

UiT

THE ARCTIC  
UNIVERSITY  
OF NORWAY

# **Contemporary perspectives on female entrepreneurship**

## **Are we heading the right way?**

---

Professor Lene Foss

School of Business and Economics

International Conference, 5-7 Octobre 2015, Benevento  
Department of Law, Economics, Management and Quantitative methods  
University of Sannio and Business Professional Women, FIDAPA, Italy



# **Gender perspectives used in entrepreneurship research**

---

- Gender as a variable (feminist empiricism)
- Feminist standpoint theory
- Post- structural feminism

# What's wrong with research on women's entrepreneurship?

---

- Narrow view: documenting financial performance and growth, other issues silenced
- Individual focuses analysis, mean differences between male and female, explanation on the individual rather than social and institutional level
- Objectivist ontological and epistemological position: 'male' and 'female', female measured against men,



Gender as  
accomplished

## Example: Entrepreneurial networks

---

Foss, L. (2010) "Research on entrepreneur networks: The case for a constructionist feminist theory perspective", *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol.2: 82-101.

Identified 5 hegemonic statements 1) networks are used strategically to obtain resources 2) Women do not network effectively 3) Weak ties are the source of male entrepreneurs' success 4 ) Women are inherently relational in their networking

Foss, L.(2016) "Research on network, gender and entrepreneurship : A never changing discourse? In Henry, C., Nelson, T. & Lewis, K. V.(eds.) The Global Companion to female entrepreneurship (Routledge) forthcoming

The same hegemonic statements appear. Research continues to reinforce essentialism – measure women against men. Scare attention to within group variation. Need to study entrepreneurial networks embedded in larger institutional structures.

# **Systematic Literature Reviewes**

## **A methodology that reveal gender discourses:**

---

Henry, C., Foss, L. & Ahl, H. (2015) "Gender and Entrepreneurship:Review of methodological approaches", *International Small Business Journal*, pp.1-25,

The entrepreneurship fields lags behind sociology, political science, organization theory – develop a methodological repertoire to match post structural feminist approach – contextual approaches.

Foss, L., Henry, C. & Ahl, H. (2015) "Lost in Translation? Policy and practice implications in gender and entrepreneurship research ( in review)

Just of half of the articles on female entrepreneurship published in the “Big Five” (ERD, ETP, JBV, JSBM and SBE over 30 years (1998-2012) articulate implications for practice and policy. Vague terms. Center on training directed at women entrepreneurs.

# **How is gender conceptualized in the innovation literature?**

---

Few articles actually contain a robust discussion of the relationship between gender and innovation. Hardly any articles refer explicitly to gender theory and positioning themselves within specific gender perspectives.

Foss, L. & Henry, C. (2016) "Doing Gender in Innovation: an exploratory study" in Alsos, G., Hytti, U. & Ljunggren, E. (eds.) *Research Handbook on Gender and Innovation*, Edward Elgar.



## Exploring future research agendas in the field of gender and entrepreneurship

Susan Marlow

*University of Nottingham Institute of Enterprise and Innovation,  
University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK*

abstract

# Future perspectives

From description to theorizing

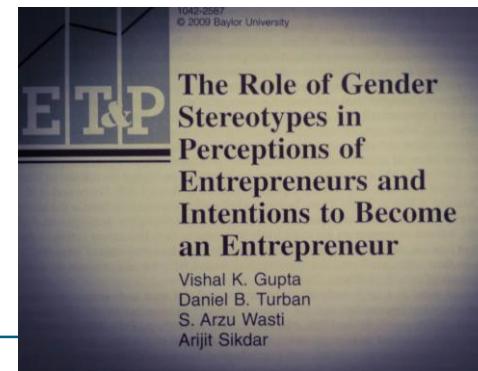
From generic gendered presumptions to - how gender intersects with other social ascriptions (race, class, etc.)

The role of context in shaping entrepreneurial opportunities (cf Welter, 2011; Foss & Gibson 2015)

- The role of secondary education in increasing awareness of entrepreneurship (Johansen and Foss, 2013)
- Social entrepreneurship (McAdam and Treanor, 2012)

# What can we do ?

---



- Start asking new questions!
- Be aware of gender stereotypes !
- Make female entrepreneurs in academic entrepreneurship more visible!

«We promote the visibility of women in science and show that it can be an excellent career path for women as well as men» - Sarah Morgan & Hannah Stern, Cavendish Inspiring Women»

- <https://shar.es/17RCAk>

# International Journal of Gender & Entrepreneurship - IJGE



Editor in Chief: Professor Colette Henry  
Consulting Editor: Professor Lene Foss

# Key facts .....

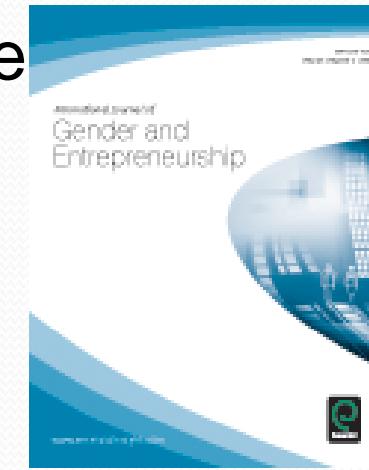
- Launched in 2008 at the Diana International Research Symposium, Belfast
- First issue published in 2009
- 3 issues per year – moving to 4 in 2016
- Considers academic research papers (empirically or conceptually based – 9,000 words max, all inclusive)
- International scope – papers from Europe, Asia, US & Australasia
- Practitioner section; emerging researcher category
- Special issues

# IJGE status

- Still a very young (niche) journal (Vol 8 in 2016)
- Currently ranked on:
  - Australian Deans Business Council
  - Australian Research Council ( AKA ERA)
  - Scopus - first metrics just available - The SNIP (Source Normalized Impact per Paper) is 1.134, which is about equal or higher than competitive journals.
  - NSD (Norway)
  - BFI (Denmark)

# Changes over time

- More international papers
- Growing number of young/emerging researchers
- Increasing quality – alongside more robust reviewing
- About 50% papers get Desk Rejected – this helps improve the chances of those progressing to full double blind peer review
- Increase in post-structural feminist approaches
- More qualitative, case-type papers



## **Where are we heading- what do we need ?**

---

- Theoretically and empirically – more advanced frameworks and methodologies
- Policy implications – does not reach out in traditional academic journals
- Need new constellations to serve «third mission» of research from universities: co – creation of knowledge – work with user groups
- **LET's GET STARTED! COMINCIAMO!**

# Grazie per avermi !

[lene.foss@uit.no](mailto:lene.foss@uit.no)

---

