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# Which factors act as the main motivators for ecopreneurs in Sweden to start their green-green ventures?

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** Ecopreneurs are individuals who engage in entrepreneurial activities, starting green-green ventures, and focusing on sustainability. Ecopreneurs are shown to be key drivers in our society's transition toward sustainability. This research focuses on environmental sustainability and the reason these individuals engage in ecopreneurship. What is their motivation to start a green-green venture with the intent of contributing towards environmental sustainability?

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** This study consists of 7 in-depth case studies of ecopreneurs that founded their green-green venture within the past 5 years in Sweden. 1 hour, online semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. A thematic analysis was used for analyzing the gathered data. The MSI framework based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators guided the authors and helped to an understanding of multiple types of motivators and explains the possible motivators for ecopreneurs in Sweden.

**Findings:** Ecopreneurs in Sweden were shown to be motivated by 7 main themes acting as motivators: Previous life experiences, future generations, market change, gap in the market, family influence, Swedish supportive ecosystem, and being their own boss. These themes were then classified into the MSI framework based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to understand what motivates ecopreneurs in Sweden. Other findings can be seen in the simplicity of the current motivation framework and literature, which engages in the dichotomy of extrinsic-intrinsic motivational sources. This led to the authors questioning the dichotomy. The findings as well led to the authors suggesting that perhaps ecopreneurs are entrepreneurs with an enhanced resonance to their experiences and environment.

**Research limitations:** The small sample size, the country context, and post-rationalization may impact the findings.

**Value:** This research paper aims to contribute to the emerging research field of ecopreneurship. A better understanding will be formed of what motivates these ecopreneurs, which can help generate and sustain green-green ventures in our transition to a more sustainable society.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, ecopreneurs, green-green ventures, motivators, venture creation, Sweden.

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# 1. Introduction

The world is rapidly changing towards the negative, on both a social and environmental level due to climate destruction caused by human activities (Pielke, Roger A, 2004, p.515). A response to the destruction first emerged in the Brundtland (1987) report named sustainability (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). Sustainability in its essence means that the world needs a complex construct of multiple factors to ensure that the earth can keep on existing for future generations without using all of its resources. The definition of sustainability emerged from three different aspects: environmental, social, and economical, also discussed in later literature as the triple bottom line (TBL): people, planet, and profit (Elkington, 2013). Thus, all three of these are important in humanity's fight against climate destruction and injustice, the authors of this paper have chosen to focus on the environmental aspect of the TBL, due to its importance in protecting and restoring the world's ecosystems and crucial to continuous life on earth.

A further aspect of the environmental part of the TBL is what we, as a society, do with it. What actions do we take to fight against the changes caused by environmental destruction? Different approaches have emerged to fight environmental destruction, such as governmental policies, existing ventures, or green investments, but according to Gibbs (2006), ecopreneurs are viewed among many to be the leaders of a new type of capitalism that tackles the environmental issues and copes with the fear caused by them. An ecopreneur is defined by Isaak (2002) as an entrepreneur whose intention is to contribute to a sustainable transformation within a specific sector. The venture of an ecopreneur is also what Isaak (2002) defines as a green-green venture, meaning that the venture implemented environmentally sustainable policies and practices from the get-go, and did not go through a change to become environmentally friendly. According to Gibbs (2006), ecopreneurs are going to be the drivers of sustainable innovations and changes in existing and new markets, which is why the focus of this research will lay upon ecopreneurs.

The need to transform to sustainability has not gone unnoticed by consumers, who increasingly demand more sustainable products/services. This demand for sustainable products has been accompanied by a parallel increase in investments in sustainable impact startups in the past years, with Sweden being top of the list of European countries with €4.3 billion invested from venture capital to try and meet the consumer demand for environmentally friendly products/services, being 51% of all total venture capital investments in 2021 (Swedish Institute, 2021). The rise in investments globally, but especially in Sweden

to green-green ventures makes this research current, and important to understand ecopreneurs and how we as a society can promote and contribute towards a more sustainable way of living.

## 1.1 Research Question

With the information presented above, it is clear that ecopreneurs will be crucial for the environmentally sustainable transition needed to fight against environmental destruction. But what motivates individuals to do so? To become ecopreneurs? Currently, there is limited research that has been conducted on the motivations for ecopreneurs to start a green-green venture, and in the research that has been conducted, the motivators are very broad and overlap with the existing motivators for “normal” entrepreneurship as well (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). This led to the research question which will be examined in this paper:

**“Which factors act as the main motivators for ecopreneurs in Sweden to start their green-green ventures?”**

The findings showed that the ecopreneurs studied in Sweden are motivated by a broad spectrum of motivations, but an overlapping theme among them all is their green values. Their green values affect their decision-making process, drive their motivation, and are the cause behind their decision to start a green-green venture.

This led to an additional theory emerging from the findings, in which the authors question if ecopreneurs are entrepreneurs who are more resonant with their environment. Resonance, as described by Rosa (2018), is the awareness, reaction, and capacity to act upon the reaction by the individual. This makes resonance very unique to each individual as it is very unpredictable and cannot be called upon. The findings showed that the ecopreneurs studied demonstrated a resonance with their previous experiences, and their environment, which led to them extracting their motivation from it. The ecopreneur’s green values seem to play a role in their capability of resonating with their environment, as personal values play a crucial role in which an individual reacts to the environment within which it is within (Rosa, 2018).

Although motivation is a long-studied research field, its complexity does not represent the simplicity of theories that emerged from the literature. The dichotomy of extrinsic-intrinsic motivation, discussed as two separate motivational sources, does not represent the findings that emerged from this research, which have led the authors to question

the theories of motivation and the simplicity of them. The findings of this research show that ecopreneurs in Sweden seem to have absorbed external environments, which have affected their motivation to start a green-green venture. This does not correspond well with current literature on motivations as the ecopreneurs' motivation is shown to be driven by their green values, their want and need to contribute to a better environment, neither acting as an extrinsic motivation as described in the literature as performing an act with a monetary reward to it (Scott Rigby et al., 1992), nor intrinsic motivation described as spontaneous behaviors caused by curiosity (Montgomery, 1954).

To guide the authors in their search for ecopreneurs' motivation, the motivational source inventory (MSI) framework will be used as a tool to categorize the variety of motivators and to narrow down the conclusions to fewer motivational sources. Barbuto, Jr., Trout & Brown (2004) discusses the MSI framework and goes in-depth on what the five sources entitle, which the authors will make use of to guide and categorize the findings. The authors are as well open to additional motivators appearing during the research, not fitting into the MSI framework.

By identifying and classifying the motivators within the MSI framework it is possible to research, explain and analyze the underlying motivators for individuals to start with ecopreneurship. This research will make use of qualitative research methods, using semi-structured interviews allowing for the ecopreneurs to reflect and give thorough answers to the questions provided, as well as allowing for the authors to steer the interviewees in the direction wanted to get answers to all questions necessary. Purposive sampling will be used to ensure that the ecopreneurs interviewed will provide useful and purposeful answers to increase the depth of the research field. To analyze and assess the answers given a thematic analysis approach will be used, as it allows for the authors to extract underlying themes that can be guided by the MSI framework.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

To understand the motivators for entrepreneurs to decide on starting a green-green venture, it is essential to understand what sustainability means. A definition of sustainability will give insights into the multiple aspects of this phenomenon and what this means for ventures. Further, an explanation is required of the connection between sustainability and climate change. Why is sustainability in ventures needed and what are the motivations for starting a green-green venture? Further, by defining sustainability as a whole, it gives a better understanding of the necessity. Therefore, ecopreneurship must be defined and explained to understand what this type of entrepreneurship means and what the relation is to sustainability. By defining these key concepts together with reviewing current literature on motivators for ecopreneurs, it is accessible to research the motivators for ecopreneurs to start with their green-green business and their role and focus on sustainability.

### 2.1 What is Sustainability

Brundtland (1987) defines sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987, p.43). Vos (2007) builds further on this definition by explaining that it is closely related to the economic approach of sustainability where there needs to be a relationship between economic growth and the use of natural resources. Vos (2007) explains that sustainability can be defined in multiple ways but that the broad explanation of this concept is about environmental problems concerning society and the economy (Vos, 2007, p.335). Lagerstedt (2022) describes sustainability as well from these three perspectives, environmental, economic, and social sustainability. With environmental sustainability, she explains that the earth's ecosystems should be protected and preserved. Further, she implies that economic sustainability is the ensurance of economic activities available for all. She also describes social sustainability as the equality of basic human rights among societies (Lagerstedt, 2022, p.34).

This phenomenon is also often described as a triangle consisting of three factors: economy, environment, and society, discussed as the triple bottom line (TBL) principle by Lee & Mao (2015). The TBL principle is a tool that can be used by ventures to assess their impact related to sustainability. The three factors are overlapping each other and are used as a framework for ventures to work not only with economic challenges but also, environmental and social challenges. The economic factor of the TBL focuses on the impact of the venture

on the economy and measures the growth of the venture combined with the growth of the economy. This relates to supporting future generations with economic growth. The environmental factor of the TBL focus lies on reducing the ecological footprint of a venture by reducing the use of environmental resources. How many resources and raw materials can be taken from our earth and how can nature be preserved (Vos, 2007, p.336). Lastly, the social factor of the TBL is focused on practices in ventures to give back to the community and create socially fair businesses and labor. This means that a venture acts socially responsibly to create internal and external benefits for humans (Lee & Mao, 2015, p.8).

The Triple Bottom Line theory explains all three aspects of sustainability that are relevant for ventures to focus upon. Therefore, for a venture to become entirely sustainable the focus needs to be on all aspects of the principle. The phenomenon of sustainability is often closely connected to environmental sustainability. Therefore, the social and economic factors are left out; because of this, there are multiple ways of defining sustainability. Lee & Mao (2015) define sustainability with a broad definition based on three factors. Their definition states as follows: “a fundamental and complex construct that mandates the balance of several factors for the planet to continually exist” (Lee & Mao, 2015, p.7). In their definition they describe that there needs to be a balance between several factors, these factors are considered the social, environmental, and economic factors as described earlier. Further, they explain that the definition of sustainability is not a fixed cause and that over the years this definition will keep on developing. Vos (2007) addressed this in a similar form by stating that sustainability is a complex phenomenon that continues to develop with an unknown destination (Vos, 2007, p.336).

As a result of the complexity of the phenomenon of sustainability, the authors have chosen to make use of a definition incorporating the TBL in the definition, and specifically focusing on the environmental aspect of the TBL. Lee & Mao (2015) define sustainability as: “a fundamental and complex construct that mandates the balance of several factors for the planet to continually exist”. This definition includes all aspects of the TBL but highlights the importance of the earth's continued existence, which can be seen as the planet aspect of the triple bottom line. Therefore, this definition will be used throughout this research when assessing possible participants and their green-green ventures.



## 2.2 Defining Ecopreneurs

Ecological entrepreneurs (ecopreneurs) have been a limited research field as of today and can therefore be seen as an emerging field calling for additional research to be done. Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in broader terms have been studied since the 1990s while ecopreneurs and smaller enterprises with a sustainable core have not been paid a lot of attention (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). This has led to many definitions of ecopreneurs being formed over recent years. Among the scholars that seek to understand ecopreneurs, many have come up with their definitions which created confusion on what an ecopreneur is. This can be seen as a lack of consolidation between the work that has been done and the emerging research (Kirkwood & Walton, 2014). Further, with help from different scholars, the authors will try to identify different definitions of ecopreneurs to verify the definition which will be used throughout this research.

Isaak (2002) defines an ecopreneur as an entrepreneur whose intention is to contribute to a sustainable transformation within a specific sector. The ecopreneur does so by starting a venture within the sector and practicing sustainable processes ensuring sustainable development in the future for the venture. Along this, Isaak (2002) goes on to describe the difference between a “green business” and a “green-green business”. A green business is those that did not start with sustainability as part of its business model but got integrated later on due to the financial and marketing advantages. A green-green business is those that started with sustainability as part of its core. The founders of such ventures can be classified as ecopreneurs according to Isaak (2002). Another definition can be found by Kirkwood & Walton (2010). They define ecopreneurs as those who have sustainability integrated into their core business philosophy. Deeper green values drive ecopreneurs and define their strategic and operational decisions within their ventures. Further, Gibbs (2006) argues that an ecopreneur is an entrepreneur who drives by combining environmental awareness and business activities. They do this to shift economic development towards a sustainable future. Schaltegger & Wagner (2011) build further on this by explaining that the core motivation of an ecopreneur is to solve environmental challenges while creating economic value within a specific market (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011, p.224). Their explanation of an ecopreneur is someone that solves environmental problems while creating a profit. The environmental goals are most of the time more important than the economic value, which comes second. The difference between classic entrepreneurship and ecopreneurship is that in ecopreneurship the person’s focus is to change a market to a more sustainable solution. While classic

entrepreneurship is often just focused on creating a high market share. Schaltegger & Wagner (2011) therefore describe an ecopreneur as a person who searches for business ideas and potentials created by environmental problems. This person identifies the market potential and can achieve success within this market (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011, p.229). Further, the article explains that often ecopreneurs are not seen as inventors of specific products or machines. An ecopreneur is searching for existing innovations to place in specific markets to create revenue while contributing sustainable innovation (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

In addition, it is important to understand the characteristics of an ecopreneur. Schaper (2005) states “*entrepreneurial in some shape or form; commercial activities that have a net positive impact on the environment and move towards a sustainable future*”. This definition incorporates the individual's personal belief regarding environmental protection and sustainability, where the individual has strong green values. Regarding Schaper's (2005) definition of the characteristics of an ecopreneur, Ivanko & Kivirist (2008) discusses ecopreneurs as having an embedded mission to better the earth, in the form of a sustainable transformation, incorporating the individuals' personal values seen as green values here.

Within this research, the definition of use will be Isaak's (2002). Isaak (2002) defines ecopreneurs as an entrepreneur whose intention is to contribute to a sustainable transformation within a specific sector. Furthermore, Isaak (2002) discusses the difference between green businesses and green-green businesses. In this research, the focus will be on ventures classified as green-green businesses, meaning that they had sustainable intentions towards bettering the environment from the start. Further, the incorporation of the environmental aspect of the triple bottom line will be focused upon, meaning that the ecopreneurs who have started a green-green business must focus on environmental sustainability rather than social or economic, although overlapping of these aspects is still possible.

The use of definitions of both sustainability and ecopreneurs will come to use when analyzing the motivators for individuals to become ecopreneurs. To enable the analysis and assessment, it is important to understand and define what a motivator is. A further discussion is provided below. In addition, a framework developed by Barbuto, Jr., Trout & Brown, (2004) called the motivational source inventory (MSI) will be used to categorize the motivators that emerged from the data, giving guidance and support to the authors, and enabling the categorization.

## 2.3 Motivators

When using the definition above of ecopreneurs, it is important to understand the difference between intent and motive. Motivations for an individual to act, in this case, to become an ecopreneur and start a green-green business, is a psychological state. These psychological states incline an individual to take a specific action (Raz, 2017). Further, motivations can be described as the needs, wants, interests, or desires that lead us to behave in a particular way. Your motivation reflects your psychological needs or biological needs. Psychological needs differ between individuals and across cultures, while biological needs are consistent among all individuals as it is connected to survival and reproduction (Graham & Weiner, 2012). While motivators are the “why” factor behind an individual's particular action, the intention is the intended outcome of the motivation. For example, an individual wants to become an entrepreneur because he/she misses having flexibility in working hours. Here, the motivation is flexibility, and the intention is to become an entrepreneur. An intention is always formed after motivation and cannot come before. Neither does the intention become the individual's motivation after being formed (Raz, 2017). In the research conducted within this paper, the definition used of ecopreneurs implies that the individual(s) intention was to become an ecopreneur starting a green-green business but does not imply the motivation behind it.

### 2.3.1 Types of Motivators

Over the years researchers have studied the motivations of individuals who have started entrepreneurial activities. The main question in these studies is what drives an individual to start entrepreneurship. Motivations can differ from individuals but the main focus of an entrepreneur, the intent, is to provide a new innovative business solution to the market or to work for themselves and not within a bigger corporation. Estay, Durrieu & Akhter (2013) describe that motivation is connected to the internal energy of an individual that drives them toward business creation. For each individual, this can be distinctive because motivation is based on personal needs, desires, values, intentions, goals, and rewards (Estay, Durrieu & Akhter, 2013, p.247). In addition to that, it is explained that motivations come from personality traits that influence the decision of an individual to start with entrepreneurship. These personal traits can be described as; Reaching accomplishment, risk-taking, gaining dominance and personal control, need for autonomy, and desire for creativity (Estay, Durrieu & Akhter, 2013, p.248-249).

Overall motivations can be classified as intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation focuses on the motivation from an individual that comes from the inner self. This means that the individual is driven to perform an act by their own will, driven by curiosity and exploration. Extrinsic motivation can be described as motivation that comes from the influence of others or the drive of reaching an external goal (Montgomery, 1954; Scott Rigby et al., 1992). Barbuto, Jr., Trout & Brown (2004) explains these two types of motivators as well but goes more in-depth by describing five sources of motivation across multiple disciplines. This theory is therefore not only based on entrepreneurs but applies to all individuals. The five sources of motivation are intrinsic process motivation, instrumental motivation, self-concept-external motivation, self-concept-internal motivation, and goal internalization motivation (Barbuto, Jr., Trout & Brown, 2004, p.11-15). This theory of identifying and assessing personal motivations is called the Motivation source inventory (MSI). The MSI will further be used, as explained previously, to structure, analyze and assess the answers given within the interviews. By using thematic analysis, which is further explained in the methodology, the authors have the opportunity to classify the motivators extracted from the data gathered and categorize them into the MSI framework. The authors are as well open to additional motivations lying outside of the MSI, but to create a structure and framework, guiding the authors, the MSI framework will be used throughout the analysis and assessment of the findings.

Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic Motivation
Intrinsic process motivation      Self concept internal motivation	Instrumental motivation      Self concept external motivation      Goal internalization

**Table 1.**

Types of motivators

**- Intrinsic motivation**

*1. Intrinsic process motivation*

Intrinsic process motivation is described by Barbuto & Scholl (1998) as the enjoyment of a certain type of work for an individual. This type of motivation comes from the inner self of an individual instead of external factors such as rewards or status. Intrinsic motivators behaviors are based on the activity an individual is undertaking. This can be

explained as psychological needs which means that competence, autonomy, and relatedness are important (Barbuto & Scholl, 1998, p.1012)

## 2. *Self-concept-internal motivation*

In this case, motivation is internally orientated where an individual is motivated by their internal standards. An individual is motivated to reach their personal goals and is focused on accomplishment. Self-concept-internal motivation is similar to intrinsic motivation because it enjoys the process of the tasks but the difference is that the outcome is even more important. The outcome can be described as the need for achievement, esteem, and reaching optimal personal growth for the individual (Barbuto & Scholl, 1998, p.1013).

### - **Extrinsic motivation**

## 3. *Instrumental motivation*

This type of motivation can be described as the tangible outcomes of doing a task. In this case, an individual is motivated by the reward that is earned after doing a specific task. This can be in the form of salary, promotions, bonuses, etc. (Barbuto & Scholl, 1998, p.1012). Further instrumental motivation can be seen as the drive from an individual to create power, need for existence, and safety. This type of motivation can be related to biological needs, which means that an individual is striving for basic human needs for existence. As an example, this can be seen as a roof, food, and a safe environment.

## 4. *Self-concept-external motivation*

Self-concept-external motivation is based on the external factors that influence motivations for an individual. These external factors are described by Barbuto & Scholl (1998) as seeking acceptance from others. The motivation of an individual is influenced by a larger group because the individual is seeking belonging, social inducements, comfort, and approval. After achieving these factors an individual can create a specific status among the group.

## 5. *Goal internalization*

Lastly, there is goal internalization motivation which means that an individual is motivated by a specific task because it shares the same value as their values. By sharing these same values the individual is motivated to reach a common goal. This type of motivation can be related to self-actualization, which means that an individual is capable of doing all they

can to reach self-fulfillment and their personal and common goals (Barbuto & Scholl, 1998, p.1013).

Currently, this theory is used to address motivators across multiple fields of study. As an example, Barbuto, Jr., Trout & Brown (2004) use the MSI (Motivations sources inventory) theory to identify sources of motivation of adult rural workers. They used this to measure and assess different motivators in traditional business settings. In this research paper, this theory is used as well to assess the different underlying motivators. Only in this case, it is used to address the motivators for individuals to start with ecopreneurship.

### 2.3.2 Current Literature on Motivators for Ecopreneurship

As mentioned previously, ecopreneurship has been researched limited, thus, the research that has been conducted suggests that creators of ecologically friendly ventures may have different views and opinions on sustainability, in comparison to “regular” entrepreneurs, which they take into their foundation of the new venture creation (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). For ecopreneurs, ethical reasons, and a need to contribute to sustainable solutions play a part, but it is not the only reason. A gap in the market creates environmental deterioration or a consequence of a market failure leading to a response, which leads to being a motivator for individuals to become ecopreneurs (Cohen & Winn, 2007). Pastakia (1998) discusses how market failures leading to the inability to deal with negative environmental consequences that could potentially harm biodiversity and create an ecological imbalance have created a consumer movement towards environmentally friendly solutions, leading to opportunities for ecopreneurs. Discussions have been suggesting that all entrepreneurs have similar motivators, but according to research this is not the case, not even within the more niche group of ecopreneurs.

In research conducted by Kirkwood & Walton (2010) on motivators behind ecopreneurs, the findings came down to five main drivers for ecopreneurs: green values, a gap in the market, making a living, being their own boss, and passion. These five main motivations found by Kirkwood & Walton (2010) were then classified into push and pull categories. Push and Pull motivators are often described as a theory on the motivation for individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Baum & Locke, 2004; Gódnány et al., 2021). The two different terms used, push, and pull, describe different scenarios leading to the motivation to become an entrepreneur. Push is referred to as a necessity entrepreneur and pull is called an opportunity entrepreneur. The individual who became a necessity

entrepreneur was “pushed” into it due to the negative outcomes of their surroundings. These surroundings are often associated with internal factors leading to negative outcomes, such as loss of work, dissatisfaction, long-term unemployment, or other circumstances resulting in negative emotions for the individual. These are all situations an individual would not want to be found in (Taylor, 1996). The individual who became an opportunity entrepreneur can be seen as “pulled” into it and the individual is encouraged to engage in entrepreneurial activities. These opportunities spotted by the individual are often caused by market failures or imperfections leading to unsatisfied needs.

The green values found as a motivator by Kirkwood & Walton (2010) of the ecopreneurs were often combined with a gap in the market spotted by the ecopreneur. The ecopreneur identified a gap in need of a solution, and with their green values in mind, the individual exploited the gap to provide a sustainable solution. The individuals also expressed that the green values imprinted into the business from the start gave the business itself meaning. This type of venture is described as a green-green venture by Isaak (2002). Another factor driving green values as a motivator is the desire to influence and impact others with similar green values. The ecopreneurs saw an opportunity to educate others about their green values through a venture (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010).

A gap in the market fulfilling the need for eco-friendly products/services were also identified as a motivator for ecopreneurs. These gaps identified appeared from market imperfections that had led to environmental deteriorations, the individual's expertise, and experience or a personal need not being met leading to the ability to recognize an opportunity (Baron, 2006; Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). Cohen & Winn (2007) also conducted a study where similar findings appeared. Market imperfections lead to gaps that individuals managed to identify and act upon.

Another motivator found for ecopreneurs is the ability to make a living. Research shows that ecopreneurs' drive to make a living was not to become wealthy or earn large profits, but rather to make enough to continue their operations sustainably and to support themselves and their families (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). Schaltegger & Wagner (2011) also suggests that ecopreneurs' main motivator is the environmental goals, which are an integrated part of the business core from the start, whereas financial profits are the ends of the business continuously supporting the ecopreneur's sustainable work and environmental impact.

The capability to decide your own work and time, being your own boss, was another motivator among the ecopreneurs. Thus, the ecopreneurs explained the need to be their own

boss, this desire is questionable to be a driving force in case the ecopreneurs had identified competitors before starting their venture, leading to a gap in the market being a stronger motivator than the desire to be their own boss (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010).

The passion for the products or services the ecopreneurs offered was as well a motivator for becoming an ecopreneur. The findings suggest that passion is closely linked to the ecopreneurs' green values, with ecopreneurs' passion for "green cause" being a driving motivator (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). The findings further suggest that for ecopreneurs, it is difficult to separate the motivators' passion and green values, as they are often closely linked together and combined into the venture creation (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010).

The findings in general by Kirkwood & Walton (2010) support previous studies done by Keogh & Polonsky (1998) which suggest that ecopreneurs have a variety of motivators leading to their decision of starting a venture, with their underlying green values being very impactful.

### 3. Methodology

This research aims to conduct a qualitative study, studying the underlying motivations behind ecopreneurs. The emerging research field of ecopreneurship has left a gap in the research field concerning motivators behind the start of new green-green ventures, in which the authors of this research want to further close the gap and contribute to the understanding of ecopreneurs. To achieve the following goal stated above, the authors have set definitions regarding the key concept following this research. These definitions will be used to define ecopreneurs, and it has set a clear structure regarding who will be interviewed and what type of venture the interviewees have started. The structure of the research and the complexity of the field has led to the methodology chosen, which has enabled authors to effectively conduct semi-structured interviews in an attempt to find out the motivators behind ecopreneurs. The interview candidates have been carefully picked regarding the definitions of an ecopreneur and sustainability, which have enabled the authors to carefully set the scene and conduct interviews to find out what motivations drove the ecopreneurs to start a green-green venture. The candidates' ventures can be defined as a microenterprise and are founded within the past 5 years and have a maximum of 10 employees (James, 2021).

The reason for a qualitative study with semi-structured interviews being chosen is due to the complexity of becoming an entrepreneur. More structured forms of questionnaires do not capture the richness of in-depth analysis captured through interviews. Becoming an



entrepreneur, in this case, a more niche form of entrepreneurship, ecopreneur, is a very personal and subjective process, as an individual evolves into an ecopreneur through evaluating and responding to experiences, circumstances, and events. Further, for the authors to properly understand the motivations behind ecopreneurs, a questionnaire would be impossible as it does not capture the complexity of the decision-making process. Only an interview can record the interrelationships between the factors leading to an individual deciding to become an ecopreneur. Due to the field of ecopreneurship being in an exploratory phase in terms of developing theories on motivators, qualitative, face-to-face, in-depth interviews are better suited (Stevenson, 1990).

After conducting the interviews, analyzing and interpreting the data gathered, the authors will carefully code the answers given regarding motivators from the ecopreneurs into the motivation source inventory theory (MSI) (Barbuto, Jr., Trout & Brown, 2004, p.11-15). This theory will help guide the authors into a structure leading to conclusions that can be drawn regarding the definitions, country context, and theoretical framework. The interviewee's answers, and the analysis of the interrelationship between the factors leading to the individuals becoming ecopreneurs, will be assessed and categorized following MSI. The importance of understanding how the authors will analyze the data collected is crucial to establish trustworthiness among the readers to validate the research conducted (Nowell et al., 2017). Therefore, the data collected will be analyzed by the authors using a thematic process. Some researchers describe thematic analysis not to be its own method, but rather a tool to help with the analytical process of data. Others argue that thematic analysis is its own method (Nowell et al., 2017). Nowell et al (2017) argue that it is its own method and that it can be widely used across different research questions as a method to analyze, categorize and describe themes found within the data collected. That is as well the aim of this research, and therefore thematic analysis has been chosen as the analytical method when assessing the data collected. Conclusions will then be drawn regarding where the motivators of ecopreneurs come from following MSI, further closing the gap in the research field, and to inspire for further research to be done.

A research that has inspired the authors, which this research will take guidance from and further pressure on ecopreneurs in Sweden, is the research done by Kirkwood & Walton (2010). Kirkwood & Walton (2010) conducted similar research, which inspired the selection of methodology used in the different aspects. Further discussions can be found below.

### 3.1 Case study New Zealand

A similar study researching the motivators behind ecopreneurs in New Zealand was done by Kirkwood & Walton (2010), which has inspired the author's work with this research. Before conducting their research, Kirkwood & Walton (2010) engaged in a literature review. The literature review is important to understand the entirety and complexity of the field of ecopreneurship and to guide the authors into a theoretical framework that can be used when assessing and analyzing the data collected from the interviews conducted. Kirkwood & Walton (2010) found two theories important to their research, with one found by the authors of this research to be crucial for the research conducted in this paper as well. The theory found to be similar and crucial is by Schaltegger (2002) who states that the creation of a new environmentally sustainable venture is different from an existing venture transitioning its strategic and operational work to sustainable. This theory goes along well with Isaak's (2002) theory on green-green ventures, which is a theory that has been identified and will be used by the authors throughout this research as well.

Kirkwood & Walton (2010) adapted a qualitative approach to their research based on the limited research done on ecopreneurs and that qualitative research is well suited to fields where limited research has been done (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007). Kirkwood & Walton (2010) interviewed 14 ecopreneurs who all suited their definition of an ecopreneur. The interviewees were purposely selected from a wide range of industries, given the little information on the topic today. The interviews were conducted in semi-structured settings as it is often a complex decision to engage in entrepreneurship, and it allows us to examine the expression of relationships between motivators expressed by the interviewees (Kirkwood & Walton, 2010). After conducting the interviews, Kirkwood & Walton (2010) coded the transcripts created after themes, allowing for a deeper analysis leading to conclusions and findings. The themes were then categorized into the push and pull framework, to then conclude whether ecopreneurs tend to be motivated by push or pull factors when starting with ecopreneurship. By adopting the push and pull framework, the authors feel like Kirkwood & Walton (2010) are pushing the participants into either one of these two categories. Rather than using this framework, the authors will use the MSI in combination with being open to additional motivators outside of the MSI framework. The country in which the research was made was New Zealand, giving context to the findings, conclusions, and applicability to other countries. The working structure adapted by Kirkwood & Walton (2010), will be adapted as well by the authors of this research due to the similarities in the research area. The limited

amount of research within the field, the complexity of motivators, and the country context have all led the authors to conduct qualitative research with seven interviewees under semi-structured settings to fully allow for the examination of expressions of interrelationships between the motivators mentioned by the interviewees. The authors will as well adapt purposive sampling and a thematic analysis process to this research which is further discussed below.

## 3.2 Research Method

This research will use a qualitative research approach because it allows the researchers to explore the underlying motivations for the participants to start with ecopreneurship. Therefore for this exploratory research, this is selected as the best form of research. The focus of the data collection is based on a qualitative approach in the form of semi-structured interviews. Using this approach provides the authors with the possibility to let the participants think about what their motivations would have been instead of pushing them in a specific direction (Choy, 2014, p.101). The interview guideline was made before the interviews to help structure the interviews to a certain height but is not followed in order. Using this type of method, the authors were able to ask follow-up questions based on the answers of the participants. Therefore, the authors were more flexible during the interviews, and follow-up questions were asked during the interviews if needed (Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M. & Kangasniemi, M, 2016, p.2955).

Within the semi-structured interviews, the authors used a guideline questionnaire based on the participant's background, connection with sustainability and previous experiences, entrepreneurial journey, and work experience and motivators. These pre-arranged questionnaires were solely used as a guideline during the interview and left space for the authors and the participants to open the discussion.

### 3.2.1 Method of Selection

An important aspect of the methodology is for the readers to understand how the ecopreneurs and their green-green ventures were selected. Therefore, an explanation and justification will be given within this section to establish transparency and credibility regarding the research methodology pursued. The method of selection used was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a method often used in qualitative studies (Campbell et al., 2020; Miles & Huberman, 1994) that aims to increase the profundity of a research field

instead of the width (Palinkas et al., 2015). The purposive sampling method does not incorporate any random form of sampling and ensures that the final sample is useful and specific following the previously established definitions. Adopting a purposive sample method assumes that certain kinds of people, in this case, ecopreneurs, may hold specific views on the topic being researched, in contrast to other kinds of people, for example, general entrepreneurs (Mason, 2002; Robinson, 2014; Trost, 1986). This selection method is therefore chosen in this research as it fits with the aim and purpose of the research. The interviewees were chosen following the definitions regarding ecopreneurs, sustainability, and their ventures, but as well due to the likeliness of appropriate and useful information given during the interviews (Kelly, Bourgeault & Dingwall, 2010). Another reason for the chosen purposive selection method is that it will efficiently use research resources (Kelly, Bourgeault & Dingwall, 2010), which helped the authors due to the time constraints of conducting this research. The selection criteria used was for the individuals to be an ecopreneur according to the definition given in: 2.2 Defining Ecopreneurs, which states that the authors will adopt Isaak's (2002) definition of ecopreneurs, specifying that the entrepreneur must have started a green-green venture with a focus upon the planet aspect of the triple bottom line. Isaak's (2002) definition of an ecopreneur also states that environmental sustainability must be focused upon, which goes along with the author's definition of sustainability which as well were a selection criterion. This definition infers that the ecopreneurs studied have green values as part of their personal values. This is crucial to the study as green values play an important role in the selection method, and in defining what an ecopreneur is. Another criterion used was for the ecopreneur's venture to be classified as a microenterprise according to James (2021), with the venture established within the previous five years and having less than 10 employees. The reason for using the definition of microenterprises is due to the minimization of post-rationalization by the ecopreneurs, which can be seen as a limitation.

### 3.2.2 Data Analysis Method

The method that will be used to analyze and assess the data collected will be thematic analysis. The thematic analysis will be used to assess the codes that emerged from the data gathered. The advantages of thematic analysis are its flexibility and modification towards the needs of a study, enabling a rich and detailed, but as well complex set of data. Disadvantages with thematic analysis can be found when comparing the method to other methods, as it prohibits the authors to make claims regarding the language used (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The method's flexibility can as well lead to inconsistencies when assessing themes found in the data set (Holloway & Todres, 2003).

The whole process contains six separate phases described by Nowell et al (2017) in the journal article "Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria". The authors of this research will conduct these phases accordingly. The first phase is after gathering the data through semi-structured interviews, to familiarize ourselves with the data. In this phase, it is important to take note of possible themes, and theoretical thoughts and to keep track of all raw data, transcripts, and notes that were taken throughout the interview process. The second phase is to generate initial codes. Here it is important to use a coding framework, reflexive journaling, and to take note of all meetings discussing the data between the authors. The third phase is searching for themes. Here the authors will make use of researcher triangulation and document the process in attempting to develop themes and theories. The fourth phase is reviewing the themes developed in the third phase. Here a detailed and thorough assessment of the themes developed by the authors will take place, as well as going back to the raw data to test for referential adequacy. The fifth phase is the defining and naming of the themes. Due to the theoretical framework used in this research, the authors will instead of defining and naming, place the themes developed within the MSI framework. In addition to the MSI framework, the authors are open to other motivators not fitting into the MSI framework, but rather let the framework guide the authors in their research. The last and sixth phase of the thematic analysis is the production of the report. The authors will develop and describe the findings, the analytical choices, the contexts, and the theoretical framework clearly to demonstrate understanding and establish dependability (Nowell et al., 2017).

### 3.2.3 Limitations

The authors are aware of the limitations of using this form of qualitative research approach. The main limitation of this research is the post-rationalization among the ecopreneurs, which means that the participants, the ecopreneurs, have changed their thoughts about their motivations over the time since their green-green ventures were launched. By reflecting upon their own motivators for starting with a green-green venture, the ecopreneur can be biased or influenced by new information that they gathered during their entrepreneurial journey. This could be a limitation since this research focuses on the motivations that drove them towards starting their green-green venture. To limit the effect of

this limitation, the authors narrowed down the participants to ecopreneurs who started a green-green venture within the past 5 years. A relatively short time span limits the post-rationalization and allows for the true motivators to be explored. Therefore, the authors aim to collect data from participants who are still aware of their reasons and motivations for starting their green-green venture.

Another limitation of this research could be the amount of time that this research is conducted in. This research has been conducted within a 5-month span which could lead to missed information from a larger number of participants which would eventually strengthen the outcome of the research (Choy, 2014, p.101). Although the time limit could be a limitation, the authors made use of purposive sampling to make sure that the correct participants were interviewed, and that the data gathered were sufficient for this research. Further, this limitation could as well be a starting point for further research on this topic, as a larger number of participants could be studied to get a wider sense of motivators among ecopreneurs.

Lastly, using semi-structured interviews leads to a rich amount of data and information that needs to be processed precisely by the researchers. This could be a limitation because important data could be overlooked (Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M. & Kangasniemi, M, 2016, p.2955). This limitation is tackled by the researchers because of the knowledge and past experience that they have within this field of research.

On the other hand, the authors are aware that there are also other methods to identify the motivators for ecopreneurs. Those alternative methods were discussed for this research, for example, a quantitative approach as a survey. Although these methods were considered, a decision was taken not to pursue these methods due to their limitations. Using a survey as a method would limit the authors to explore the underlying motivations of the participants due to the limitation of pre-arranged questions. Although the benefit of quantitative research would be of reaching a larger audience in a shorter period of time and in general less time-consuming, in this case, the authors need the individual perspective of the participant on why they started with ecopreneurship. Further, by using a quantitative method in the form of a survey, the authors are limited to questions that are not providing the possibility to explore in-depth information about motivators (Choy, 2014, p.101). Lastly, this research method requires a greater number of respondents on the questionnaire, and finding participants that are classified as ecopreneurs is considered a challenge. Therefore using a qualitative method in the form of semi-structured interviews is considered the best fit for this research.

Other qualitative methods such as structured and unstructured interviews were as well considered as possible methods for this research. The authors decided not to adopt one of these approaches because of their limitations. By using a structured method during the interviews the authors are restricted to the pre-formulated questions and there is no possibility for identifying underlying information from the participants. Although this method is less time-consuming given the fact that by using this method, it is not possible to go in depth during the interview which makes this method not applicable to this research (Gill et al., 2008, p.291). On the other hand, using an unstructured interview method would be more time-consuming and require the right management during the interviews. Further, this method gives the possibility to go more in-depth about a specific topic but does not contain a guideline in the form of pre-arranged questions (Gill et al., 2008, p.291). In this case, these pre-arranged questions are needed to steer the interview in the right direction and to collect the right information that is needed for the data collection and analysis.

### 3.3 Establishing Trustworthiness

By pursuing a thematic analysis, the authors hope to establish trustworthiness among scholars and researchers. Trustworthiness as a concept was redefined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) into four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The credibility of the research is decided when the audience is faced with experiences they can recognize. This will, for the authors, be hard to establish due to the newness of research. Instead, the authors will make use of peer reviews, in the form of supervision and grading by established researchers at Lund University School of Economics and Management, which is as well noticed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way to establish credibility. Transferability refers, in qualitative research, to the transfer of information and practices from case to case. Thus, this is impossible for the researchers to control, as they do not know the sites of transfer for their research, the researchers can provide rich information so that other researchers can judge the transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The authors will use transferability to give as much context as possible to the readers, allowing the reader to make an educated assumption on whether the findings are transferable or not to their specific context. Dependability refers to the research process and its logic and clarity. If readers can understand the research process, the readers can better consider the dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By giving a detailed outline of the theoretical framework and methodology used, the authors will demonstrate to the readers the practices put in place and the methods

used, which allows the reader to better understand and judge the dependability of the research. The last criterion established by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is confirmability, which refers to the authors' ability to clearly show the findings and conclusions drawn from the data collected. The thematic analysis used by the authors will clearly demonstrate the author's ability to draw conclusions and show the findings. Quotes will be incorporated in the findings along with a detailed description of the codes that emerged from the data gathered.

### 3.4 The Case Companies

In this section, the case companies are described that have participated in the research. All the participants are located in Sweden and the business is less than 5 years old. In Table 2, an inclusion with all the relevant demographics of the participants can be found. The 7 participants are carefully selected by the definition of ecopreneurs, sustainability, and the ventures of the participants. As explained earlier due to limited research time, the authors proceeded with 7 selected participants for the interview process. The 7 participants were carefully selected and successfully went through the pre-arranged criterion established through the definitions provided in the theoretical framework. Participants were sourced through multiple sources such as word-of-mouth referrals, researchers' networks, and websites such as Circular Economy Loop ([www.circulareconomyloop.com](http://www.circulareconomyloop.com)) and Swideas ([www.swideas.se](http://www.swideas.se)). Below the participants are stated with a brief description of their green-green ventures. Names, company name, and background information is stated with the permission of the participants in Table 2.

#### (1) Fjällgås

Fjällgås was started by Charles van de Kerkhof who is on a mission to accelerate the co-creation of a regenerative future. His company is focused on taking action by bringing people together to plant a seed for a regenerative future. The focus of the company lies in regenerative tourism, education, agriculture, and nature.

#### (2) Go Cirkulär

Go Cirkulär was founded by Irene Atance and is a company that focuses on upcycling ingredients for the skincare industry. Her main focus is to make products that are good for the planet and the skin. She is the founder of the company and currently, there are no other



employees. She works in the field of reducing ingredient waste and protecting the environment by saving these ingredients and upcycling them towards new products.

### (3) Cirkulär

Eric Öste founded Cirkulär back in 2019 in Lund, Sweden. Cirkulär is focused on developing the next generation of biological factories by using fungal cells. By using this new technology Eric embraces sustainable transformation within the sector. Cirkulär helps multiple industries with their technology to change their production processes by using residual waste from food, wood, agriculture, and chemicals. With their technology, they change this residual waste into new proteins, enzymes, chemicals, and cells.

### (4) Jorddoktor

Jonas Nilsson is currently working on his start-up Jorddoktor which he is launching in 2023. Jorddoktor is brought to life by Jonas because he is convinced that in the current agricultural industry, we as a society are too dependent on chemical fertilizers. Therefore, he found a solution by using the soil food web. His mission is to help farmers towards a more regenerative solution for their farms without being dependent on chemicals.

### (5) CoHabit

CoHabit was founded in 2022 in Malmö, Sweden, by Vaishnavi Srinivasan, Maximilian Pangerl, and Jed Manguera. All founders participated in this research to identify their personal motivators. CoHabit provides its customers with a circular furniture rental service. Their goal is to make furnishing more sustainable for their customers and for the planet. They are tackling the problem of fast furniture and supporting a shift in consumer behavior.

## 3.4.1 Table demographics

**Table 2.**  
Demographics information  
for the cases.

Company	Name participant	Product/ service	Employees (including founders)	Gender	Date founded	Based in	Nationality
1	<b>Fjällgås</b> Charles van de Kerkhof	Regenerative tourism, education, agriculture.	1	M	2022	Lund, Sweden	The Netherlands
2	<b>Go Cirkulär</b> Irene Atiance	Upcycled skincare products	1	F	2020	Malmö, Sweden	Spain
3	<b>Cirkulär</b> Eric Öste	Biological factories by fungal cells	7	M	2019	Lund, Sweden	Sweden
4	<b>Jorddoktorn</b> Jonas Nilsson	Circular soil food web	1	M	2023	Löddeköpinge, Sweden	Sweden
5	<b>CoHabit</b> Vaishnavi Srinivasan	Circular furniture rental	3	F	2022	Malmö, Sweden	India
6	Maximilian Paugerl			M			Germany
7	Jed Manguera			M			Philippines

### 3.5 Country context

Sweden is a country that has a long history of focusing on education and research, dating back to 1842 when the Swedish government introduced compulsory schooling for 6 to 13-year-old children, which has later been discussed as a crucial part of Sweden's development from a relatively poor agricultural country to a rich innovation leader in the world. Today, the Swedish government invests more than 3% of its GDP every year into research and development to continuously develop and support new and old ventures in their aspiration of developing world-leading products. This has helped to develop governmental organizations, such as Vinnova, that support the startup ecosystem (Swedish Institute, 2022).

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report from 2022/2023, Sweden ranks 11<sup>th</sup> overall when measuring entrepreneurial activities in the world in comparison to countries with equivalent conditions and economic development. In other categories, such as entrepreneurs who want to make a difference in the world and entrepreneurs who consider environmental aspects, which both can be seen as ecopreneurial activities, Sweden ranks high as well. According to the data reported by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2022), it is clear that Sweden hosts a supportive environment for ecopreneurs to flourish, which makes this research current and relevant, researching the motivators behind ecopreneurs which can inspire and further help other researchers to develop countries less developed in ecopreneurial activities compared to Sweden.

## 4. Findings

The ecopreneurs studied were found to be motivated by a variety of factors leading to the start of their green-green ventures. After implementing the methodology discussed above, the motivators emerged into seven themes. These seven themes are discussed below, including quotes and connections to each other to clarify and assess the motivators for ecopreneurs in Sweden. By making use of the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators divided in the MSI framework the authors are able to connect the seven themes found in the interviews within this framework. Based on this, the authors identified what types of motivators are most common among ecopreneurs in Sweden. The seven themes that emerged from the interviews are:

- (1) Previous life experiences
- (2) Future generations
- (3) Market change
- (4) Gap in the market
- (5) Family influence
- (6) Swedish supportive ecosystem
- (7) Being their own boss

Table 3 shows the connection between the seven themes and the participants that mentioned this as motivators. This table helps the authors understand which themes were most common among the participants and therefore also shows the correlation between the answers of the participants. By doing this the authors are not measuring the results, instead, all seven themes emerged seemed to play an equally important role in the motivation behind ecopreneurs in Sweden, and due to the methodology chosen, the authors cannot say if any motivators are stronger than others, rather that these seven themes are all present, and all play a part in the making of ecopreneurs and green-green ventures in Sweden.

**Table 3.**  
Motivators for each participant.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
	<b>Fjällgås</b> Charles van de Kerkhof	<b>Go Cirkulär</b> Irene Atance	<b>Cirkulär</b> Eric Öste	<b>Jorddoktorn</b> Jonas Nilsson	<b>CoHabit</b> Vaishnavi Srinivasan	<b>Maximilian Pangerl</b>	<b>Jed Manguera</b>	
<b>Previous life experience</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5
<b>Future generations</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				2
<b>Market change</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				3
<b>Gap in the market</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
<b>Family influence</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4
<b>Swedish supportive ecosystem</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6
<b>Being own boss</b>							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1

## 4.1 Presentation of Findings

In this section the findings are presented by using the seven themes that emerged from the interviews. Based on the seven themes the findings are explained with quotes of the participants. In this section, the correlation between the themes and participants is shown to create a better understanding of the connection between the themes.

### 4.1.1 Previous life experiences

Almost all the participants were influenced by previous life experiences to start with their sustainable venture. Based on the data gathered these previous life experiences can be explained more in-depth by classifying them into two segments: Study & work experiences and environmental experiences.

- Study & work experiences

Study & work experiences are a common theme among the participants. Study & work experiences are explained as experiences throughout the participants' lives that motivated them to start their green-green ventures. Charles van de Kerkhof emphasized the influence of starting his company, following his passion, and contributing to the environment. Eric Öste mentioned this as well, following the passion that he gained during his study and working experience.

*“Most of the companies I've worked for in Africa were rather small scale with people just like me, they wanted to contribute in one way or another to the environment or just follow their heart and do what they want to do.” - Charles van de Kerkhof*

*“During my study I finally started committing towards biology, which is my main passion and something that I am curious about. I think it is fascinating that you can see the world in interesting ways within biology. I started studying this in Stockholm and while I was studying I focused more on natural science.” - Eric Öste*

In both cases there is a clear connection between their previous study & work experiences that led them to find out their passion. These happenings steered them towards starting their own ventures. Eric Öste goes even further by explaining the relationship between his previous job and the company that he started recently.

*“I worked in a startup in the sales and business development department in the early stages of the company. Here I got the first taste of what it means to launch something new and work in many new different areas of a company and really do it all. Kind of doing the dirty work, it is not very fancy but it is a good learning experience as you launch something new. You sort of have to do it all.”- Eric Öste*

Jonas Nilsson explains a similar experience that influenced him for starting his own sustainable venture. His entrepreneurial experiences in his previous job steered him towards starting his own venture. This happened in combination with his education and passion.

*“During the job at this fish farming I have tasted what it is like to start your own company, the job was very entrepreneurial. I took an education that would teach me more about this as well, I mean you don't spend four or five thousand euros with 18 hard months of studying to just have it on the bookshelves, I wanted to do something with it.”- Jonas Nilsson*

From the interviews it was also clear that the participants use their previous education as a driver for their current business. Three of the participants explained that their studies opened the door to the business idea. They also see this as their motivation to continue because they are passionate about the subjects. Eric Öste explained his previous study before starting his business. For the participants Jonas Nilsson and Maximilian Pangerl this correlates as well.

*“So we studied recombinant protein production a lot, which is a common tool used in pharmaceutical development, biologics, enzyme production, and so on. We discussed and agreed that this could be used in the food industry somehow. This was back in 2016, after that I created this company.” - Eric Öste*

*“After studying the soil food web at school I felt that I wanted to create a company to work with this. I mean, with the soil food web you can help a golf park, farmer, or private garden, so we can get out of the dependency of chemical fertilizers.”- Jonas Nilsson*

*“Working with improving resource efficiency, water energy, and material efficiency, and I didn't know that I was going to focus on this later as well. It turned out to be the best thing*

*that could ever happen to me. Because I learned about the circular economy, natural processes, and the importance of waste management.”- Maximilian Pangerl*

Jed Manguera also explained that his previous study experience motivated him towards starting his own green-green venture. For him, it was more focused on applying his knowledge about sustainability and entrepreneurship in a more practical way.

*“I studied the Masters in sustainability and one of my top priorities after graduating was how to apply this knowledge in a more practical setting. How could I translate this knowledge into a business that has a direct impact, with CoHabit I found a way to do this.” - Jed Manguera*

- Environmental experiences

Another type of precious experience that arose during the interviews was environmental experiences. This lays the focus on the experiences that the participant had with environmental change that had been observed. Three of the participants mentioned that environmental experiences were a core motivator for them to start their green-green venture. Charles van de Kerkhof mentioned that during his childhood he traveled around Africa where he saw the destruction of nature caused by humans. Jonas Nilsson also mentioned this as a driver for him to start his venture. Their previous environmental experiences motivated them towards starting their ventures.

*“My interest in the environment comes from my background and experience in nature and my hands-on experience in Africa where I saw the destruction and demolishing of nature by humans. This made an impact on me and opened my eyes to the fact that we are destroying our planet.” - Charles van de Kerkhof*

*“My grandfather told me how people were destroying the rainforests in Africa and also in South America. Some messages will just stick on to you and you will never forget that. This was that message. The pictures that I have seen and experienced made me realize that this needs to change.” - Jonas Nilsson*

Jonas Nilsson explains as well that his motivation for starting his business is to make a change and that his experiences made him realize that he needs and can do something about it. Charles van de Kerkhof has this as a similar motivation.



*“We make the decisions for the future. And for me as an entrepreneur, it is based on my previous experience, mostly in Africa, and wanting to do something about it and seeing business or entrepreneurship as a way to have a direct contribution to it. Seeing and understanding the destruction that we do as humans within the tourism industry motivates me to change this.”- Charles van de Kerkhof*

His past experiences in the tourism industry and his environmental experiences made him realize that it is time for change and that the things that he has seen motivate him to change it. He explains this more in-depth by giving examples of what he has seen.

*“But in Africa, I saw the destruction that we are doing to create food. We are going to the forest, and we produce food but we can't manage this process properly. So then you've got soil that is dying and raining away, so we can't use it anymore. It is completely rubbish. So those are hands-on examples that made me realize that we need to improve and help the planet more.”- Charles van de Kerkhof*

Maximilian Pangerl also talks about the hands-on environmental experiences that influenced him to start his green-green venture. His experiences correlate with the one from Charles, seeing the destruction and environmental change made him realize that this needs to change.

*“And in Indonesia it was really about seeing all of the bad things that are going on there, like seeing the landfills, seeing people living on the landfills and kids growing up there and also waste being washed into the ocean while surfing in the ocean and then being confronted with diapers, needles, and razors, which is gross and in my believes need to change.”- Maximilian Pangerl*

#### 4.1.2 Future generations

In two of the cases, the participants mentioned that starting their venture was important to contribute to a better future for upcoming generations. The focus of this theme lies in acting upon environmental challenges to ensure that future generations can exist. The following two quotes from the participants show their connection to future generations.

*“Regeneration is giving back more to society, the environment, and the economy than we extract or take out. So with that mindset, you will always be doing more for all three aspects,*

*not necessarily just the environment, but also society and economy in a way that will benefit all three aspects.” - Charles van de Kerkhof*

*“I'm passionately into this because it is not for making money. I have kids and I love this blue planet and therefore want to realize that happiness isn't about a shiny black Porsche, but it is about nature.” - Jonas Nilsson*

These findings show the correlations between why they started with their green-green ventures and the need to ensure a healthy planet for future generations. In the case of Charles van de Kerkhof, he mentioned that regeneration is important because it benefits the economy and environment in a positive way, but most importantly for society. By using a regenerative approach which Charles van de Kerkhof is working on implementing and educating others about, all these three factors can be assured for the future

Jonas Nilsson goes more in-depth on a personal level when he looks at his own family, and this reflects back on him as a motivator to start with his green-green venture. He is not there for the money but he is connected with the planet. Jonas Nilsson takes it a step further by mentioning:

*“I just think it's common sense that you should take care of the planet. If you come to a place you should leave it in the same way as you arrived or even better. We need to understand that this is important.” - Jonas Nilsson*

This explains that he is aware of the impact that people are making on the planet and that it is possible to change so future generations can live on the same planet as us. Charles van de Kerkhof mentions that we are reaching a point of no return so there is no real other choice. This motivator is in close connection to previous life experiences where both participants have learned and experienced the changes in the world's environment.

*“We've got such a main focus on this linear economy and lots of consumption. Making a quick profit. So that's why we need to implement a regenerative mindset because we've got 50 harvests left for the world to feed itself. I mean, there's a deadline. So we don't really have a choice.” - Charles van de Kerkhof*

### 4.1.3 Market change

Three of the participants mentioned that one of their motivations was to drive a change within a specific market. This change is based on their green-green venture activities that will provide the market with new solutions. Irene Atance had already formed a goal during her studies, that she wanted to contribute towards a sustainable transition within a chosen market.

*“Researching the possibilities more and if this could have the potential to be translated into a business opportunity that has some sort of impact within a specific industry.” - Irene Atance*

*“I always had a clear vision of why I was doing all these things, I wanted to make a difference, I wanted to influence this industry by creating something new and different. I wanted to provide a different way of doing conventional things.” - Irene Atance*

Eric Öste explains that his motivation comes from the impact and change he can make on the market. With his company, he wants to contribute to a better future. Jonas Nilsson has a similar reasoning for the motivator, as he explains that with his venture he wants to change the farming industry. His motivation is to drive the change towards a more sustainable industry.

*“The consequences of climate change will affect all of our lives and therefore this is a real problem. It is very concrete, as we see these consequences around us so it's in a way really easy for me to say that this needs to change and that I need to focus on making a difference and impact within this market.” - Eric Öste*

*“With the soil food web you can help a park golf course, a farmer or private garden to get out of this dependency of chemical fertilizers. We are actually running into the wall so the soil is not degraded. 70% of our houses' arable land is degraded because of this green revolution but if you put the microlight back, you can actually reverse this and you can start building soil for healthier plants. The farmers could be better off today and eventually also financially.” - Jonas Nilsson*

#### 4.1.4 Gap in the market

Half of the participants mentioned that their motivation for starting their green-green venture was coming from identifying a gap in a specific market. This gap that they identified is in combination with their previous experiences that are study and work-related. Their previous knowledge of these topics led them towards identifying these gaps. Irene Atance and Eric Öste mentioned that they identified these gaps based on their previous study experiences.

*“The food industry which is way more advanced and outspoken about sustainability, therefore I researched a different angle of coffee grounds and found an opportunity within bio compounds and the benefits for the skin. I guess that this was the initiator for the journey to begin because after this I started to dive in.” - Irene Atance*

*“We have done a bunch of analysis and research on what group to target, and we identified a gap in the market of aquafeed ingredients and pet food ingredients. And there are a few reasons for that and so that’s where we are focusing on the product side.” - Eric Öste*

In these two cases the participants stated clearly that after identifying these gaps they got motivated to continue with setting up their green-green ventures. Eric Öste and Jed Manguera identified the gaps in the market during the period that they were researching the market. This gap functioned as a motivator to start the business within that market.

*“On the other side, we are providing a service by collecting our partners' byproducts. For them currently, it is a bottleneck to handle all of these byproducts. Therefore, there lies an opportunity for collecting these materials and making this process more efficient.” - Eric Öste*

*“Then we came across the opportunity of buildings in Malmö and Lund where there were many apartments that were unfurnished. Students are moving in every year and at that point, I realized that this was a huge opportunity.” - Jed Manguera*

These gaps in the market are the initiator for the motivation that the participants got from identifying them. Further, this theme is related to the previous experience of participants and of their previously gained knowledge about the market and sustainability. Vaishnavi

Srinivasan identified the gap in the market also based on her own experiences during her time in Sweden.

*“Swedish student cities are brilliant because they give so many things away in the marketplace, some for free or for very low prices and that makes it really affordable. So I wanted to try setting up my house with mostly secondhand items because I didn’t know how long I was staying in Sweden, here the idea arose, I don’t want to consume something new if I can rent it.”- Vaishnavi Srinivasan*

*“So how can students consume more sustainably, especially when they are in a place for a short period of time? This is how the problem was understood.”- Vaishnavi Srinivasa*

Vaishnavi Srinivasan explains that the problem arose after she identified what the gap in the market was. This motivated her to look into this problem and eventually started setting up her green-green venture together with her two co-founders.

#### 4.1.5 Family influence

Family influence is seen as an important theme for the participants to start with their green-green ventures, and start with their entrepreneurial journey. Family influence can be understood as family members who are also working in the field of entrepreneurship or ecopreneurship and have in some way influenced the participants towards ecopreneurship or towards working with environmental sustainability. In four cases the participants mentioned that close family members indeed influenced them. Charles van de Kerkhof, Eric Öste, and Jed Manguera mentioned that their parents were active entrepreneurs and were role models for them to become an entrepreneur as well. In combination with their green values and their previous experiences, they got motivated to start their own business.

*“All my family members have their own businesses, so that's one of the points for me that I already knew as a kid that I wanted to set up my own business. I knew it was going to happen for me one day and my interest in tourism led me towards this business.” - Charles van de Kerkhof*

*“My family is a big influence on me for becoming an entrepreneur, my family is a group of entrepreneurs, both my mom and my dad and uncles and so on are entrepreneurs. It always*

*felt like the only option that I have grown up with and really felt comfortable in. You can argue that this is quite uncommon. But for that reason as well, I have seen it and it sort of becomes more natural and more comfortable for me.”- Eric Öste*

*“My dad has always been an entrepreneur so I have always seen him opening new businesses and always investing in other businesses. So I kind of grew up with it and he gave me that entrepreneurial mindset as well. That is when I thought, I also want to be an entrepreneur.”- Jed Manguera*

In these three quotes from the participants it is clear that family played a role in the participants' motivation to start their business. Charles and Eric elaborate even more on this theme by explaining that seeing their parents running their businesses it was a more common thing for them to follow this path as well.

*“My dad started his own company 20 years ago and my mom 10 years ago. So even at later stages, they worked for themselves. It became more and more of a common thing in my life. It made sense to me that you can start your own thing so you can do your own thing. In this way I can make my own contribution.”- Charles van de Kerkhof*

*“I was always there in the office during the summers, I was sitting there as a kid and surrounded by the colleagues there who were working for the company. It came really naturally for me and that has been a big influence on my own decisions.” - Eric Öste*

Irene Atance is also influenced by her family not to become an entrepreneur but to work with environmental issues. Her parents taught her about environmental sustainability and about the importance of this steered her in the direction of her current green-green venture.

*“My dad has always been an environmentalist and he has always been very active in teaching me about this and showing me good life lessons, as in that corporates were often doing wrong and that there were other ways of doing things.”- Irene Atance*

#### 4.1.6 Swedish supportive ecosystem

The Swedish supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem is a theme that arose from six participants. They all mentioned the importance of the ecosystem in Sweden as a motivator for them to start and continue with their initial green-green business ideas. Irene Atance, Eric Öste, Vaishnavi Srinivasan, Maximilian Pangerl, and Jed Manguera all explained that the supportive ecosystem functioned as a motivator for them to start their business. Irene and Maximilian explained that the support and help from people in Sweden led them towards starting their ventures and continuing with their ideas.

*“Swedish culture is in my opinion very close to nature and as well as the mindset of people. But besides the right mindset in Sweden, there is a good structure and support for companies that are focussing on the environment. As a company it is necessary to have this kind of support and structure.”- Irene Atance*

*“The Swedish ecosystem for an entrepreneurial journey and the amount of support from the environment is just amazing. It was incredible and also important for me and my team. People who genuinely want to help and build a network here in Sweden.”- Maximilian Pangerl*

Eric Öste and Vaishnavi Srinivasan explained this even more in-depth by mentioning examples of incubators and investors that helped them with continuing working on their ideas. The support from the ecosystem functioned as a motivator for them.

*“Sweden has a lot of resources, for me there was Vinnova that I applied for, and other grants. There are many more that you can apply for and also a bunch of business incubators and in general just a lot of people that want to help. Everyone here wants you to succeed, that is my experience at least. This ecosystem is a great place for Swedes but also foreigners to start their ventures.”- Eric Öste*

*“I had no agenda to take up entrepreneurship but when Leapfrogs happened, that was like the eyeopener to continue, someone thinks this idea is worth giving it a try. The support from outside the people who actually built it influenced the take-off of the company.”- Vaishnavi Srinivasan*

Jed Manguera compared the ecosystem of Sweden with his own country, The Philippines, and reflected upon the differences. His motivation for starting his green-green venture came from the vast amount of support from the network that he built in Sweden.

*“If CoHabit was founded in the Philippines it wouldn't succeed I think. The ecosystem here is just different, the culture and the amount of support that we are getting is great.”- Jed Manguera*

Charles van de Kerkhof mentioned another reason why Sweden has a good ecosystem to start a company. He explained that creating a family in Sweden is safer than in other places that he experienced before.

*“I realized that I didn't want to go back to Africa because it is not the most safe continent economically and politically. Also bringing up kids is not the perfect place for that either so therefore, I was looking for something else and that's when I bumped into Sweden. Where all these factors are better.”- Charles van de Kerkhof*

#### 4.1.7 Being their own boss

The last theme that arose from the interviews is, being their own boss. This theme is a common theme among the basic forms of entrepreneurship. Creating freedom and being able to make your own decisions. For Jed Manguera this was an important motivator to start with his green-green venture. He explains that being his own boss will give him the freedom and space to make his own decisions.

*“While looking at my dad I saw that he had a lot of freedom, he wasn't bound to a 9 to 5 job and he could make his own decisions. This is something that was really interesting to me as well.”- Jed Manguera*



## 4.2 MSI Framework Motivators

Within this section the connection between the themes and the MSI framework is made to show what type of motivators are leading to the start of green-green ventures among ecopreneurs. The MSI framework is divided into sections intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In Table 4, the seven themes are placed under the types of motivators. As seen in the table the correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is present. Although, based on the seven themes, extrinsic motivation is most common among ecopreneurs to start their sustainable ventures.

Intrinsic Motivation		Extrinsic Motivation		
Intrinsic process motivation	Self concept internal motivation	Instrumental motivation	Self concept external motivation	Goal internalization
Themes	Market change	Being their own boss	Previous life experiences	Future generations
	Gap in the market		Family influence	Swedish supportive ecosystem

**Table 4.**

Motivational themes connected with the MSI framework.

Although the authors have classified the themes within the MSI framework, difficulties were experienced when doing so because of the simplicity of the current frameworks and literature on motivators. Based on the MSI framework the themes are classified as intrinsic or extrinsic motivators although in practice these two are connected and therefore it is not representable to only classify these types of motivators within either one of extrinsic or intrinsic. The simplicity of extrinsic-intrinsic motivational theories complicated the process of connecting the motivational themes to the MSI framework for the authors, as it engages in the dichotomy of extrinsic-intrinsic motivation. The dichotomy discussed in current literature suggests that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation cannot work parallel with each other. The findings from this research suggest the opposite, that the individuals studied, the ecopreneurs, were motivated by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, among which extrinsic motivation was transformed into intrinsic motivation in certain cases. This has led the authors to question the dichotomy of the MSI framework, and in broader terms, between extrinsic-intrinsic motivation. In the next section, the authors will engage in a discussion describing and questioning the dichotomy between extrinsic-intrinsic motivation.

### 4.3 Questioning the Dichotomy of Intrinsic-Extrinsic Motivation

When assessing the data gathered, the authors found participants being affected by a combination of motivational sources to a high degree, meaning that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation were found to be present within the same individual and their decision to become an ecopreneur. As found in the interview with Charles van der Kerkhof, he states:

*“My aunt took us to South Africa when I was six years old, and she had her own tour operator, so she was offering tours” - Charles van de Kerkhof*

*“That's really because of my background and interest in nature, and my hands-on experience in Africa where I saw how we as humanity have been demolishing nature”. - Charles van de Kerkhof*

Charles demonstrates that his experience and resonance with his environment, which can be seen as extrinsic motivation, gave him intrinsic motivation to work with environmental sustainability. This was also seen with the participant Irene Atance, who states in her interview:

*“I think I never saw myself as an entrepreneur because I was more interested in public policies and public sectors, but after my education at Malmo University, and a course that was about project management, I got an idea about working with repurposing coffee grounds, and that was on my head for quite a bit while studying, going through the course.” - Irene Atance*

Irene discussed how she resonates with her environment, in this case, her further education at Malmö University, and how these extrinsic motivational factors gave her intrinsic motivation to start a green-green venture. Another example is from the participant Vaishnavi Srinivasan who first stated:

*“During my first master's in India, I started volunteering with a non-governmental organization (NGO) that is working with education and the inequalities in the educational space. This was something I started off with as a volunteer, but then I become closely*

*involved with the organization and at one point I quit my corporate job and started working full time with the NGO”- Vaishnavi Srinivasan*

Later on she mentioned that:

*“The trigger for me to work as a volunteer was from my background as I come from a good economical background due to my family’s work, my study through the schools I went to and also my college education was conserved. And in India, education is not publicly funded throughout the country, and I got the opportunity to be sponsored. I feel that it is in a way, my way of giving back to society. I don't need to necessarily give back to the person who gave the money to sponsor my education but in a way of bringing it back to the society”. - Vaishnavi Srinivasan*

Vaishnavi shows that her experience of being able to go to school, in a country where school is not publicly sponsored for everybody, and her observation of that, gave her the motivation to start working within an NGO as a volunteer first to give back to the society that enabled her to get further education. Vaishnavi’s observations and knowledge about the educational system in India can here be seen as extrinsic motivation, but later, this extrinsic motivation goes on to become her drive to give back to society, also seen as intrinsic motivation.

In the individual cases discussed above, the ecopreneur was first made aware of environmental sustainability through their experiences. These experiences can be of various types such as travel, education, and professional work. The experiences, seen as external environments, affected the motivation of the individual to want to start a green-green venture. As the literature on motivation long has studied extrinsic and intrinsic motivations as being a dichotomy, what was discovered during this research challenges the simplicity of the theory as the ecopreneurs absorbed their environment to form their motivation from it. The absorption of the individual's environment would be classified as extrinsic motivation in early motivation literature, in Charles van der Kerkhof, Irene Atance, and Vaishnavi Srinivasan’s case the observation of nature destruction and educational experiences. The findings that emerged from this research show that ecopreneurs in Sweden seem to attract external motivations and turn them into a passion and their mission, making it their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Here, the dichotomy is questioned as the two motivational sources work parallel and spur each other.

Originally, intrinsic motivation gained its initial research as the spontaneous behaviors of learning and exploration. Behaviors that occurred without any reinforcements or incitements (Montgomery, 1954). Extrinsic motivation on the other hand is behaviors performed with an outstanding reward in the end, an incitement (Scott Rigby, C. et al., 1992). As seen in the data gathered and findings that emerged from it, the ecopreneurs researched gained their intrinsic motivation from external environments, not following the previously studied patterns of intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation. The ecopreneurs seemed to resonate with their environments and convert the experiences into their motivation with the intent of starting a green-green venture.

Another conflict found in the literature regarding extrinsic-intrinsic motivation can be seen in the ecopreneurs who were studied starting their green-green ventures due to their passion and curiosity, also seen as intrinsic motivation described by Montgomery (1954). As an example, Maximilian Pangerl stated:

*“I want to go out in the world, I want to travel and explore, and I guess I was just following my gut feeling, to be honest”- Maximilian Pangerl*

This was said regarding his decision to start working in Indonesia during his exchange year as a bachelor student. Maximilian also goes on to describe how it was thanks to his curiosity that he was made aware of environmental destruction in Indonesia and how it negatively affects societies.

*“In Indonesia it was really about seeing all of the bad things that are going on there, like seeing the landfills, seeing people living on the landfills and kids growing up there”.- Maximilian Pangerl*

In contrast, the ecopreneurs studied did not start their venture due to extrinsic motivations as it is described in motivation literature, also described by Scott Rigby, C. et al. (1992) as an action performed with an outstanding reward in the end. On the other hand, the ecopreneurs' goal is to receive rewards in the form of fighting environmental problems and contributing to a healthier planet, which does not fit into the discussion of extrinsic motivations by scholars.

## 5. Discussion

What was found in this research was that the ecopreneurs studied in Sweden were motivated by seven main themes: Previous life experiences, future generations, market change, gap in the market, family influence, Swedish supportive ecosystem, and being their own boss. For all the entrepreneurs studied, a combination of multiple themes was the source of motivation, meaning that multiple factors drove their decision to start a green-green venture. Thus, seven themes emerged which can be placed into the MSI framework, it created confusion and was a complex process for the authors. This is due to the simplicity of the motivational frameworks currently presented in the literature. The findings show that the ecopreneurs' motivation comes from both extrinsic and intrinsic sources, and not solely from either one which is currently suggested in the literature regarding motivational sources (Scott Rigby et al., 1992). During the interview process, it was as well apparent that the ecopreneurs absorbed their motivation from external events, leading to the creation of their intrinsic motivation. This does not correspond well with current literature, which suggests that extrinsic and intrinsic motivational sources cannot work together, and oftentimes, if extrinsic motivation is presented it can damage the intrinsic motivation already existing within the individual (Scott Rigby et al., 1992). Other findings suggest that the individuals studied, ecopreneurs, have an enhanced resonance with their environment, suggesting the inclusion of resonance in a new motivational framework for future researchers to make use of.

### 5.1 The Simplicity of Current Motivational Frameworks

Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivations have long been studied as a dichotomy. The two motivational sources have been presented by early scholars as not being able to be present at the same time. In many cases, if extrinsic motivation is being introduced while intrinsic motivation already exists, it will harm the intrinsic motivation of an individual (Scott Rigby, C. et al., 1992). The two sources of motivation have long been separated, with intrinsic motivation being described as the internal perceived locus of causality, while extrinsic motivation refers to the external perceived locus of causality (Scott Rigby et al., 1992). The polarization of the motivation sources and the theory of extrinsic-intrinsic motivation being too simplistic has caused a dichotomy of them to be widely studied and spread among scholars. Thus, the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is important and has long been discussed as a simple dichotomy, Scott Rigby, C. et Al. (1992) state that it can be misleading when stating it as one. Scott Rigby, C. et al. (1992) argues that the relative

autonomy of an individual's motivated actions, to what degree the actions are experienced as chosen or endorsed, is a better way of understanding motivations rather than an extrinsic-intrinsic dichotomy. The MSI framework chosen as a guiding framework in this research engages in the extrinsic-intrinsic dichotomy by classifying motivators into five separate categories. These categories are based upon extrinsic or intrinsic motivation, which then separates the two from each other, engaging in the dichotomy of the two motivational sources. The dichotomy presented in the framework, in combination with the findings that emerged from the data, the authors felt limited in their categorization of motivators presented by the interviewees. The authors as well felt like the literature available on motivational sources, presents the dichotomy of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as too simplistic, causing conflicts in the literature and as well among motivations for individuals who are presented to be affected by both extrinsic and intrinsic.

### 5.1.1 New Motivational Framework

To further enhance research on motivators for ecopreneurs, the authors suggest a new motivational framework to emerge, which will facilitate future research better, and create a deeper understanding of the motivators behind ecopreneurs. Scott Rigby, C. et al. (1992) argues that a new motivational framework incorporates to what degree an individual's actions are either chosen or endorsed. Such a framework would give a more comprehensive understanding of the motivation behind an action, not engaging in the dichotomy of extrinsic-intrinsic motivation. To further enhance such a framework, the authors would suggest incorporating resonance as discussed by Rosa (2018). Rosa (2018) discusses the elements of resonance, and how it affects the decision-making process and ultimately affects the outcome of an action performed. The findings of this research raised the question of perhaps ecopreneurs are entrepreneurs with a higher ability to resonate with their experiences or the environment one is located in. Below is a further discussion on resonance, and the importance of it among ecopreneurs, which also emerged from the data gathered.

## 5.2 Enhanced Resonance

Resonance, as discussed by Rosa (2018), is consisting of four elements: affection, emotion, transformative qualities, and intrinsic unpredictability. Affection is referred to an external experience connecting with us. This can be seen through experiences of various sorts, for example, music, nature, art, etc. These experiences act as a way for us humans to

relate to the world. Thus, the affection, feeling touched by something, is not enough to create resonance. Another element that is important is the way we act upon these experiences, the affection. One's action is highly dependent on the capacity the individuals have. Often, an immediate physical response is made in the form of goosebumps, increased heart rate, or sweat. This is what Rosa (2018) discusses as the emotional element of resonance. How we as individuals react, and emotionally connect with the experiences, expressed through bodily activities explained above. The response itself, beyond bodily expressions, is heavily dependent on the psychological, social, and cognitive sides of the individual, which makes the experience and the reaction unique to each individual. In addition, the realization that you as an individual are capable of acting upon your experience and the reaction caused by it is discussed by Rosa (2018) as self-efficacy. The transformative qualities can be seen in claims that books, music, and experiences of any sort, changed an individual's perspective or behavior. This leads to the fourth element which is intrinsic unpredictability, meaning that affection, emotion, and transformative qualities cannot be predicted at any moment. It is impossible to know if an experience is going to touch us, and if so, to what degree it will (Rosa, 2018). For resonance to appear, a differentiation in the environment needs to be apparent. It is the differentiation, sometimes the opposition, that enables an individual to react and resonate with their experience. Thus, a world consisting of no differences, in complete harmony, would disable a person's capacity to resonate with their experience, as the environment lacks differentiation (Rosa, 2018). This raises the question that perhaps ecopreneurs are entrepreneurs with enhanced resonance.

During this study, it was apparent that the ecopreneurs studied all had experienced differences in the world, which according to Rosa (2018), is a must to enable an individual to resonate with their experiences. Other findings were that it was clear during the interviews, that the ecopreneurs were resonant with their environment. Rosa (2018) discusses that resonance cannot be established at any moment; it is not something that can be instrumentally constructed at an individual's ask. Its appearance is beyond the individual's control. This further strengthens the question raised earlier, if ecopreneurs are entrepreneurs with enhanced resonance to their environment and experiences? Since the decision-making process and the outcome varies among individuals, and it is heavily affected by a person's personal values (Schwartz, 2006), it enhances the question further, that perhaps ecopreneurs become ecopreneurs, due to their personal values i.e., green values, in combination with the enhanced resonance of their experiences and their environment. For example, Charles van de Kerkhof stated in his interview:

*“From a relatively young age I was able to really understand and see the damage that we're doing to the planet. That's the thing where that drive comes from, to where the motivation comes from to actually do something about it.”- Charles van de Kerkhof*

Charles was fortunate to be able to travel to Africa at a young age with his aunt who owned a tour operation company, which Charles traveled to and experienced from a young age.

Charles demonstrated that he, from a young age, resonated with his environment, and his experiences, and absorbed the information available to him through the experiences. He then goes on to state that this is where his motivation came from. Starting as external factors, in his case, environmental destruction is seen when traveling to the African continent.

According to Rosa (2018), how we react to experiences is unpredictable, and unique to each individual, which further strengthens the question that perhaps Charles, as an ecopreneur, has an enhanced resonance with his environment which enabled a reaction in that he later acted on, starting his green-green venture. Eric Öste stated in his interview:

*“In the forest, I just feel so idyllic and pure in a way, and then you just see a bunch of plastic on the ground like that. That is just you know, to see that on an everyday basis just makes me too sad to go on.”- Eric Öste*

Eric demonstrates a high ability to resonate with his environment as well, showing a physical reaction to plastic waste in environmental habits, and a capacity to act upon his reaction through his green-green venture.

### 5.3 Conclusion

To conclude, the authors conducted a qualitative study, researching the motivators behind ecopreneurs and the start of their green-green ventures. The findings suggest that there are seven themes that act as motivators among ecopreneurs in Sweden. These seven motivators are: Previous life experiences, future generations, market change, gap in the market, family influence, Swedish supportive ecosystem, and being their own boss. All seven themes play a role in the creation of ecopreneurs, and their green-green ventures, and due to the shape and structure of the research, the themes cannot be defined solely between extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Due to the intercorrelation between extrinsic and intrinsic motivators



within the MSI framework, it can be concluded that motivators arise from the connection between these seven themes. The dichotomy of extrinsic-intrinsic motivation, which is present within the MSI framework, complicated the process of connecting the seven themes to the MSI framework. Further, the simplicity of the current literature on motivators, engaging in the dichotomy of extrinsic-intrinsic motivation, is questioned, as findings show that both sources can be present and work parallel with each other in the creation of a motivator for an individual. This led to the suggestion of a new motivational framework being needed, which incorporates resonance. The incorporation of resonance in a new motivational framework arose from the findings suggesting that the individuals studied have an enhanced ability to resonate with their experiences and their environment. This led to the question that perhaps ecopreneurs are entrepreneurs with an enhanced ability to resonate with their experiences or their environment, enabling them to react and act upon experiences related to environmental experiences.

#### 5.4 Further Research Questions

The findings suggest that seven themes are the leading force behind the motivators of ecopreneurs in Sweden. Thus, this study engaged in a smaller sample size, further research could be conducted on a larger sample, further establishing the motivators or the discovery of new motivators. Due to the country context, the applicability of this research can be varying, which suggests similar studies need to be done in other areas, further establishing the motivators behind ecopreneurs.

A new motivational framework is as well suggested, as the current ones available in the literature engaging in the dichotomy of extrinsic-intrinsic motivation, are too simplistic, and do not represent the findings of this research. The authors suggest including resonance, as found to be an important aspect of ecopreneurs making in Sweden, in a new motivational framework.

As the findings stated, the ecopreneurs studied showed an enhanced ability to resonate with their experiences and their environment. This led to the question that perhaps ecopreneurs are entrepreneurs with enhanced resonance. This area could further be researched to enhance and establish the theory developed, along with the question: where does the enhanced resonance originate from?

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview Guide

Questions are based on the theoretical framework.

#### **Introduction:**

1. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your background?
  - a. Education
  - b. Family
  - c. Professional
  - d. Work history
  - e. Hobbies
  
2. And a little more about your entrepreneurial journey?
  - a. How did it start?
  - b. Why?
  - c. When?
  - d. With others? Alone?
  - e. Your own venture? Or did you join a startup?

#### **Sustainability:**

3. What are your thoughts and connection towards sustainability
  - a. Background
  - b. Work history
  - c. Experiences
  - d. Personal experience
  
4. How would you describe your view on sustainability
  - a. Triple bottom line
  - b. How do you integrate this into your company?
  
5. How do you work with sustainability today?
  - a. Specific examples
  - b. Challenges

#### **Entrepreneurial journey:**

6. How would you describe yourself as an entrepreneur/ ecopreneur today?
  - a. How has this changed over time?
  
7. Can you tell us more about when you started your first sustainable startup?
  - a. How?
  - b. With who? Alone?

- c. When?
8. What is your entrepreneurial work today?
- a. Any challenges?
  - b. Sustainable challenges?
  - c. Is this what you expected when you started the business?
  - d. Do you have specific goals that give you the energy to continue?

**Motivation:**

9. Why did you start your current sustainable ventures?
- a. Motivators?
10. How did you come to the decision of starting it?
- a. Specific answers
  - b. Influence by an experience?
  - c. Influence by other people?
11. What are your thoughts from starting the venture and what changed at this moment?
- a. New insights?
12. If you go back in time, could you describe specific motivators for starting your business?
- a. How did it happen?
  - b. Do you still feel the same about it?