

Yvonne von Friedrichs, PhD, Professor of Business Administration
Mid Sweden University, Sweden
Guest professor at University West, Trollhättan, Sweden

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Challenging the normative entrepreneurship - a prerequisite for regional development

Abstract

The need for entrepreneurship and innovation is pressing worldwide. International studies show that entrepreneurship and responsible leadership are catalysts for economic growth but that the amount of entrepreneurial activity differs markedly between regions. Recent research shows that the concept of entrepreneurship is intertwined with societal responsibility, e.g. social/societal and community-based entrepreneurship, which means that social benefits could be the major organisational outcome from entrepreneurship processes. Such perspectives have challenged institutionalised norms and values related to entrepreneurship research. A wider perspective on entrepreneurship as a conceptual notion that incorporates not only economic but also human and social values can be found in various contexts and sectors in society. Cooperation and partnerships between regional public, private and civic actors has become strategies to meet up with the increasing global competition between regions regarding residents and local business activity, especially in regions where local welfare and wellbeing are threatened as a result of economic depletion due to closures and poor tax assessment. Recent research has also shown that strategic collaboration and partnerships between stakeholders from the public, private, civic sectors and sometimes academia as well, may explain structural development in economies.

The time is gone for many rural regions and communities who use traditional and sometimes out-dated strategies of dealing with development issues. This has led to that important resources have been lost to urban areas in particular. Sustainable regional renewal needs entrepreneurial diversity including various individuals, resources and support systems as well as, sometimes brand new, policy strategies. These strategies include new business models, non-traditional industries and new groups of entrepreneurs. Research has shown that the support systems of businesses is rigid and mostly supports traditional industries instead of new industries and marginalized entrepreneurs. A vital step in implementing such strategies is to develop a sustainable entrepreneurial mind-set where the normative perception of the

entrepreneur and entrepreneurship is challenged. Thus, the key to meeting the future challenges is to find new areas and models for the development of entrepreneurial diversity.