

Farmers that engage in entrepreneurship for the “wrong” reason and the moderating role of cultural intolerance (otherwise known as Jante or the Tall Poppy Syndrome).

Erik Hunter

Associate Professor, Department of Work Science, Business Economics and Environmental Psychology
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
erik.hunter@slu.se

Kim Klyver

Professor, Department of Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management University of Southern Denmark
Adjunct Professor, Entrepreneurship, Commercialisation and Innovation Centre University of Adelaide
kkl@sam.sdu.dk

Eric Micheels

Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics University of Saskatchewan
eric.micheels@usask.ca

Jozefine Nybom

Ph.D. candidate, Department of Work Science, Business Economics and Environmental Psychology
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
jozefine.nybom@slu.se

Abstract

In the agricultural sector, the Law of Jante—a Scandinavian form of cultural intolerance towards standing out, being different and overachieving (akin to the Tall Poppy Syndrome and hit-the-nail-on-the-head culture found in other countries)—may play an important role by influencing when entrepreneurship is an acceptable strategic choice to adversity. Based on a three group, between subjects experiment of 122 Swedish University students studying Agricultural and Rural management, we tested whether the advice our participants gave to a fictitious farmer to pursue entrepreneurial activity depended on information regarding the farmer’s motivation to pursue entrepreneurship (experimental treatments included motivation scenarios based on necessity vs. opportunity driven vs. control). Moreover, we test whether entrepreneurial advice is moderated by the participants own “Jante-ness”. Unexpectedly, we found that our participants did not adapt the entrepreneurship advice they give to the situational context nor does Jante play a moderating role; instead we found that Jante had a significant and negative main effect on the entrepreneurial advice given. This finding suggests that Jante is still very much alive and may play an important role in explaining relatively low rates of innovation and entrepreneurship in Swedish agriculture.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; Agriculture; Motivation; Jante; Tall Poppy Syndrome