition of using yields as a measurement of success among farmers, two of the farmers do not regard clean fields as a symbol of good farming.

Instead of regarding clean fields as a success, Farmer 1 and Farmer 9 find it problematic and react with scepticism when they see clinically clean fields. "One react a bit, one does not want it to be clinically clean either [...] it is possible to clear it up to make it completely aesthetically unpleasant” (Farmer 9, 2015). “The visual way I experience it is that it is absurd if it [the field] is chemically clean, it is not good, and it is not right and it is... that's not how I want it" (Farmer 1, 2015). Clean fields in their view thus symbolise
the opposite of good farming. These farmers promote fields with some weeds to enable biodiversity and a good farmer is instead someone who can manage a field with some weeds in. “It is always nice with some fauna, the birds should have theirs, it becomes more pleasant. I want a mixture, even if it means somewhat smaller yields” (Farmer 9, 2015). “Good farming is farming that is part of the surrounding, that recognises that we are part of nature. [...] I believe it is wrong in some way, when you remove all plants except the one you have sowed. Then it is thousands of species that are needed in the nature, that don’t have any livelihood. Everything is narrowed down, there is something that disappears. You can’t do like that. It doesn’t matter if there are weeds in the edges, it’s not the same thing. Everything is needed” (Farmer 1, 2015). A field with a bit of weeds is here a symbol of a farming that is living in symbiosis with nature. The mixed fields that are promoted by these farmers symbolises care for the environment and enables biodiversity. At the same time it is evident that even these farmers are farmers who are there to produce food and fibre and are not there solely as a nature conserver. It is important for them that there is a balance in species, but the crop have to have a major role, as it is the crop that ensures the income to the farmer.

This kind of reasoning as seen above is more in line with the advantageous outcomes of organic farming advocated by KRAV. KRAV explicitly highlights the mixed fields as an advantage in organic farming as it enables biodiversity and environmental sustainability (KRAV, 2014b).

### 8.2.3. Order and management of the farm

Furthermore, apart from the field itself, many farmers mention the importance of order and tidiness on the farm as well as managing it in a good and progressive way. This shows both good economy and motivation of the farmers. Farmer 3 (y) (2015) mentions how a farmer can be regarded as good and successful if “one can keep the house and ones things in order, keep it tip top”. Similar attitudes are mentioned by Farmer 4 and Farmer 9. Additionally, Farmer 7 (2015) argues that it is appealing to see farms that are well ordered but mentions that it is unclear how much work these farmers put into the farm and that for himself, putting too much work into the farm is not ideal. Farmer 7 further mentions the possibility to develop the farms, new buildings or other development projects indicate a farmer with ambition and motivation but also the fact that the farm has the financial means needed to do these investments. “It is fun to see farms where they have built up a lot, a farmer should be able to survive on his work and be able to develop [the farm]” (Farmer 7, 2015). In this case it is not the actual production that is in focus for deciding on how the farmers are performing. Instead the built environment and objects relating to the farm have an important position. Farmer 6 explains how good farmers are prepared and have their machines in order so that timing can be as accurate as possible. Having everything ready to be used when it is needed is a way to reduce risk as the farmer is always prepared to use the objects. Apart from indicating a motivation among farmers, this tidiness also represents a financial aspects. As reducing risks and having new and well maintained buildings enables the farmer to perform its tasks more efficiently, a good income is therefore easier obtained.

### 8.2.4. The geographical characteristics of the farm


Related to farmers’ motivation and knowledge is also the characteristics of the farm itself. The size of the farm itself is associated with good farming, although there are no coherence among the farmers whether the farm should be small or large. Symbolising development of the farm, Farmer 7 spontaneously claims that: “First thought [about good farming], a really big farm with a lot of land. The thought that one has developed things and has been able to grow as a business is good, even though that is maybe not my goal” (Farmer 7, 2015). Almost all farmers highlight that they are businesspersons running an agricultural business in which development, revenue and profit are important parts. In this case this development is represented by the size of the farm. On the other hand, several other farmers argue for the disadvantages of large scale farmers and instead advocate small scale farms and a physical closeness between the farmer and the fields and the animals. Having the fields and the animals close to the farmhouse makes it possible for the farmer to keep track of the animals and to make sure that the timing is right for actions on the fields. Seeing a farm where the fields are close to each other therefore represent a good farm. Farmer 6 describes a conventional farmer to whom he is looking up to: “He has 40 dairy cows that he really takes care of; he has the land just next to the farm, he grows his grains, his ley and has his pastureland […] he should be very close to the perfect farm because there is something symbiotic and very few transports. He is very efficient, can run this and support a family” (Farmer 6, 2015).

Consequently, farmers with smaller farms tend to care more for the land and the animals as they have more time per hectare and per animal. According to this reasoning a smaller farm gives the possibility to live in a closer symbiosis with nature.

What seems to be thoroughgoing among most of the interviewed farmers is that few associate good farming with characteristics specific to organic farming and characteristics that are promoted as positive by for example KRAV (2014a) and in the Swedish environmental goals (Naturvårdsverket, 2014a). KRAV particularly highlights the fact that crop fields mixed with weeds are contributing to biodiversity and the Swedish environmental goals also highlights the positive effects organic farming might have on biodiversity. Nonetheless, it is the conventional farmer norm with clean fields that is regarded as good among many of the organic farmers. Even though some of the farmers put even more prestige into the farming if this can be reached with as little external input as possible, organic farming is used as an excuse for how the fields look like rather than seen as something positive in itself. It seems like the organic farmers regard characteristics related to ensuring a good business as the most important, with well managed houses and machines being vital. But as have been seen the understanding of the good farmer is quite varied and some farmers have opposite views going against what is described as the traditional norm within the farming community.

8.3. Role of (organic) farmers

To further understand how the farmers understand themselves and to be able to put organic farmers in relation to the discussion about agricultural transitions it is helpful to understand their understanding of their role as farmers. The results show that some of the organic farmers do not state any particular difference between themselves and conventional farmers. Organic farms are just as conventional farms businesses that aim at producing and selling food products and meeting the demands of the consumers. Some
on the other hand argue for a larger emphasis on environmental concern among organic farmers.

As Farmer 1 says: “The goal for the conventional farmers is to earn money on what they are doing, but for the organic farmer it is to earn money but connected to the thing that we are part of a context. No machine spitting out money, but the organic farmer operate in a context that should function as well” (Farmer 1, 2015). It is more important for organic farmers to consider the surrounding environment, compared to the conventional farmers. This of course reflects the view of the individual farmer but highlights how organic farming is regarded. Food production is important but other values have an obvious role as well. It also shows that organic and conventional farmers have some goals in common but the organic farmer is supposed to reflect on the environment. Similarly farmer 2 argues that “the most important for me is to earn money and do it with something that I can stand for, ethically, morally, environmentally ... in all ways”. These roles are also what is stated in the main principles of the organic farming community developed by the IFOAM and can be said to represent the basic principles of organic farming (IFOAM, 2015). Production should take place with concern to nature and the surrounding environment. Farmer 1 and Farmer 2 have here distinguished themselves as having distinct roles in society and have positioned themselves away from conventional farmers.

In some cases the role of organic farmers it not portrayed very differently from conventional farmers. Some farmers argue that conventional farming as well as organic farming should contribute to both food production and other benefits for society, such as open fields and environmental gains. On the question on what role he has as a farmer, Farmer 7 answers that: “First, it is to produce as much as possible [...] but then the environment is important, there is such a connection, if there is no animals, it will become overgrown more and more. One see the connection between the farms and to those living in the surrounding areas that everything works together. There is a role to keep the countryside living [...] but I don’t see any specific roles for organic farmers, I don’t have that feeling, I felt as proud as a normal farmer as well (Farmer 7, 2015). From this perspective, the main role is similar to both organic and conventional farmers. Even though some of the informants argue for additional objectives for an organic farmer, the main purpose, according to Farmer 7, for both organic farmers and conventional farmers is to produce food and meet the demands of the consumers and the market. Hence the understanding of the farm as a food producing business is prevalent here but both organic and conventional farmers should ensure additional values as well.

Furthermore, organic farming might have the role as a role model for farming in general, where the development in organic farming has the potential to influence conventional farming practises. This means that conventional farmers would adapt the advantages associated with organic farming, such as environmental and animal care, to their conventional practises. Farmer 6 expresses this as follows: “Conventional [farmers] should also contribute to the environmental goals [...] organic farming is affecting conventional farming so the society gets an environmental benefit” (Farmer 6, 2015). This also connects to organic farmers, regarded as more progressive and problem solving oriented. "Instead of using the new technique that exists, they [conventional farmers] are fighting for keeping their pesticides. That feeling doesn’t exist with us [organic farmers], we find a solution for changed conditions” (Farmer 4, 2015). Organic farmers have a role
as developer and creating new solutions to old problems. They are therefore regarded as more progressive and are not retained in old ways of handling problems. Organic farming is therefore seen as opportunity creators both for organic farmers but also for farmers in general who can benefit from new techniques and practises.

Some of the farmers mean that due to the additional value that organic farming bring to society and especially to the environment, they hope for more organic farmers in the future. A few of the farmers see organic farming as a way both for Sweden and the world to ensure good food production in the future. From this reasoning one can see multiple roles for organic farming, as more organic farmers would bring additional societal and environmental benefits, the organic farmers have a different role to play as environmental managers. Additionally, Farmer 4 (2015) mentions how organic farming can help countries in the Global South to enhance their food production and that the knowledge that is gained through organic farming practises can help those countries and people in enhancing their agricultural practises.

On the other hand, some of the organic farmers mention the national need to keep up output and yields to feed all people in the country and around the world. Therefore, too much organic farming is not ideal as this would decrease the total yields and make Sweden even more reliant on imported food. Conventional farmers therefore have a stronger role to ensure food security for everyone. Furthermore, some farmers argue that organic farmers meet a niche market and their products can attain demand for high quality products. Seeing their role in a market perspective, there is a fear among Farmer 3 (2015) and Farmer 4 (2015) that too many organic farmers will harshen the competition for the organic farmers.
9. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The aim of this thesis is to understand organic farmers’ attitudes towards organic farming and understanding of agricultural space in relation to the concept of multifunctional agriculture. While many studies have used a top-down approach to understand agricultural changes this thesis focuses on the individual farmer to understand attitudes and changes from a grassroots perspective. To bring depth to the analysis, the theory of planned behaviour and the good farmer concept through the conceptualisation of cultural capital is used. This enables the disclosure of attitudes and perceptions that has relevance for how organic farming and agricultural space is understood and how it can be put in a larger context of agricultural changes.

9.1. Understanding the driving forces behind organic farming

As mentioned above, Ajzen (2005) have argued that to understand a behaviour, one have to look at three components influencing the intention to a behaviour; personal attitudes towards the behaviour, the subjective norms of the behaviour and the perceived behavioural control which together forms a basis for the farmers’ intentions. To investigate what underlying attitudes were significant for the conversion can enhance the understanding on how different values and roles are related to organic farming and agricultural space.

The intention for many of the farmers is to have a prosperous farm that gives a sufficient income for the farmer’s family to live a decent life. The organic farmers therefore build much of their attitudes towards organic farming around the economic possibilities it can provide for them. Similarly to the findings of Sutherland (2011), changes in agricultural practises occur as a result of financial considerations. She has concluded that both a change to low-input conventional farming and conversion to organic farming can be understood in financial terms (Sutherland, 2011). The organic farmers regard themselves as business people who run an organic farming business. The choice of way to use the land is connected to how it can ensure income to the family. Changes in agricultural practises and the usage of agricultural land therefore reflect the attitudes on how this might affect their business. A change to organic farming is among many of the farmers occurring after discovering that it is financially viable for their farming business.

However, as highlighted by some (e.g. Läppe and Kelley, 2013), farmers make up a heterogeneous group with regard to environmental attitudes. As has been shown by others (Andresen Nylén and Hult, 2004) the attitudes towards organic farming is both varied and diverse, also among the organic farmers themselves. The results show that the organic farmers in Halland have a diverse set of attitudes towards organic farming and emphasises different perceived outcomes of the behaviour. Focusing on the attitudes towards organic farming, one can broadly equate the findings with previous findings of Darnhofer et al. (2005) where they have characterised organic farmers as either committed or pragmatic. Those farmers approaching organic farmers pragmatically build their attitudes towards organic farming and agricultural space around economic gains. Many of the farmers have experienced financial difficulty as conventional farmers due to increased international competition and a downward pressure on prices. In contrast to organic farmers in the UK, who saw the financial benefits with reduced external input (Sutherland, 2013), the organic
farmers in Halland build their positive attitudes for organic farming mainly around the higher prices on organic products as well as the financial contribution by the EU. Those driven mostly by the financial aspects see their products as niche products enabling them to meet a growing demand from customers. Attitudes in favour of organic farming are hence developed through the understanding of market success of the products. Associated with high demand and low competition, the market for organic products inspired the farmers. As some farmers see additional organic farmers as a threat for their favourable market position, this further highlights how organic farming is seen as a way to ensure business opportunities for the farmers.

Even though most of the farmers framed their positive attitudes around economic outcomes of organic farming, possible other outcomes were equally and perhaps even more important. Sutherland (2013) found that “green ideologies” were associated with organic farming and that ideologies could be a tipping point for farmers to choose organic farming. Those farmers that can be related to the committed farmer proposed by Darnhofer et al. (2005) associated organic farming with environmental benefits and related it to a symbiotic living with nature. Intending particularly to avoid the use of chemical pesticides but also striving for a desire to live in symbiosis with nature and preserve the natural resources for the next generation, organic farming was seen as a feasible option. Often the attitude was developed through a scepticism towards conventional farming methods rather than a particular drive specifically towards organic farming. They regarded organic farming as a way to ensure the outcomes that they could not obtain through conventional farming. This way of farming was understood to contribute to these outcomes and was therefore seen as a good option. These attitudes is very much in line with the main principles developed by the IFOAM (IFOAM, 2015) and the reasoning can be traced back to the pioneers of organic farming in the beginning of the 20th century, where living in symbiosis with nature was advocated (Vogh, 2007). Economic aspects are however not neglected by these committed farmers. Seeing the potential for financial feasibility is important, but in contrast to what Sutherland (2013) means, it might be the economy that is the tipping point rather than the environmental aspects. Even though the main intention with a change is to contribute to a more environmentally friendly farming, the economy is be the factor that makes it possible for the farmer to actually do so.

With the theory of planned behaviour, it becomes evident that not only the farmer’s own intentions and attitudes towards the behaviour is important when studying changes in agricultural performances. Farmers are not organic farmers only as a result of their own attitudes towards organic farming but their perception of the surrounding attitudes towards the behaviour and the ability for the farmers themselves to perform the new behaviour is important.

Borges et al. (2014) argue that farmers are dependent on others when deciding on agricultural practises. Burton (2004b) means that a negative attitude among other important actors can inhibit a behaviour. On the other hand positive attitudes from people important for the farmer can influence a change in behaviour (Borges et al., 2014). Primarily, the results show how attitudes of different people have influenced the conversion to organic farming. Additionally, in the next chapter, the conceptualisation of
cultural capital will contribute to understand how attitudes from other can inhibit certain behaviour.

The findings show a rather distinct difference between those farmers converting early and those converting late when it comes to how they are influenced by surrounding attitudes. The main difference is on what scale the subjective norms are mediated. Late converters tend to be influenced by attitudes from people that are both geographically and socially close to the farmer while the earlier are influenced by attitudes developed on a national or even international scale. Studies in both Denmark (Risgaard et al. 2007) and Norway (Bjørkhaug and Blekesaune, 2013) have shown that neighbours have an influence on each other, and farmers with both geographical closeness and a similar production have the potential to influence each other. Similarly Borges et al. (2014) could show that both friends and neighbours, but also workers and traders, were important for subjective norms. Several of the farmers that converted during the 21st century, but also some of those converting in the late 1990s indicate the influence of neighbours and friends to have been influencing them. These farmers have consequently felt that they can find support for organic farming among neighbours and other acquaintances that live close by and whom they meet regularly. Important for the farmers have been to see that organic farming can contribute economically to the farm and that yields and production can be sustained. Contrary to what was described by many of the earliest converters, the attitudes among conventional farmers are now more permitting and open to new ideas. Sutherland (2011) claims that changed norms occur when the norms do not correspond to reality. The financial situation for many farmers has changed as it is less advantageous to use artificial input. This would, according to her, change the subjective norms among the farmers. Still several of the farmers describe conventional farmers who disregard organic farmers. The presence of particular people, within a geographical sphere that facilitate daily or regular contact, seem to be important for the subjective norms among the late converters. This however, is shown less important for the early converters where subjective norms were dependent on other levels of influence.

As been highlighted by Borges et al. (2014) friendship among other is found important also among some of the early converters. However, the general attitudes within the farming sector were described as rather hostile towards organic farming as the organic farmers did not comply with traditional farming norms. Both agricultural skills and financial viability were questioned in regard to organic farming. This might have frightened other farmers to convert, however the results show that the early converters in were primarily affected by the subjective norms from a general national opinion. These farmers describe how they were driven by a debate about the externalities of conventional farming, in which organic or alternative farming were regarded as better alternatives. As mentioned earlier, subjective norms are proposed to change when reality and norms do not correspond with each other (Sutherland, 2011). The organic farmers explain how the attitudes among other farmers are becoming more and more accepting. This is motivating for many of the organic farmers as it gives a confirmation of the validity of their agricultural practises.

The characteristics of the farm has also been highlighted as important when describing the possibility for a change in behaviour. One of the farmer saw organic farming as the best agricultural practise for the conditions on his farm. This implies that the expectation
and the understanding of factors helping or impeding the behaviour contributes to choosing a certain agricultural practise. However, many times, it is not until the conversion has taken place that the limitations and conditions are fully understood. This can be problematic as it can result in an abandoning of organic practises. It has been shown that expectation not always correspond to reality and there are studies showing that organic farmers have given up completely or reverted to conventional farming as the expectations did not match reality (Sahm et al., 2013). The situation among the organic farmers in Halland is actually more in line Morgan and Murdoch (2000) who found farmers as “knowing agents”, where organic farmers have more autonomy and control over the production themselves. Most of the farmers express how they, in contrast to conventional farmers, are more innovative and find new ways to solve the problem they encounter. Furthermore, several of the farmers have had to change their organic production after they have converted, in order to better suit the conditions on the farm. As they are more dependent on their farm characteristics, they themselves are creating the solutions that fit the farm and are therefore less dependent on external actors.

The perceived behavioural control can drastically change due to changed external conditions outside the influence of the farm itself. Changing conditions can act both positively and negatively on how the farmer understand the possibility for the behaviour. Taking the example of organic pig farming, the intention for organic farming was based on a set on conditions, both external and internal. A change in one of the perceived conditions can eventually imply a change in how the behaviour can be performed. When the slaughterhouse in Varberg was closed, the previous perceived behavioural control was changed, forcing several of the farmers to rearrange their production. The farmers consequently saw the factors for other type of production more favourable and thus changed their production.

9.2. Understanding the attitudes to farming

To understand the attitudes towards farming, the theory of capital and the concept of good farming are used. Previous research has argued that attitudes are specific to the regions in where the farmers operate (Sutherland and Darnhofer, 2012, Sutherland 2013) but research has also shown that within regions and sectors, there can be differences in attitudes towards farming (Hunt, 2010, Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011). The background of the organic farmers is rather homogenous, all but one is raised on the farm they are now in charge of, many have similar type of production and most of them have worked with farming their whole life. Still the attitudes towards farming and how good farming is portrayed is rather split. There is on the one hand consensus on the general norm in the farming society in Halland. Nevertheless, there are large differences in the attitudes on whether this norm is representative for good farming.

Using the concept developed by Bourdieu (1986), also used by Sutherland (2013), the habitus of the organic farmers in Halland is rather similar. With similar background, the experiences and learned expectations should be rather similar. When talking about good farming, both yields and clean fields emerge in one way or the other. The farmers often refer to high yields and clean fields when describing the general norm of good farming among farmers in Halland. As Wilson (2001) has seen, the characteristics of a productivist
society have been incorporated into the presumptions for good farming, where intensification and production maximisation have been encouraged. Organic farmers have smaller possibilities to reach this industrialised agricultural production as many of the external inputs used to enable the intensification of agriculture, e.g. chemical pesticides and artificial fertilisers, are not allowed in organic agriculture. Sutherland (2013) means that when condition changes, so do also the habitus and cultural capital through which the symbols for good farming are created. In organic farming, the conditions are very different from conventional farming. Organic farmers are not only following different regulations, but the prices on both external input and the organic products themselves are higher. Still many of the farmers, both early and late converters refer to high yields and clean fields when describing a good farmer.

Clean fields and high yields are measures of success and that the farmers have the professional skills required to run a farm. Even though, or maybe because of, the different prerequisites of organic farming, a clean field or a good outcome bring further cultural capital to the farmer as it is an even larger proof of the professional skills the farmer holds. The importance for farmers to show their skills in order to generate cultural capital has been highlighted before (Burton et al., 2008). Due to the habitus of the farmers, i.e. the inherited norms within the farmers’ community, and the difficulty of showing professional skills, agro-environmental schemes have come to fail in many places (Burton et al., 2008). Organic farming, in contrast to these agro-environmental schemes, is a method to produce food and fibre. Therefore there is still a possibility for those farmers to show their agricultural skills. Clean fields, as fields without weeds, a healthy crop and straight lines are symbols for the farmer’s ability to obtain high yields. High yields, that are perceived important among the farmer community in Halland, are related to farmer skills and the ability to handle the land well. The urge for clean fields can be related to previous findings of roadside farming (Burton, 2004a, Burton et al., 2008, Sutherland and Burton, 2011) where there is a tradition among farmers to look at the performance of neighbour farmers from the car, thus looking at the visual aspects of the fields. Both Farmer 2 and Farmer 5 mention how they themselves do this and this can be a contributing factor to why visual aspects remain important and why cultural capital is still obtained through the norm of clean fields and high yields.

Nevertheless, many of the farmers highlights the relation between input and output. When seeing a clean field or exceptionally high yields many of the farmers question the amount of work and resources put into that field. While a clean field is desirable, it cannot come with any price. This finding goes against early research on conventional farmers where a clean field was desired without question (Burton, 2004a) but is in line with later research on alternative farming where other values are promoted by the farmers (Sutherland, 2013). As Sutherland (2013) mentions, economic capital has the potential to change the cultural capital of farmers. When farmers are met with new or changed economic conditions, the ideas of good farming can be changed. This is however contradicted by Burton et al. (2008) who show that financial conditions did not seem to have any influence on the cultural capital. Nevertheless, organic farmers in Halland meet different financial constraints than many of the conventional farmers and therefore the good farmer concept has been slightly modified as a result of the conditions met by organic farmers.
One previous study using cultural capital where organic farming has been included has compared the concept of good farming between conventional farmers and organic farmers. It is shown that there is a difference between conventional and organic farming in how good farming is understood (Sutherland, 2013). Organic farmers tend to include other values than those related to high yields (Sutherland, 2013). Among the organic farmers in Halland, there is also a vast difference. While, as mentioned before, several of the farmers regard clean fields and high yields as good farming, there are others that completely reject the idea of clean fields as good farming. They also mention the farming norm of high yields, but do not regard this as good farming. Instead they build their cultural capital around mixed fields where the farmer can produce a useful crop without removing all the weeds. Cultural capital is thus created through the ability to generate biodiversity and natural values at the same time as producing crops. According to the farmers it shows knowledge and professional skills in a way where both sufficient production and environmental concern are maintained. These attitudes are very much in line with the founding principles of organic farming, but are also in line with one of the advantages of organic farming stressed by KRAV (KRAV, 2014a).

Coming back to the discussion from the last chapter about the influence of subjective norms in the decision to convert to organic farming. The results from the influence of others on farmers’ attitudes can be useful even when understanding how they construct their attitudes to good farming. Many of the farmers who were influenced by close neighbours or a friend when converting to organic farming tend to be emphasising clean fields and high yields to a larger extent. Connecting to the habitus of the farmer, these farmers seem to be close to the local farming community and reliant on the perceptions of other farmers. Striving for living up to the norm of high yields can therefore be a way for them to be accepted among the rest of the local farmer community. Consequently, the results show the connection between cultural capital and social capital found in other studies (Sutherland and Burton, 2011). However, those that stress other values as important for a good farmer are also the ones that were influenced by the subjective norms of the public and to some extent from policy makers who stress the importance of environmental concern within agriculture. Consequently, through which channels cultural capitals are formed might differ between the organic farmers. Lamine (2011) has for example shown that farmers are not isolated economic actors but are part of social and professional networks. In France she can see that the consumption of organic products is increasing due to health and environmental aspects, but that the production is not following due to a lack of recognition among professional farmers and institutional agents.

Cultural capital is not only formed through the crop production itself but other aspects are often seen as equally important. This means that also organic farmers, who might not be able to meet the ideals of high yields can obtain cultural capital anyway. The standard of the buildings and the build environment of the farm is symbolising economic prosperity. Furthermore, order and tidiness on the farm itself shows the motivation of the farmer. This is not a demonstration of the farming skills of the farm but rather a way to see the skills of running a business, which is also important among the farmers. Also the fact that the size of the farm itself is an important indicator for a good farmer further takes away the focus from the production itself to more objectified cultural capital where items have
come to represent a good farmer. All these symbols relate to motivation and economy rather than skills in farming practices.

What is striking with the results is that many of the organic farmers do not build cultural capital around farming characteristics that are typical for organic farming but are in many cases influenced by a norm more suited for conventional high productive agriculture. However, as Sutherland (2013) has claimed, financial influence is seen also in the case of the organic farmers in Halland. Most of the cultural capital not directly relating to traditional norms in the farming society are instead independent of the way of production and rather valid for all kinds of farming methods. As a result, many of the organic farmers build their cultural capital around symbols not directly related to farming practices and can therefore obtain important cultural capital even though they have other prerequisites for farming. As highlighted above, only a few of the farmers build their cultural capital on aspects directly related to organic farming such as mixed fields indicating a large spread among the organic farmers.

9.3. A multifunctional transition and the role of agricultural space

Within agricultural policy framing, there has been a rather strong focus on advocating alternative values of farming, such as environmental care, food quality, landscape management etc. (Marsden and Sonnino, 2008, Burton, 2004a), even though there are some competing discourses also within the policy framing arena (Potter and Tilzey, 2005). Several formal instances, e.g. the Swedish Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket, 2014a) and the EU (European Commission, 2014b) highlight how organic farming can contribute to obtaining an agricultural sector that contributes not only to the food production but also to other desired outcomes. Similarly, both KRAV (2014a) and IFOAM (2015) highlights how organic farming can contribute primarily to environmental advantages but also to social sustainability. Organic farming, looking at a top-down perspective, would therefore quite clearly imply a rather strong multifunctional agriculture where agricultural space with a variety of values and purposes, has an important part in the discourses. Still, in contrast to conservation activities, organic farming is within the spectrum of agricultural multifunctional space as the purpose of food and fibre production remains.

However, the purpose for this thesis is not to add to the studies investigating multifunctional agriculture from a policy perspective but to understand how the individual organic farmer is contributing to multifunctional agriculture and how agricultural spaces are understood and correspond to a multifunctional agricultural transition. As highlighted by Wilson (2008) different types of farms have different multifunctional agricultural trajectories, where a certain type of farmers are, due to decision making boundaries, placed differently at the multifunctional agricultural spectrum. Also within different groups of farmers there are large differences in how they can be placed within the multifunctional spectrum. The organic farmers hold diverse set of values and attitudes, many going against each other. In Europe, organic farmers obtain financial support for contributing to environmental protection and rural development. However, concern has been raised that organic farming is developing towards conventional farming mainly as a result of the large number of conventional farmers.
converting to organic farming. New converters would then bring the ideas of conventional farming, undermining the advantages of organic farming (Sutherland, 2013). The fact that most of the organic farmers in the study have previously been conventional farmers and converted to organic farming would suggest that they hold ideals related to conventional farming and productivist agriculture. Those organic farmers converting solely or primarily due to economic reasons showed little concern about the other values that organic farming is supposed to bring. Their main driving force in organic farming was that they saw the possibility for financial gains. With the inclusion of these organic farmers, the multifunctional spectrum, in which the organic farmers are operating, widened. These farmers differ strongly from pioneers of organic farming who highly promote environment and sustainability as important concept. The farmers that converted out of organic farming ideal can also be found among the organic farmers, seeing outcomes of biodiversity and environmental preservation as important outcomes of their behaviour. The intentions for conversion to organic farming reveal one type of organic farmer being rather close to a productivist reasoning where organic farming is mostly seen as a niche for agricultural production. This reflecting what has previously been argued by Burton and Wilson (2006), that individuals within a profession group tend to hold specific values for that job typ. They have found that farmers in general tend to hold productivist values, not always corresponding to the values advocated by policymakers. On the other hand, there are the stronger multifunctional farmers who still adhere to the need for production, but likewise highlight other values, primarily environmental concern. This is also related to the subjective norms of the farmers. Those driven by the subjective norms of the farming community, tend to hold weaker multifunctional attitudes than those driven by the larger public opinion who holds stronger multifunctional attitudes.

Even though the reasons for conversions are important in understanding how organic farming relates to agricultural space and an agricultural multifunctional transition, there are other factors that are interesting when analysing the multifunctional agriculture. Many farmers experience a greater dependence on the characteristics of the farm and that they have to adapt their production to environmental conditions now when they are organic producers. The actual agricultural land thus has a more important role for the farmers. Furthermore, while being more dependent on the environmental surroundings, the independence from large chemical corporations are emphasised by some of the farmers. Both these findings, the dependence on the surrounding environment and the independence of large agri-business structures, suggest a move away from the traditional productivist industrialised agriculture towards a more small scale agriculture more dependent on the surrounding agricultural land and environment.

Nevertheless, to fully understand how the organic farmers reason around agriculture, the findings from the concept of the good farmer is used here. As mentioned by Burton et al. (2008), and as has been confirmed by many of the organic farmers, there is a tradition within the farming community to favour actions relating to a productivist agricultural and rural space. Similar to what has been seen among conventional farmers by Burton and Wilson (2006), many of the organic farmers themselves strive for this norm even though they practise organic farming. Striving for ideals related to productivist agriculture such as high yields and clean fields shows that, even though their practises, i.e. organic farming, might be related to a stronger multifunctional agriculture, their ideas about
themselves as a farmers, and the attitudes they adhere to still reflects weak multifunctionality. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the organic farmers are rather diverse and emphasise different values as important. Those farmers rejecting these ideals of a good farmer and instead promotes an agricultural land with mixed fields and a concern for the environment show tendencies of a much stronger multifunctionality. What is interesting though is that those farmers that are driven by financial returns and adhere to the norm of clean fields, still challenge the norm in that way that they question the amount of resources put into reaching the norm. As has been claimed by Sutherland (2013), changing conditions for farming can also change the attitudes to good farming. This thus suggests that even though a rather productivist norm prevails, the different conditions that organic farmers meet also influence their attitudes and consequently they slowly change attitudes more in line with stronger multifunctionality.

The original organic farming movement could be understood as a niche innovation developed outside the dominant regime of industrialised agriculture. As described by (Kemp et al., 2001, p. 275), it is these niches that has the potential to create a transition within a sector. However, the attitudes among many of the farmers are in line with the dominant productivist agricultural understanding, and has instead of constitute a complete new alternative, been incorporated into the dominant perceptions of agriculture. Additionally, many of the farmers emphasise good farmers attributes such as order and tidiness on the farm, not at all relating to organic farming ideals but rather to the possibility to run a farm in general. This shows how organic farming has come to be very much in line with conventional farming. The fear of a conventionalisation of organic farming (Darnhofer et al., 2010) can be valid here. However, as mentioned by Sutherland (2013), organic farming has been mainstreamed and therefore attract also those that previously were not interested in the practises. This has altered the organic farmers’ symbols of good farming but also conventional farmers’ symbols of good farming. Most of the organic farmers in this study emphasise economic gains and are aware of the productivist norm within the farming community. Nevertheless, many still pay attention to the circumstances under which the norm is reached and do not completely agree with the norm. It can therefore be argued that even those organic farmers who have very weak multifunctional agricultural attitudes are approaching stronger multifunctional attitudes steadily but slowly. Additionally, many of the farmers emphasise the role for farmers to take care of the environment at the same time as they produce food, either as a particular role for organic farmers or as a general role for all farmers. Consequently there is no pure focus on productivist attributes, but multifunctionality is highlighted to some extent.

Organic farming is thus not automatically related to strong multifunctionality, as might be suggested by policy documents and organic farming institutions. The multifunctional spectrum within organic farming communities is rather wide and include both those farmers with weak and those with strong multifunctional attitudes towards farming. Different conditions met by organic farmers, compared to conventional farmers does however seem to drive the organic farmers in a direction towards stronger multifunctional agriculture.
10. CONCLUSION

The aim for this thesis has been to understand how agricultural space and organic farming is understood among organic farmers and relate this to the ongoing discussion of multifunctional agriculture.

The thesis has shown that organic farmers are not a homogenous group but have attitudes and reasoning that are quite diverse. This diversity is not only reflected in their reasons for conversion to organic farmers, where farmers claim both economic and ideological reasons, but is very well evident in their daily perception of agriculture and agricultural space. The organic farmers are influenced by many aspects and it is not surprising that the organic farming community contain different attitudes and understandings. On the one hand, the organic farmers have the original organic farming values proposed by IFOAM and KRAV, public institutions and also a public opinion that are often in favour of environmental care and diverse outcomes of agriculture. However, the organic farmers are operating within a traditional farming environment where traditional farming norms towards agricultural space are still valid also among organic farmers. Nevertheless, while there are examples of farmers really adhering to original organic farming norms, many others are showing signs of attitudes tending towards less traditional farming norms, mainly as a result of the different conditions organic farmers are facing compared to conventional farmers.

Due to the heterogeneity of the organic farmers, they cover a wide range of the multifunctional agricultural spectrum proposed by Wilson (2007). Even though they all follow the same rules and regulations they are not striving for the same goals. Some farmers have a productivist view on agriculture and agricultural space, advocating conventional farming ideals such as high yields and clean fields while others tend to have a strong multifunctional attitude arguing for environmental and other aspects. On the other hand, those farmers with attitudes towards weaker multifunctionality still show signs of a change towards stronger multifunctional thinking as they have started to question the methods used for reaching productivist ideals. But, if strong multifunctional agriculture is to be aimed for, as often is proposed by formal institutions, there have to be work done on both practises and attitudes. Financial conditions seem to have an impact on especially practises for organic farmers. Nonetheless, to change the attitudes towards ideals of a strong multifunctional agricultural space among the organic farmers require a change within the whole agricultural community. Organic farmers must be able to obtain confirmation of their skills and knowledge from both conventional and organic farmers, not only from a general public. An attitudinal change where agriculture and the usage of agricultural land to create various outcomes, create recognition and is associated with a good farmer is needed for a stronger multifunctional understanding of agricultural space.

This thesis has studied organic farming at one geographic location. Wilson (2001) has claimed that attitudes to agricultural space are place specific. What can be interesting for future research would therefore be to compare attitudes and perceptions among organic farmers between regions in Sweden. This would be especially motivating in relation to the large regional differences in the proportion of organic farming in Sweden to see if agricultural space is understood differently among organic farmers in other regions with a high proportion of organic farmers.
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