

# RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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A presentation of the ten projects  
funded by the programme

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# The Programme: Research on Women's Entrepreneurship

*Ulla Göranson, Magnus Lagerholm & Pär Larsson – VINNOVA*

## **The research programme and the call for applications**

In the spring of 2008, VINNOVA invited researchers at universities, research institutes and other organisations to submit applications for funding for research projects under the programme *Research on Women's Entrepreneurship*. The call for applications was part of the government's measures to promote entrepreneurship among women. The government's measures also include Nutek's more practically-oriented programme "Promoting Women's Entrepreneurship" and Statistics Sweden's statistical analyses of entrepreneurship among women. The aim of this document is to present the ten research projects that have been awarded funds as a result of VINNOVA's call for applications.

The intention behind the call is to strengthen and broaden research on women's entrepreneurship. The aim is to generate new research-based knowledge that can be used to improve the opportunities for women to start, run and develop companies and thus, in the long term, increase employment and growth in the Swedish economy. The call focuses on two areas: first, identifying any discriminatory or other obstructive structures to women's entrepreneurship and enterprise and, second, illuminating any differences in the preconditions governing entrepreneurship and growth in sectors that are gender-marked as male or female. The programme has a budget of SEK 30 million for the period September 2008 – March 2011 and the final report is to be submitted to the government no later than 30 June 2011.

## **Background and motives**

Acquiring knowledge that can be used to improve the preconditions for entrepreneurship and enterprise and to stimulate business development and growth is an important research task. There are several reasons why the focus is on women's entrepreneurship in this call. First, there is a growth motive as only a quarter of all the entrepreneurs in Sweden are women and women constitute only a third of all new entrepreneurs. There is thus an unexploited potential for increased entrepreneurship among women. If obstacles and any discriminatory factors are identified, measures can be taken that will enable more women to start and run companies and it will be possible to put their ideas and entrepreneurial energies to good use.

Second, there is a gender equality motive. Sweden has a strongly segregated labour market and this is reflected in entrepreneurship – men and women tend to be active as entrepreneurs in different sectors where the preconditions for entrepreneurship may differ. For example, publicly-financed programmes that aim to promote entrepreneurship are often designed to suit traditional industrial sectors. Consequently, many female gender-marked sectors have not been covered by these support measures. With more knowledge about how different promotional measures work in practice, a basis can be created for the design of support measures that promote the entrepreneurship and enterprise of both women and men but do not reinforce normative notions about women and men.

Third, there is a knowledge motive in itself. Little attention has been paid to women's entrepreneurship in the research in this field, partly because entrepreneurship and enterprise are concepts that are characterised as being strongly male and partly because the areas or sectors in which women predominate as entrepreneurs have not been the focus of the research. In addition, research in this field has applied a gender perspective to only a limited extent. This means not only that knowledge about women's entrepreneurship and enterprise is limited, as women constitute a not insignificant proportion of all entrepreneurs, the lack of knowledge also means that we know relatively little about entrepreneurship and enterprise in general. Studying women's entrepreneurship can highlight important aspects that will help to increase knowledge about entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise in general.

## **Ten approved projects**

37 applications were submitted in response to VINNOVA's call. Of these, 10 have been granted project funds for the period autumn 2008 – March 2011. The projects focus on different aspects of women's entrepreneurship. They relate, for example, to academic entrepreneurship, family businesses, the transformation of the public sector and the EU's structural funds. The projects represent different disciplines and subject areas from business administration and political science to economic history, economics and social and economic geography.

The ten projects are presented here. Although each of the projects can generate valuable knowledge, it is the overall mass of knowledge created by the programme's 10 projects that can make a difference. The programme is expected to identify and highlight obstacles to women's entrepreneurship and enterprise by increasing our knowledge of how various sector- and industry-specific preconditions affect the entrepreneurship of women (and men), and to augment research on women's entrepreneurship, innovation and enterprise. Together with the projects, VINNOVA will work to generate benefits and synergies.

# Going into Politics: Female Entrepreneurs as Policy Entrepreneurs in Swedish Politics, 1990–2008

*Project manager: Eva Blomberg, Södertörn University College*

## **Background and research problem**

The project investigates the issue of female entrepreneurship appearing on the political agenda in Sweden from the 1990s. The aim is to show the importance of *policy entrepreneurs* in politicizing questions concerning women entrepreneurs. Thereby, we aspire to generate new knowledge about gender and politics.

The problem of gender inequality within enterprise – especially with regard to the relative under-representation of female entrepreneurs and corporate executives – has attracted the attention of Swedish politicians on a national as well as a regional level. This may be described as a process involving networks, lobbyists, organizations, political parties and individuals. The ensuing attention makes participation in this process increasingly important to female entrepreneurs and their organizations, a participation taking place within politics as well as within media.

On what grounds have the terms of female entrepreneurship been described, debated and been subjected to political action, and how do networks and organizations act in order to highlight the issue?

## **Purpose and goal**

The aim is to investigate the issue of female entrepreneurship on three political levels: national politics, municipal politics, and organizational politics. Through the analysis of network-formation, organization and the actions of female entrepreneurs – and the ensuing results on a higher political level – we may be able to explain the conflicts surrounding the development of special policies aimed at “female” enterprise.

## **Expected outcomes and results**

On a short-term basis, we may contribute to new knowledge of the conditions of entrepreneurship, from a political and historical perspective. Within what political frameworks and structures do female entrepreneurs act, and what obstacles do they encounter? On a long-term basis we aspire to identify discriminating structures and institutional frameworks within political organizations, decision-making areas and the



mass-media. Our claim is that the combined studies of gender, media, policy-making and decision-making processes will reveal further structures and conditions with implications for female entrepreneurship. Through the highlighting and analysis of female participation in political processes we hope to improve future conditions for female entrepreneurs.

## **Research design**

The project will make use of quantitative as well as qualitative sources and methods, including interviews, organizational protocols and minutes, state investigations, material from political parties and newspaper material. Most of the project will be conducted in 2009–2010.

## **Project participants**

Associate Professor Eva Blomberg, Södertörn University College.

Tel: +46 70 650 81 88

Mail: [eva.blomberg@sh.se](mailto:eva.blomberg@sh.se), [eva.blomberg@mdh.se](mailto:eva.blomberg@mdh.se).

PhD Martin Wottle, Södertörn University College.

Tel: +46 8 608 47 85

Mail: [martin.wottle@sh.se](mailto:martin.wottle@sh.se).

# Academic Entrepreneurship: Incubators and Schools of Entrepreneurship for Female Business Start-ups

*Project manager: Åsa Lindholm Dahlstrand, Halmstad University*

## Background

Research on female entrepreneurship and business start-ups has often focussed on the individual rather than the structural context affecting the phenomena. In this project we will analyze academic entrepreneurship and different structural conditions affecting female business start-ups in the university setting. More specifically, the project will illuminate entrepreneurial learning in university incubators and schools of entrepreneurship. Universities are well-known examples of organizations with severe gender differences. At the same time, the university context offers great possibilities for learning and empowerment. It is thus important that University education and university-linked learning (e.g. in an incubator setting) are used in order to increase and improve female academic entrepreneurship. The study will focus on the role of incubators and Schools of Entrepreneurship for female academic start-ups. We believe that both these mechanisms have potentially high importance for improving female entrepreneurship, but that care must be taken not to conserve existing normative gender differences in this context.

## Purpose and goal

The overall purpose is to develop new knowledge to be used for the improvement of female academic entrepreneurship. The project will analyse whether university incubators and schools of entrepreneurship can be used in order to improve female entrepreneurship, new firm formation and job generation.

## Expected results and effects

Increased female academic entrepreneurship can be one way to create new, well-paid, jobs in Sweden. Improving the existing knowledge of female academic entrepreneurship is important in order to better aid and support new businesses of this kind. The project will generate results with both academic and practical relevance. It will generate an increased understanding of entrepreneurial learning and business development, which can be of use not only for the female start-ups themselves, but also for actors and organizations involved in new firm support, university incubators and

schools of entrepreneurship. The project is also anticipated to result in several policy implications.

## **Research design**

Members with different research backgrounds and interests (e.g. entrepreneurship, innovation, gender) have been brought together in order to develop this project. This creates good possibilities for cross-fertilization and combinations of research methods. We have chosen to include both a quantitative and a qualitative sub-study in the project.

## **Participants**

Professor Åsa Lindholm Dahlstrand, SET, Halmstad University

Tel: +46 35 167738

Mail: [Lindholm.Dahlstrand@hh.se](mailto:Lindholm.Dahlstrand@hh.se),

Pia Mattsson, SET, Halmstad University

Tel: +46 35 167542

Mail: [Pia.Mattsson@hh.se](mailto:Pia.Mattsson@hh.se)

Agneta Hansson, HOS, Halmstad University

Tel: +46 35 167355

Mail: [Agneta.Hansson@hh.se](mailto:Agneta.Hansson@hh.se),

Marita Blomkvist, SET, Halmstad University

Telephone: +46 35 167507

Mail: [Marita.Blomkvist@hh.se](mailto:Marita.Blomkvist@hh.se)

Joakim Winborg, SET, Halmstad University

Tel: +46 35 167541

Mail: [Joakim.Winborg@hh.se](mailto:Joakim.Winborg@hh.se)

Diamanto Politis, SET, Halmstad University

Tel: +46 35 167728

Mail: [Diamanto.Politis@hh.se](mailto:Diamanto.Politis@hh.se)

# **In the Shadow of the Swedish Welfare State: Gendered Entrepreneurship 1950-2005**

*Project manager: Lena Andersson-Skog, Umeå University*

## **Background**

The emergence of the Swedish welfare state and the importance of large firms within export-oriented industry have been two pillars of Swedish economic performance after 1950. Entrepreneurial activities by both men and women have reflected this development, together with the transformation from industrial production to service-oriented activities. There are however several key issues of gendered entrepreneurship in Sweden which remain unsolved in business research. Since a majority of female entrepreneurs have been engaged in firms within the service sector, the histories of such entrepreneurial activities are to a large extent unknown within economic research. Thus, the dominance of research on large industrial firms has neglected the role and the conditions of female entrepreneurs in post-war Sweden.

## **Purpose and goal**

The main purpose of the project is to examine the gendered entrepreneurship that emerged in the shadow of the Swedish welfare state between 1950-2005 both from the perspective of gender theories as well as entrepreneurial theories. The forces behind gendered entrepreneurship in Sweden will be discussed from the viewpoint of pink-collar work and emotional labour.

## **Expected results and effects**

The main expected result will illuminate structural and economic incentives both hindering as well as encouraging structures of gendered entrepreneurship. By analysing such mechanisms we will be able to get a better understanding of the interaction between economic structure, political institutions and the emergence of the welfare state. The effect of these multiple factors on gendered entrepreneurship will be of central importance in this respect. By using historical data on the development of gendered entrepreneurship, we will be able to show how the long-term development of gendered patterns interacts with policy decisions, and how such historical processes can help us to understand the long-term development of entrepreneurship and gender.

Policy implications in terms of how conditions for entrepreneurship might increase the potential for economic growth will be discussed from a gender perspective.

## **Research design**

The project builds on economic historical methods and both quantitative and qualitative empirical historical data. We will especially investigate first, the most gendered industries in terms of entrepreneurship and incentives in a longitudinal study; second, gendered entrepreneurship within the health care sector; and third, career patterns and gendered entrepreneurship in the bio-technology sector.

## **Participants**

Professor Lena Andersson-Skog, Department of Economic History, Umeå University  
Tel: +46 90 786 5249

Mail: [lena.andersson-skog@ekhist.umu.se](mailto:lena.andersson-skog@ekhist.umu.se)

Assistant Professor Helén Strömberg, Dep.of Economic History, Umeå University  
Tel: +46 90 786 7654

Mail: [Helen.stromberg@ekhist.umu.se](mailto:Helen.stromberg@ekhist.umu.se)

Guest Professor Jan Ottosson, Dep. of Economic History, Umeå University  
Tel: +46 90 786 52 49

Mail: [jan.ottosson@ekhist.umu.se](mailto:jan.ottosson@ekhist.umu.se)

Assistant Professor Peter Schilling, Dep. of Economic History, Umeå University  
Tel: +46 90 786 7921

Mail: [peter.schilling@ekhist.umu.se](mailto:peter.schilling@ekhist.umu.se)

Licentiate Jonatan Svanlund, Dep. of Economic History, Umeå University  
Tel: +46 90 786 7921

Mail: [jonatan.svanlund@ekhist.umu.se](mailto:jonatan.svanlund@ekhist.umu.se)

# Women's Entrepreneurship in the Era of Public Sector Transformation

*Project managers: Elisabeth Sundin and Malin Tillmar, Linköping University*

## **Background**

Economic life is constantly changing. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, the public sector seems to be in focus for change and challenges. The background factors are of different kinds; demographic, with an increasing number and proportion of elderly in the population, increasing costs and also the “import” of international trends like NPM for ideological reasons.

The public sector, especially the welfare services, is dominated by women as employees. The public sector's activities in these fields could be an obstacle towards private enterprises as service-providers. Changes could, consequently, mean new opportunities. To date, big national and international companies seem to be the winners – but the pattern is far from easy to describe and interpret and local and regional practices vary.

## **Purpose and goal**

To describe and analyze women-owned businesses in the era of public sector transformation, with particular focus on female-dominated industries. The overall research question concerns how the prerequisites for female (and male) owned businesses are developing and why this is so.

## **Expected results and effects**

Answers to the “how” and “why” questions are of practical, political and theoretical importance. Practitioners and politicians need scientific knowledge as this is a field full of ideological “wishful thinking” that could be transformed to decisions and actions with negative consequences both for “customers” and providers of all types. The theoretical importance is related to the research questions concerning many different theoretical fields, such as theories on organisations and organisational change, on labour market behaviour, on entrepreneurship and on gender-dimensions in all these fields.

## Research design

A variety of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used. On the quantitative side, we will draw on existing statistical data as well as use questionnaires. The qualitative part of the study will comprise strategically-selected case studies as illustrated in the table below. Analysis and discussion will take their point of departure in organisational processes, gender-perspectives and entrepreneurship theory.

**Table on the research design. Enterprises from all groups will be part of the study**

	Owned by women	Owned by men
New enterprises	Taking advantage of the changes	
	Not successful on the new market	
Established enterprises	Taking advantage of the changes	
	Not successful on the new market	
	Actively neglecting the change	
	Were previously successful on the new market	

Big national and international companies that are providers of services on the new expanding markets will also be studied as they, together with the organisations of the public sector, constitute the context for all small and medium-sized enterprises on these markets.

## Participants

Professor Elisabeth Sundin, Department of Economic and Industrial Change, Linköping University

Tel: +46 13 28 15 83

Mail: [Elisabeth.Sundin@liu.se](mailto:Elisabeth.Sundin@liu.se)

Associate Professor Malin Tillmar, the same department.

Tel: +46 13 2815 88

Mail: [Malin.Tillmar@liu.se](mailto:Malin.Tillmar@liu.se)

Research assistants: Jenny Johansson and Birgitta Sköld. The same address.

Mail: [Jenny.Johansson@liu.se](mailto:Jenny.Johansson@liu.se); [Birgitta.Skold@liu.se](mailto:Birgitta.Skold@liu.se)

# Constructions of Gender in Support Practices: an International Comparison

*Project manager: Helene Ahl, Jönköping University*

## **Background**

Knowledge about entrepreneurship in general and about women's entrepreneurship in particular is largely an Anglo-Saxon import, not least an import of research and experience from the USA. These countries have other institutional orders than Sweden – different family policies, different cultures and different sorts of expectations about men's and women's roles in society. However, this is seldom problematized and we therefore risk an uncritical import of models, explanations and policy recommendations that are not applicable in a Swedish context. In order to make adequate use of international research and experience regarding women's entrepreneurship, we therefore need to learn more about institutional differences between countries and we need to understand how such differences create different conditions for the support of women's entrepreneurship.

## **Purpose and goal**

The purpose of the project is first, to map institutional differences (with a bearing on women's entrepreneurship) between Sweden, Great Britain and the USA, and second, to investigate assumptions of gender among those who work to support women's entrepreneurship in the three countries. A basic premise is that assumptions of gender depend on a country's cultural, political and institutional orders, and that such assumptions affect how support programmes for women's entrepreneurship are designed and argued.

## **Expected results and effects**

Through increased understanding of cultural and institutional differences, as well as differences in conceptualizations of gender and gender roles, this research will facilitate the assessment of the consequences of models and suggestions imported from Anglo-Saxon research and practice. It will also facilitate the creation of locally-relevant support programmes for women's entrepreneurship.

## **Planning and implementing**

This research combines three different methods: 1. Interviews with actors who work to support women's entrepreneurship in three different countries. 2. A comparison of



legislation and family policy between the countries. 3. Document studies regarding support practices for women's entrepreneurship in the three countries. The research is based on social constructionist feminist theory.

### **Project leader**

Associate Professor Helene Ahl, School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University

Tel: +46 36 10 14 44

Mail: [Helene.Ahl@hik.hj.se](mailto:Helene.Ahl@hik.hj.se)

# Access to Venture Capital – Conditions for Women-owned/led Businesses

*Project manager: Jeaneth Johansson, Luleå University of Technology*

## Background

The proportion of women-owned/led businesses in Sweden is relatively low compared to many other western countries (e.g. the USA, Great Britain). Research has shown that the number of women-owned/led businesses in both Europe and in the USA is tending to increase, as is the number of employment opportunities in such companies. This raises the question whether finance or the lack thereof is a determining factor for the level of women's business activity in Sweden. Currently, there is a lack of research in the area of women's entrepreneurship and finance and consequently a lack of knowledge. Theory development within the financial area is mainly based on men's businesses while less is known about the financing of women-owned/led businesses. The limited research done on conditions for women entrepreneurs and finance has focused foremost on micro finance, such as bank loans. Several studies suggest that it is more difficult for women to receive start-up finance and subsequent finance. In addition, women also tend to meet credibility problems in banking relationships. However, the findings are contradictory since other studies found no differences between gender and bank financing.

Several researchers have identified a need of more knowledge on finance and gender. There is a specific need of increased knowledge on women-owned/led businesses' access to finance, specifically in the growth stage, where the need for capital is great. Expressed differently, there is a need for a holistic view of the capital market in order to understand women entrepreneurs' access to substantial capital sources such as venture capital and the stock market. In particular, there is a lack of studies on women-owned/led businesses and access to the stock market. Based on this, two tentative hypotheses are proposed: the more substantial the capital source is the more limited is the access of women-owned/led businesses to finance; the more substantial the capital source is the less research is available on the access of women-owned/led businesses to finance.

The lack of network ties among financiers and women who own or lead a business may, according to financial theory, have consequences in terms of the inefficient allocation of resources in the capital market. The asymmetric information caused by the lack of network ties among partners may result in venture capital financiers being

unaware of the fact that they are missing out on investments with high growth potential and lead them to choose instead investments with lower potential, so-called “adverse selection”. In summary, this leads to the question of whether women entrepreneurs are left out of value creation; is there a glass ceiling for women-owned/led businesses?

## **Purpose and goal**

The aim of the project is to map research within the area of women entrepreneurs and finance. This includes the identification of future areas of research. A holistic view of the capital market is needed in order to understand barriers and conditions for women-owned/led businesses.

## **Results and effects**

The results of the project will increase awareness regarding woman entrepreneurs and finance and will identify potential areas for future research on finance and gender. The project will contribute to the debate on conditions for women-owned/led companies regarding access to the capital market.

## **Planning and implementing**

The project includes a literature review on women entrepreneurs and finance. A pilot study on women-owned/led businesses and access to finance will also be carried out in the project.

## **Project participants**

PhD Jeaneth Johansson, Luleå University of Technology

Tel: +46 920 49 23 64

Mail: [Jeaneth.Johansson@Ltu.se](mailto:Jeaneth.Johansson@Ltu.se)

PhD Malin Malmström, Luleå University of Technology

Tel: +46 920 49 10 87

Mail: [Malin.Malmstrom@Ltu.se](mailto:Malin.Malmstrom@Ltu.se)

## **Reference group**

Professor Patricia Greene, Babson College, USA

Professor Candida Brush, Babson College, USA

Professor Lena Trojer, Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden

Associate Professor. Mats Åkerblom, Uppsala University, Sweden

CEO Anders Sundström, Folksam, Sweden

# **The Assessment of Risk and Capability in New Ventures: Affected by the Gender of the Entrepreneur?**

*Project manager: Carin Holmquist, Stockholm School of Economics*

## **Background**

Women start fewer new firms than men and their companies grow less. One proposed explanation for this is that women have less access to capital. Women experience that they have more difficulties in financing their new ventures, which could be due to women entrepreneurs being judged differently than male entrepreneurs. One theory is that the hypothesis of female under-performance is self-enhancing; the belief of creditors that women's firms will under-perform leads to reduced access to capital, which in turn reduces the growth prospects for women's firms.

## **Purpose and goal**

This project will use controlled experiments to assess if and how the judgment of risk and growth prospects in entrepreneurial ventures is affected by the gender of the entrepreneur. Regardless of the outcomes, the study will have an impact on the ongoing work to enhance women's entrepreneurship; if there are differences in the assessment of ventures due to the gender of the entrepreneur these results can be used to educate creditors and policy-makers and change attitudes to women's entrepreneurship. If there are no differences, these results can be used to strengthen the confidence of women entrepreneurs.

## **Expected Results**

The study will contribute to research on women's entrepreneurship and also to policy measures designed to stimulate women entrepreneurs. Previous research has shown that when stereotypical attitudes are communicated to decision-makers, decisions are less biased. By analyzing if and how the gender of the entrepreneur affects decision-making relating to the financing of new ventures we can help reduce any bias in these kinds of decisions. The results will be communicated to creditors, entrepreneurs, and policy-makers.

## **Research Design**

The study will be conducted through controlled experiments using both active creditors and students. The subjects will be required to conduct an assessment of a fictive business plan and CV. The judgment will focus on the (a) perceived risk of the business venture and (b) the entrepreneurial aptitude and capability of the entrepreneur. In both treatments the business plan and CV will be identical but for the gender of the entrepreneur. The resulting data will be analyzed to assess if there are any significant differences or patterns relating to the gender of the entrepreneur.

## **Research Team**

Professor Carin Holmquist, Stockholm School of Economics

Tel: +46 8 736 90 00

Mail: [carin.holmquist@hhs.se](mailto:carin.holmquist@hhs.se)

Erik Wetter, Stockholm School of Economics

Tel: +46 8 736 94 39

Mail: [erik.wetter@hhs.se](mailto:erik.wetter@hhs.se)

# European Structural Funds and Regional Partnerships – Hindrance or Resource for Women in Business or as Entrepreneurs?

*Project manager: Gun Hedlund, Örebro University*

## **Background**

Partnerships and network politics give us a new perspective on the state and the role of politics in our modern society. Regional development is one policy area which is considered as being complex and thus traditional political steering governance is not seen as efficient. Is there a risk that these new forms of governance may become closed, male networks? Or will they be a resource for women in business and as entrepreneurs?

The number of women in formal politics is high in Sweden (second place in the world top list) at the same time as the number of women in business is very low. Different projects have been conducted in recent decades with the aim of increasing the number of women in business. An alliance has been created between women involved in politics, state administration and different grass root activities. A pattern in the partly unwritten history of women's activities in regional development policy is resistance towards women's agency.

Within the system of the EU's structural funds there has been an increased demand for the integration of marginalized groups. Despite this policy, several evaluations show that the process behind the structural fund programmes is male dominated and governed by elite groups. In the present period, a new situation has arisen in which the regional development programmes for economic growth are supposed to become integrated with the structural funds activities. In many counties, new regional partnerships have been established. Will these partnerships become a resource or a hindrance for women?

## **Purpose and goal**

The aim is to combine a structural and an agency perspective in a study of:

- What room for maneuver do women have in business and as entrepreneurs to present their needs, interests and experience in relation to the new partnerships?

- Under what conditions will the initiatives of the partnerships contribute to an increase of women in business?

Location, as well as local and regional identity, are important aspects in the study of the regions.

The goal is to create knowledge and a basis for decision-making which will be able to integrate the needs and interests of women in business and as entrepreneurs, as well as promote the inclusion of women in different networks and partnerships.

## **Results and expected effects**

New knowledge on how network governance and partnerships function in the specific case of Sweden with a lot of women in politics and few women in business. Knowledge will be acquired on factors that may exclude and discriminate, the relation between different partnerships and how the needs and interests of women may be included and articulated in the work of the partnerships.

## **Research design**

Three integrated studies will be conducted in the project where different levels of network politics will be studied. The regional partnerships of the structural funds will be dealt with in four cases. Women´s agency will be followed from the idea stage to the approval or rejection of project ideas in four different regions. A survey of participants in regional partnerships all over Sweden will be carried out, as well as a documentary study of different programmes and interviews with different agents at different levels.

## **Participants**

PhD Gun Hedlund, Center for Urban and Regional studies, Örebro University

Tel: +46 19 303 893

Mail: [gun.hedlund@oru.se](mailto:gun.hedlund@oru.se) tel

PhD Mona Hedfeldt, Center for Urban and Regional studies, Örebro University

Tel: +46 19 303 607

Mail: [Mona.Hedfeldt@oru.se](mailto:Mona.Hedfeldt@oru.se)

PhD Joachim Åström, Center for Urban and Regional Studies, Örebro University

Tel: +46 19 303 963

Mail: [joachim.astrom@oru.se](mailto:joachim.astrom@oru.se)

# **Gender Disparities on the Labour Market – How do they Influence Women’s Self-employment?**

*Project manager: Dominique Anxo, Växjö University*

## **Background and research problem**

In spite of a clear convergence in the patterns of labour market integration of men and women in the Swedish labour market in recent decades, some important disparities remain. By international standards, the Swedish labour market is highly gender segregated, both at the industry and occupational level. Concerning paid market work, significant differences in working hours still exist, with a large proportion of women working part-time. As far as household and care activities are concerned, women spend significantly more time on unpaid work than their male counterparts in spite of their increased labour market commitments, implying a double burden for many women. The interrelation between the content of work, working hours and unpaid work has to be taken into consideration in order to understand the contrasting situation of men and women in the labour market, particularly regarding the prevailing gender disparities in the incidence of self-employment. There are strong reasons to believe that female self-employment is influenced by prevailing labour market regulations, the extent of labour market segregation and the current gender division of labour. In our view, the analysis of these intricate relationships may enhance our understanding of the low incidence of female self-employment and allow us to identify existing barriers to the development of women’s entrepreneurship.

## **Purpose and goal**

There are well-known and documented gender differences on the Swedish labour market with respect to the content of work, working hours and household work/family life. The purpose of this project is to investigate the extent to which these well-documented gender differences mutually influence the gender disparities in the incidence of self-employment. Based on these results, the objective of this research project is also to propose policy recommendations in order to stimulate female entrepreneurship.



## **Expected results and effects**

The gender differences in entrepreneurship will be highlighted through differences in the content of work, working hours and family commitments. In order to stimulate female self-employment, various policy instruments, such as social insurance or regulations that affect women's incentive to work full-time, might be needed.

## **Planning and implementing**

Data from ULF - a survey on the standard of living by Statistics Sweden, will help us to analyse and assess the relationship between gender differences in entrepreneurship and living conditions. Our empirical approach is to analyze how the situation of the female self-employed differs from that of their male counterparts. Do their working hours differ? Are their family conditions and commitments different? Are their working conditions different compare to their male counterparts? Then we intend to examine the extent to which these conditions influence each other and identify the gender disparities regarding these interrelated factors. Based on regression analysis, we intend to estimate the impact of socio-economic and labour-market related variables on women's entrepreneurship.

## **Research team**

Professor Dominique Anxo, Växjö University

Mail: [Dominique.anxo@vxu.se](mailto:Dominique.anxo@vxu.se)

Thomas Ericsson, ITPS - The Swedish Institute for Growth Policy Studies

Mail: [Thomas.ericsson@itps.se](mailto:Thomas.ericsson@itps.se)

Andreas Mångs, Växjö University

Mail: [Andreas.mangs@vxu.se](mailto:Andreas.mangs@vxu.se)

Osvaldo Salas, Växjö University

Mail: [Osvaldo.salas@vxu.se](mailto:Osvaldo.salas@vxu.se)

# Notions of Women as Family Business Leaders – Obstacles for Business Transfers to Women

*Project manager: Leif Melin, Jönköping International Business School*

## Background

There is a tendency to focus on start-up entrepreneurial activities in order to increase the number of women active in business. However, we see a need to give attention and support to women that engage in up-and-running businesses. In our project we look at two ways that women become leaders in existing businesses: either by succession from one generation to another or through acquisition of an existing business.

We will explore these two ways for women to enter business. Some problems that women encounter are traditional stereotypes, the lack of business role models and the problem of combining working life and family life. The study will be based on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with women that were chosen/chose to enter the family business and women that were not chosen/chose not to enter the family business.

## Purpose and goal

The overall goal is to develop knowledge on women and their role in succession or acquisition processes, focusing on notions and obstacles that influence women's activity in existing businesses. The specific research questions are summarized in three areas: (a) notions of women as family business owners, (b) obstacles encountered when women take over a family business and (c) consequences of a family – family business combination, emphasizing the specific problems that women encounter in family-owned businesses and how these interact with women's motivation to commit to or to step aside in a family business. The project aims to increase our understanding of how women act in the specific circumstances that can be found in a family business.

To sum up, the goal of this project is to:

- Identify and make visible structures that are hindrances for women that want to take over, lead and own a family business
- Increase the knowledge about the specific situation for women in family businesses and how it influences entrepreneurship among women

- Bring out the problems and possibilities that women encounter in family business and how to further strengthen research on the area

## **Expected results and effects**

Why do we today see so few women as owners and leaders in family businesses? How do women themselves talk about their situation and what can we learn from their experience? This study attempts to increase knowledge in this area as well as to acknowledge this possible way towards becoming an entrepreneur. The results are meant to create benefit for society through different forms of presentation such as academic articles that aim to present women in family businesses as a relevant and existing area of research, and more specifically to communicate the results of this project, and educational material in the form of cases concerning questions related to family business and with women in focus.

The project will contribute both to closing the theoretical gap that today exists in family business research and to practice by offering knowledge to women interested in becoming a family business owner/leader. We consistently aim to acknowledge and represent women in family businesses, how they see their role in the company and the obstacles and possibilities that they have experienced. By focusing on obstacles and conditions for women in succession processes, the project may contribute to a higher share of women that actually take the step towards becoming a family business owner.

## **Research design**

Field studies to map the attitudes, norms, values, emotions, relations and power structures at work in successions, and analysis of the actor-specific discourse concerning the transfer of businesses and women's roles in these processes. The project includes women that have become entrepreneurs via a succession or takeover of a family business or women that might become entrepreneurs in the future, both as heirs and as buyers. The field studies include both individual in-depth interviews with actors in the succession process and focus group interviews with women.

## **Participants**

PhD Cecilia Bjursell, CeFEO (Center for Family Enterprise and Ownership), Jönköping International Business School.

Tel: +46 36 10 19 35 or +46 708 22 19 49

Mail: [Cecilia.Bjursell@ihh.hj.se](mailto:Cecilia.Bjursell@ihh.hj.se)

Professor Leif Melin, CeFEO, Jönköping International Business School.

Tel: +46 708 85 64 46 or +46 36 10 18 50

Mail: [Leif.Melin@ihh.hj.se](mailto:Leif.Melin@ihh.hj.se)



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VINNOVA, SE-101 58 Stockholm, Sweden Besök/Office: Mäster Samuelsgatan 56

Tel: +46 (0)8 473 3000 Fax: +46 (0)8 473 3005

VINNOVA@VINNOVA.se [www.VINNOVA.se](http://www.VINNOVA.se)