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Maintenance of entrepreneurial activities – A gender perspective *

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper concerns gender composition in the governance structure of non-profit association. It is emphasised that the gender composition at the board of directors have influence on entrepreneurial activities. The board is however not only considered in its totality, including all board members, but a distinction is made between different positions that are assumed to have power to influence developmental activities. The analysis showed that the gender composition have influence on one of the two dimensions of entrepreneurial activities, indicating that a female dominance in democratic organisations can increase preferences for strategic opportunism. The analysis also showed that the power distribution within the board is an important aspect that might be in need to elucidate before one can investigate gender influences.

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Traditionally, research on entrepreneurship has been the tales of great men, very similar to historical science explaining historic development through the stories of heroes. Development within the field has showed that entrepreneurship not only has to be occupied with an entrepreneurial individual, but entrepreneurship can focus on the structure and the processes of an organisation. The research field focusing on organisational development appeared during the 90ies and was termed Corporate Entrepreneurship, CE, (e.g. Covin & Slevin, 1991; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Zahra, 1991). CE incorporates activities beyond the pure creation of an organisation. Entrepreneurship is thus no longer limited to the entrepreneurial individual man, but can be seen at the organisational level.

Entrepreneurial activities need stimulation, and elements influencing the entrepreneurial activities are the governance structure, here claimed to consist of the board of directors.

The governing aspect of organisations has during the last years received an increasing interest regarding gender issues and a lot of research exists aiming at explaining gender differences in management (Eagly, Karau & Makhijani, 1995; Cliff, 1998; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). Women are for example stated to face a glass ceiling that hinders them from advancing to top management (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990), the lack of women on boards are seen as barriers to career advancements for women (Salopek, 1999), performance of women headed vs men headed organisations differ (Fisher, 1992). Attention has also been paid to whether entrepreneurial women differ from men concerning motivators for starting business (De Martino & Barbato, 2003) as well as performance (Carter, Williams & Reynolds, 1997). Little attention has however been paid to the gender composition in the governing board, and its influence on organisational entrepreneurial activities. Having women on boards and women as managers could for example provide strategic input on women's product/market issues as well as the direction of the company and contribute to the firm's female employees. Organisational diversity has also been suggested to lead to competitive advantages (Burke, 1994).

The board is further considered in its totality, assuming all positions to have the same possibility to influence, thereby neglecting the power distribution at the board, i.e. allocate women to boards by quotas may imply little influence if the women are placed on positions where little influence can be made.

The empirical focus of this research will pay attention to a rather un-investigated industry, such as the Swedish non-profit riding schools. Studies have showed that the

representation of women in higher positions is dependent on the industry (Arfken, Bellar, Helms, 2004; Swedberg, 2002) and the riding industry then represent an excellent industry to study as the majority of the consumers are women, still, the governance structure tends to be mixed. Riding schools are democratically controlled through members with one vote per member and have no profit motive but instead the goal of member satisfaction and healthy horses. The core business of riding schools is that of teaching dressage, jumping and caretaking of the horses.

Thus, the ambition of this paper is to study the gender composition within the governance structure of non-profit association, and how the composition influences entrepreneurial activities. The theoretical part includes the field of corporate entrepreneurship, a description of the important element of the governance structure, i.e. the board of directors, a description of gender differences and finally are the hypotheses presented. Then follows a section presenting how the data set of the riding schools has been constructed added with the analysis of the data set. At the end are the conclusions presented.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The feature of entrepreneurs is not a new phenomenon and an authoritative notion of entrepreneurship has been stated by Schumpeter (1934) who saw stability and growth as contradicting concepts, and who claimed innovations to be the central aspects of development. It could be the introducing of new products, new methods of production, the opening of new markets, new supply of resources, or new organisational and governmental processes. The individual realising this was the entrepreneur. Over time has it however been recognised that not only individuals undertake entrepreneurial activities but also that organisations can have entrepreneurial orientations (Jennings, 1994; Pinchot, 1985; Covin and Slevin, 1991; Miller, 1983; Zahra, 1991, 1993) and the field focusing on entrepreneurship as a firm-level phenomenon was established. The field can be referred to as corporate entrepreneurship, but also other terms exists, e.g. intrapreneurship (Pinchot, 1985), internal CE (Schollhammer, 1982), corporate venture (Ellis & Taylor, 1987) internal corporate venture (Burgelmann & Sayles, 1986), and entrepreneurial posture (Gabrielsson, 2002). Commonly, it refers to the process of creating new business, enhance an organisation's competitive position or strategic renewal for existing activities (Covin & Slevin 1991; Zahra, 1991, 1993) and can include aspects such as product innovation, risk-

taking, proactiveness (Miller, 1983); risk-taking behaviour, aggressiveness, product innovation (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Gabrielsson, 2002); innovation, risk taking, seizing opportunities (Zahra, 1991); autonomy, innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). According to Stopford and Baden-Fuller (1994) can CE include both aspects such as the pure creation as well as the continuance of developmental activities and they further identified three types of CE; 1) the creation of new businesses within an existing organisation, 2) the transformation or renewal of existing organisations, and 3) the organisation's changes of the rules of competition concerning its industry.

Thus, research in entrepreneurship tends to focus on the creation of new organisations, but presumably the most frequent entrepreneurial action belongs to the set of actions that are performed within existing organisations. We will focus on the less observed, but yet more frequent maintenance of entrepreneurial activities.

The maintenance of entrepreneurial activities will be claimed to involve two aspects; risk taking behaviour and strategic opportunism (Collin & Smith, forthcoming).

Risk in the financial sense has been conceived in financial theory to be variance of outcomes, no matter if it includes losses or extreme high profits, or probability of losses, as in behavioural finance. Entrepreneurial risk is a combination of variance and probability of losses. A venture having a high variance of extreme profits, i.e., a high financial risk, or a venture where the firm has an abundance of resources that could easily assume the losses of the venture, the entrepreneurial risk is low since it does not threaten the existence of the firm. Thus, the conception of entrepreneurial risk behaviour is reserved for those ventures that bind so many resources that it constitutes a threat for the firm's existence.

Strategic opportunism is the firm's capacity to perceive new opportunities and develop new strategies, be it new products or markets, and finally to redirect its resources (cf. Covin & Slevin, 1991; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). It is the capability to redirect the orientation of the firm, to deliberately transform the established strategy of the firm.

The conception of corporate entrepreneurship i.e., the maintenance of entrepreneurial activities is a dynamic two-dimensional concept, consisting of risk and strategic opportunism. It implies that sometimes an organisation can be low in risk but high in strategic opportunism. The organisation can be highly engaged in finding new products for their customers, but under the restriction that it does not threaten the existence of the old products. The two-dimensional concept is an adequate conception when considering

gender aspects of organisations. It has been claimed that women have a lower level of risk behaviour (Powell & Ansic 1997), which in a one-dimensional conception of entrepreneurship would doom women to be treated as having a low level of entrepreneurial action. The two-dimensional conception will make it possible to observe entrepreneurial attitudes that would have been concealed due to the risk attitudes, as will be apparent later in the paper.

To summarise, we will focus on the maintenance of entrepreneurial action, consisting of risk and strategic opportunism.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE INFLUENCING CE

Different aspects have been claimed to influence CE activities; *the environment* – dynamism, hostility, heterogeneity, *organisational form* – strategy of growth or stability, structure of communication, scanning, integration, differentiation, resources, culture, and *organisation performance* – focus on profit maximisation or overall stakeholder satisfaction as well as *strategic leaders* – ownership structure, managerial competence, board of directors, (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Gabrielsson, 2002; Zahra, 1991; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). This paper will focus on strategic leaders, such as the board of directors. We claim that environment frame entrepreneurship, the organisation contains it, but the governance structure, especially the board of directors, leads it.

The board of directors is commonly seen as the link between absent shareholders and managers and it is the entity making the formal decisions. The board can be considered to have three types of functions; monitoring, providing resources and decision making (Daily, Dalton & Cannella Jr, 1992; Judge & Zeithaml, 2003). Monitoring refers to the controlling aspect, and mainly to monitor managerial activities. The function of decision making is about how the organisation's resources are used in order to fulfil the goal of the organisation. The function of providing resources emphasises that the board includes people with specific skills and networks that might benefit the organisation. When considering the non-profit association can however a fourth function be presented, that of conflict resolution. The association consists of members that use the association because the organisation produces leisure activities. As members, they have the right to attend the general meeting and to use their vote. This feature of the association will make the board an arena for the battle between groups of members that view the association and its goals

differently. Thus, the board has a structural condition of conflict, and has therefore to engage in conflict resolution, which we view as the board's fourth function.

Depending on many factors does the board differ in its functional emphasis, and two of the most prominent factors are the organisational form and size. The organisational form of the association will induce the board to engage in conflict resolution. The directors of the board being representatives of the members, that are engaged in the association because of the service it delivers, will have a natural orientation towards the specific service produced, thus being very operative in action, focusing on the decision making function. Non-profit associations are typically small organisations, ranging from 40 members to not many more than 1000 members. In small associations, the board can be expected to be engaged in operative business and to be less restricted by formal systems (Daily, McDougall, Covin & Dalton, 2002). This implies that an association's board can be assumed to be engaged in both strategic considerations as well as in rather operative decision making concerning the service delivered. Compared to the board in large and listed capitalistic corporations, the board of an association is presumably one important locus of maintenance of entrepreneurial actions. Thus, the board of the non-profit association is considered as an important element within its governance structure, and the organisational form and size of the non-profit association emphasise specific board functions which will be prominent in the stimulation of CE activities.

GENDER ASPECTS IN THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The two biological forms of human beings, i.e. man and woman, have always existed. It is however first the last two decades that research dealing with gender in relation to leadership/management issues, have increased (Fischer, Reubert & Dyke, 1993; Eagly et al., 1995; Alvesson & Billing, 1997). Differences between the sexes, or traits that can have influence on the sexes, have been discussed within the definitions of masculinity/femininity, male vs. female values and characteristics of men and women.

Although it has been argued that masculinity and femininity should not be seen as strictly related to men and women, masculinity and femininity can be used as traits present in all individuals, where women generally are more characterised by femininities than masculinities (Alvesson & Billing, 1997). Alvesson & Billing, (1997) defines masculinity as "values, experiences and meanings that are culturally interpreted as masculine and typically feel 'natural' to or are ascribed to men more than to women." (ibid p. 83).

Masculinity further includes features such as “hard, dry, objective, explicit, outer-focused, impersonal, action-oriented, analytic, dualistic, quantitative, linear, rationalist, reductionist and materialist”. (ibid p. 84). Femininity on the other hand is “a matter of the prioritising of feelings, the importance of the imaginative and creative” (ibid p. 84) and includes features such as “interdependence, cooperation, receptivity, merging, acceptance, awareness of patterns, wholes and contexts, emotional tone, personal perception, being, intuition and synthesising (ibid p. 83-84). Women have further been identified as care-oriented, empathetic, relations oriented (Alvesson & Billing, 2000 wp). Commonly held attitudes describe women as gentle, sensitive, passive, illogical and emotional (Dubno, 1985), women are expected to possess high levels of qualities such as selflessness, a concern for others and interpersonal sensitivity (Eagly & Woods, 1991). Men on the other hand are; competitive, sexually indiscriminate and pushy (Houde, 2001); active, rational, strong and community-oriented (Smiler, 2004) and men are expected to possess high levels of qualities such as self-assertion, self-expansion, and the urge to master (Eagly & Woods, 1991). Male and female values have also been suggested to differ, females are believed to emphasise social values and qualitative ambiguous measures, e.g. personal fulfilment and storing interpersonal relations, men are believed to emphasise economic values and quantitative nonambiguous measures of achievement and success, e.g. status and wealth (Travis, McKenzie & Kahn, 1988). Thus, differences between men and women cannot be neglected.

It has been stated that the board in a non-profit association can be engaged in both the strategic as well as operative decision making, thus being of importance for entrepreneurial influence. As characteristics and values of men and women have been found to differ, it will be suggested that the gender composition in the board is an interesting aspect to consider when emphasising board’s influence on CE.

One dimension of CE has been defined as risk taking behaviour and research focusing on gender differences concerning risk has generally found that women have lower preferences for risk (Powell & Ansic 1997; Watson & Robinson, 2003). Barber & Odean (2001) stated that men made riskier investments than women and Sexton & Bowman-Upton (1990) research indicated that female business owners were less willing to be involved in situations with uncertain outcomes. Women are further more cautious concerning resources they bind to ventures (Watson & Robinson, 2003) and they tend to focus on strategies which make them avoid the worst situation to gain security (Powell &

Ansic, 1997). A study conducted by Sexton & Bowman-Upton (1990) examined the psychological traits of growth-oriented female and male entrepreneurs. The females scored significantly lower on traits related to energy level and risk-taking which indicated that female are less willing than male to become involved in situations with uncertain outcomes and they have less of the endurance or energy level needed to maintain a growth-oriented business. Powell & Ansic (1997) studied gender differences in risk propensity and financial decision-making and women were found to have lower preferences for risk than men.

Thus, the presentation above emphasises that men have higher preferences for assuming risk than women. The overall assumption is that the board has influence on CE activities, however, due to differences in men's and women's attitudes regarding risk is the following hypothesis stated:

H1. The higher the degree of women at the board of directors, the lower will the preferences for risk be.

The second dimension of CE has been defined as strategic opportunism. Research focusing on this aspect mainly considers gender differences regarding organisation's growth, which indicates that both men and women grow their business, but in different ways. Women entrepreneurs have for example been found to be more cautious and wanting a controlled expansion. (Cliff, 1998) It has also been found that women have less of the energy level needed to maintain a growth-oriented business (Sexton & Bowman-Upton, 1990). It has however to be mentioned that the measures of growth often refers to financial measures, which is not part of the capacity to perceive new opportunities or develop new strategies. An aspect that could dampen women's capacity for strategic opportunism are women's fewer resources for growth, i.e. women are less likely to have a business degree and prior business ownership experience and they have less freedom from household responsibilities (Cliff, 1998). Another aspect that can be taken into consideration is the industry at hand, i.e. Swedish non-profit riding schools. This industry had its breakthrough as popular movement just before the First World War and has thereafter had a never-ending increase of members, especially women. 2002 were for example 85 % of the members of the Swedish Equestrian Federation women, mainly younger women. These women are members due to the interest in horses and riding, and they want to take riding lessons. The main service of riding schools is the same as it always has been, i.e.

traditional form of lessons involving jumping and dressage. Women in riding schools can then be assumed to be dampened in their attempts of developing the riding schools. A fast redirection of the strategy or adoption of new services or products may make use of resources that otherwise would have been used for the traditional service, and thereby threaten the survival of the main service. A board with a high share of women does not emphasise a positive relation between women and preference for strategic opportunism and the following hypothesis is therefore formulated:

H2. The higher the degree of women at the board of directors, the lower will the preferences for strategic opportunism be.

The board has hitherto been treated as one distinct team, where the members are collectively able to organise a concerted entrepreneurial action. The hypotheses create the impression that with more women at the board, corporate entrepreneurship will change. To treat the board as entity capable of collective action is the most common conception of the board in the literature (Aguilera & Jackson, 2003). It is based on a simple view of the functions of the board, and neglects thereby the processes of the board and the power distribution within the board.

The functions of the board have been stated to generally refer to monitoring, resource provision and decision making (Daily, Dalton & Cannella Jr, 2003; Judge & Zeithaml, 1992) and when considering non-profit association was the function of conflict resolution added.

Both the monitoring function and the decision making function have a salient assumption that the board is capable of collective action. It is taken for granted that the board has the capacity to act as one single actor when it concerns the task of monitoring of the management of the organisation. The collective action of decision making can more easily be understood since every group has the possibility to create a joint action of decision making through the method of democratic voting.

The unitary view of the board, so discernable in the function of monitoring and decision making, crackle when considering the function of resource provision. The argument is that different directors can bring different kinds of resources to the board and the organisation, which emphasise the variety of directors. A variety of directors implies the possibility of disunion.

The fourth function of conflict resolution, emphasising the board of the non-profit association to be an arena for the battle between groups of members, stresses even harder that the board cannot be considered as one distinct team. Members' different interests will be present among the board members, suggesting different teams to emerge. Thus, the board is not seen as an entity representing the unitary view of the board, instead does the board represent a non-unitary view.

The non-unitary view of the board makes it possible for us to increase the precision of the hypotheses. We claim that the overall gender composition of the board represent more the resource provision function and the conflict resolution function. If there are women and men that represent different resources and different groups, it can very well be the case that they, on the average, are quite passive members of the board. Their influential power is thus low, and thereby their gender characteristics are not influential.

One the other hand, the gender of the board's figure head, which refers to the gender characteristics of the chairman of the board, the presumably most powerful position within the board, can be assumed to be important. The chairman is the one that decides upon the agenda, and leads the meetings, thereby having a strong influence on the processes of the board. Thus, we claim that the gender of the figure head can influence the activities of the organisation.

Observing the general organisational structure of a non-profit association's board will, however, reveal a third gender composition that can be claimed to be even more influential than the one concerning the figure head. This is the gender power domination. In an association's board there are typically three powerful positions, the chairman, the treasurer and the secretary. The chairman controls the agenda, the treasurer controls the money and the secretary controls the information. Together they have considerable power compared to the other directors of the board. These three functions are presumably distributed to three persons, which create a very small and intimate group that have higher probability of assuming team characteristics. The capacity to create collective action is probably stronger in the small group of three than in the group of nine or thirteen people. We therefore claim that the gender power composition will be most influential of the three gender compositions on corporate entrepreneurship. Formally this claim can be stated in a hypothesis:

H3. In a democratic not-for profit association, the gender characteristics will be less influential concerning CE when considering the overall gender

composition, more influential when considering the gender of the figure head, and most influential when considering the gender power composition.

A summary of the presented theory claims the board to have influence on an organisation's CE activities. One aspect to consider when studying this influence is the gender composition of the board where a domination of women will reduce CE influence. Due to board functions, the board is not considered in its totality, but includes for example members with various goals and interests, creating different teams. A non-unitary view of the board suggests different gender compositions to be more influential on CE than other; the chair position being one, the triangle of the chairperson, treasurer and secretary being another.

DATA

The study's empirical object is Swedish riding schools and data has been collected through questionnaires sent to riding schools. The idea was to investigate all Swedish riding schools which, according to the Consultant of the National Equestrian Federation (Ulf Vilken, personal communication) amount to about 500. The Swedish Riding Federation has no clear definition of a riding school, making it hard to separate riding schools in their membership archive, including 1020 associations, from other riding associations, such as those specialised in arranging competitions and educating horses. Thus, the probability that an address included a riding school, with the core business being that of teaching dressage, jumping and caretaking of the horse, was about 50 per cent. At the covering page was it therefore possible for them without the service riding to put a cross and they were asked to send the questionnaire back. They who had a riding school were asked to continue. The questionnaire was addressed to the person responsible for the riding school.

From the 1020 addresses, 401 questionnaires were returned. 311 indicated that they did not have a riding school, and 90 indicated that they had a riding school. Out of these 90 did 10 answer that they did not have time or the interest to participate in the survey, and usable questionnaires amounted to 80. Out of these 80 stated 60 that they were organised as non-profit riding schools and 14 that they were organised as private riding schools, the 60 answers, stating that they had a non-profit riding school represent the respondents.

The questionnaire (available from the authors) includes mainly closed questions which have been formulated with the help of two earlier conducted case studies (one reported in Collin & Smith, 2003).

CE is commonly investigated with scale-questions (e.g. Zahra 1991; 1996; Gabrielsson; 2002) and the same has been used in this study. Seven statements were created, aimed at observing risk taking behaviour and five statements were aimed at observing strategic opportunism. To measure the reliability of these statements Cronbach's alpha was used. The generally agreed lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is .70, although it may decrease to .60 in exploratory research (Hair et al., 1995).

The statements regarding strategic opportunism refers to whether the riding schools put a lot of effort into coming up with new ideas for development, either for new or for existing members, within the same activities or by developing new. Testing their reliability resulted in an alpha value of .67, which is accepted. The idea was to use the sum of the five statements as a measurement of strategic opportunism. All respondents had however not marked their attitudes on all five statements, i.e. missing values were present and an addition with missing values would exclude many cases. To be able to use as many cases as possible the scores of the five statements were recoded to one seven-graded scale. When no missing values were present, the mean of the five statements was taken as the new recoded value. When missing values were present, this missing value was replaced with the mean of the statements in which scores existed. To increase the reliability of the recoding, the two authors made it independently of each other and the results were then compared. On average was the deviations between the two authors' recoding small, 2,56 %. In two cases was the deviation 1, and due to different ways that the round off has been made.

The other dimension of CE has been defined as risk taking behaviour and was investigated with five statements. When testing the reliability with Cronbach's alpha the alpha value was low, indicating that the five statements did not measure the same thing. Factor analyses of the statements indicated however similarities between some of the statements and two statements were found with an acceptable alpha-value, .66, and the statements refers to financial security, i.e. whether the riding school easily would receive a bank loan and whether the municipality would support the riding school when facing a crisis. Also here existed missing values and again was a recoding separately made by the authors. However, the deviations were larger here than concerning strategic opportunism, on average 20,83 %, in 5 cases was the deviation 1 and in 5 cases was the deviation 2. The

main reason for these larger deviations was the different ways of recoding. As only two statements were present it was not possible to replace the missing value in one statement with the mean of the other statement. It could be suggested that the missing value could be replaced with the same score that other statement had been given, and this was the procedure used by one of the author. However, if studying the scores for the different cases it could be concluded that respondents giving the first risk statement a score of for example 1, not necessarily gave the second risk statement a score of 1, it could be 4 or even 7. Due to this uneven distribution the following procedure was taken: if a respondent for example had given the first statement a score of 1, but had a missing value on the other statement, all respondents that had given the first statement the score 1 was taken into consideration. The focus was then on the second statement and the mean of these scores was what replaced the missing value. The same procedure was taken for every missing value and the result was as follows: For missing values on the first risk statement: The score 1 on the second risk statement gave the score 4 on the first risk statement when missing values existed, $n=3$, the score 6 gave the score 7, $n=2$, the score 7 gave the score 6, $n=1$ and the score 2 gave the score 5, $n=1$. For missing values on the second risk statement: The score 4 on the first risk statement gave the score 4 on the second risk statement when missing values existed, $n=2$, the score 6 gave the score 3, $n=1$, the score 7 gave the score 4, $n=1$. Other deviations were due to different ways of the rounding off.

Data of the gender composition in the board have been obtained by asking the respondents to state whether the members of the board were of female or male sex. To able to separate specific board positions from overall board membership were the three specific board positions of the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer specifically listed. As the numbers of other board members was believed to vary with riding school, the respondents were given the possibility to state sex for 15 other board members.

Three different measures have been created to measure the gender composition of the board and include the overall gender composition, gender power composition and gender of the figure head.

Overall gender composition includes all positions within the board and the percentage of women was calculated. This overall measure for gender composition within the board ranks from 0 to 1 where 0 corresponds to a board including only men and 1 corresponds to a board including only women.

Gender power composition includes the board position of the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer. As for the measure mentioned above would one way of creating a measurement be to take the share of women for the three different positions. However, the three different positions have been considered to vary regarding influence. The chairperson has been considered to have the most influence, whereas the secretary and the treasurer have been given equal influence. The ambition was to create a measure indicating influence from men or women. Each position could either be coded as 1 or 2, man or woman. This measure could then include one of eight possible gender-combinations, i.e. chairman, male secretary and male treasurer, or chairman, male secretary and female treasurer, etc. A variable including three different categories was created, 1 included a gender composition with a chairman and where either the secretary or the treasurer or both of them were male. 2 included a gender composition where the chairperson was either a man or a woman, and with a chairman were both the secretary **and** the treasurer female, and with a chairwoman were both the secretary **and** the treasurer male. 3 included a gender composition with a chairwoman and where either the secretary or the treasurer or both of them were women. This measure includes then the three categories of 1, 2 and 3 referring to different degrees of influence from men versus women.

Gender of the figure head refers to a board having a chairwomen or a chairman as chairperson and consists of a dichotomous variable.

Larger organisations can be claimed to have more resources available for CE engagement and a control variable for having influence of CE is the size of the organisation. The size has been measured as riding schools' the total number of members the year before the survey was conducted, i.e. year 2002.

Thus, CE is investigated with two variables, one variable investigating strategic opportunism including five statements, and one variable investigating risk behaviour including two statements. The gender composition of the board is measured with three measures, one including all board members, another including the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer, and the third including but the chairperson. A control variable of size has been added.

ANALYSIS

The analysis includes 41 cases and linear regressions have been used.

The two dimensions of corporate entrepreneurship

Corporate entrepreneurship has been investigated using a two dimensional concept of strategic opportunism and risk taking behaviour. The variable of strategic opportunism has a range between 3 and 7, a mean of 4,46, standard deviation of 1,05 and a median of 4,00. The variable of risk has a range between 1 and 7, a mean of 4,59 standard deviation of 1,72 and a median of 5,00. According to Kolomogorov's test for normal distribution has the strategic opportunism variable no normal distribution, whereas the risk variable has a normal distribution.

The variable measuring the overall gender composition within the board of directors ranges from 0,36 to 1,00. The score of 1,00 claims the board to be entirely populated with women and the number of those cases amounts to 3. The mean of the variable is 0,72, the median 0,70 and the standard deviation is 0,17. Thus, the overall gender composition in the board of directors is dominated by women. A board structure including an equal composition of men and women is present in only two cases.

The variable measuring gender power composition includes the chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Considering the variable created for the three different positions, category 1 includes 29,3 % of the respondents and emphasise a structure with a high influence from men, category 2 includes 24,4 % and emphasise a mixture of influence from men and women and category 3 finally includes 46,3 % of the respondents and suggests a high influence from women.

The variable measuring gender of the figure head includes chairmen and chairwomen, and refers to 21 chairmen and 20 chairwomen.

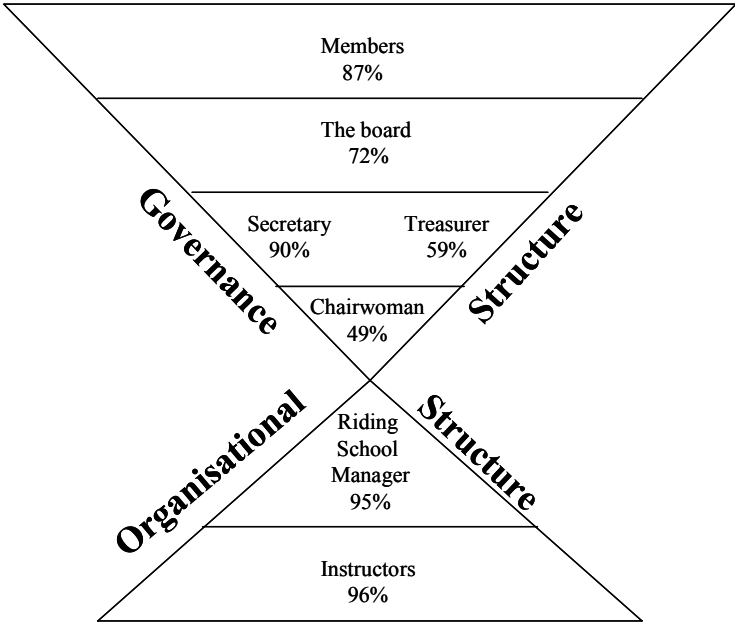
Riding schools' overall gender composition

Before presenting the analysis of the board's influence on CE will the overall gender composition regarding riding schools' governance and organisational structure be presented, figure 1 (the percentage refers to share of women). The governance structure includes the riding schools' members, and has a clear domination of women, 87 %. Some

members have been democratically elected to be part of the board and 72 % of the board members are women. The board includes different positions and the gender composition tends to differ with position; 90 % of the secretaries are women, 59 % are treasurers and 49 % of the chairpersons are women. Considering the organisational structure, including the riding school manager and the instructors, indicate a domination of women, 95 % of the managers are women and 96 % of the riding instructors are women.

Thus, riding schools will be claimed to refer to an industry with women domination. However, although the absolute majority of the members are women, it is rather remarkably that the highest position within the governance structure, i.e. the chair position, is equally divided between women and men. Also the position as treasurer has, in relation to the share of women members, a considerably high share of men. Thus, women tend take part of the activities, whereas men tend to have the powerful and influential positions concerning governance.

FIGURE 1. The Gender Composition of the Riding Schools’ Governance and Organisational Structure



A cross tabulation between chairperson and secretary shows an equal composition; out of the four male secretaries are two within boards with chairmen and two within boards with chairwomen; out of the 37 female secretaries are 19 within boards with chairmen and 18 within boards with chairwomen.

A cross tabulation between chairperson and treasurer shows no significant differences according to a Chi-2 test, but smaller indications on differences are present; out

of the 17 male treasurers are 11 within boards with chairmen and 6 within boards with chairwomen; out of the 24 female treasurers are 10 within boards with chairmen and 14 within boards with chairwomen. Thus a reverse relation is present, men are more often treasurers when the chairperson is a man, and women are more often treasurers when the chairperson is a woman.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 have been tested with two separate regressions. The dependent variables were separately the variables measuring risk and strategic opportunism. The independent variable was the variable measuring the overall gender composition in the board, and the control variable was size. The summarised results of the two regressions are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Regressions, CE and overall gender composition

Dependent variable	Strategic Opportunism	Risk
Overall gender composition	1,195	-1,498
Size	,000	,003*
Constant	3,462**	4,245**
F-value	,625	4,610*
R ²	,034	,160

***<0,000, **<0,01, *<0,05, †<0,1

The model concerning risk is significant, but the variable of overall gender composition is not significant, instead is the size variable significant. The model concerning strategic opportunism is not significant.

H1 and H2, claiming a higher degree of women to indicate lower preferences for CE found no support. A riding school with more members, i.e. a large size, seems however to be part of explaining higher preferences for risk.

H3 has been tested with four separate regressions. The dependent variables were again, separately, the variables measuring risk and strategic opportunism. The independent variable was first the variable measuring gender of the figure head, and the control variable was size. The independent variable was then changed to instead include the gender power composition at the board. The control variable size was included.

Table 2. Regressions, CE and two measures of gender of the figure head and gender power composition

Dependent variable	Strategic opportunism	Risk	Strategic opportunism	Risk
Gender of the figure head	,751*	-,212	-	-
Gender power composition	-	-	,498*	-,229
Size	,001	,003*	,000	,003**
Constant	3,863***	3,245***	3,209***	3,637***
F-value	2,461	4,176*	3,431*	4,432*
R ²	,071	,143	,113	,153

***<0,000, **<0,01, *<0,05, †<0,1

The two models concerning strategic opportunism and risk with the independent variable being gender of the figure head shows that the model concerning strategic opportunism is not significant, whereas the risk model is significant. In the risk model is however the gender variable not significant, but instead is the control variable significant.

The two other models aiming at explaining strategic opportunism and risk with the independent variable being that of gender power composition showed two significant models. It is however only the model of strategic opportunism that shows significance for the gender variable, whereas the risk model shows significance for the control variable. Thus, having women on the three positions of chairperson, secretary and treasurer indicate higher preferences for strategic opportunism.

H3 suggested the most influential gender characteristics to be the power gender composition including chairperson, treasurer and secretary, followed by the gender of the chairperson and less influential would the overall gender composition of the board be. This is supported by the tests, indicating the team of the chairperson, secretary and treasurer to be the team with most influence. An interesting notion is however that the gender variables have a positive impact on strategic opportunism, which is the opposite from the hypothesised relation. Thus, a board with women domination in the right positions, i.e. the chairperson, secretary and treasurer, will indicate a team with a higher likelihood to react and act on opportunities including for example redirections of the strategy, than a team including men.

Another notion that can be made concerns the risk models where the gender variables, although not significant, have a negative indication.

DISCUSSION

We have claimed that corporate entrepreneurship is a two dimensional concept, consisting of risk attitude and strategic opportunism. Our empirical analysis gave slight support for our two dimensional conception of corporate entrepreneurship. The gender composition did influence strategic opportunism, but in the opposite direction, and it did not influence risk in a significant way, though in the hypothesised direction. Additionally, we found support for the non-unitarian view of the board.

The two dimensional conception of corporate entrepreneurship were found to correlate with the gender composition. It indicates that studies of women entrepreneurial activities could be flawed with a too simple concept of entrepreneurship. Indeed, the empirical analysis did indicate that the gender composition of the board that considered the power distribution found female domination to amplify strategic opportunism. Based on main stream gender studies, we hypothesised the opposite. The low number of observations, and the corresponding uncertainty in the statistical test, makes us humble in our claims. But it appears that female dominance in democratic organisations in the riding industry can increase strategic opportunism. The reason for the female capacity for strategic opportunism could be that their knowledge of the industry and the member's ambitions and needs increase their capacity to assume new ideas, for the benefits of the members. Thus, the explanation could be that it is not the female character of the powerful team within the board that create the correlation, but that female directors represent the dominant sex of the industry.

If this is true, we have to revert to a glass ceiling idea of organisations. Women are elected for the board since they represent different groups and their interest. At the board, men tend to be over-represented at powerful positions, such as the treasurer and as chairman. In only few cases women break the glass ceiling and make their way to the powerful positions. We assume that those women that arrive at power are strong individuals and have an abundance of knowledge about the industry, which makes them capable of understanding the new products and the need of the need products. Men are elected first and foremost because they have authority due to their sex, not due to their deep knowledge about the industry. Their lack of industry knowledge, but their basic instinct of risk, creates organisations with higher risk attitudes and less strategic opportunism.

We found slight support for the specification of the board gender composition. It indicates as hypothesised, that the gender characteristics have stronger impact when considering the power domination, than the gender of the figure head. The overall gender composition could not be found to influence corporate entrepreneurship at all. This result shows that the power distribution has to be elucidated before one can investigate gender influences. It can very well be the case that insignificant influence of gender composition found in the literature does not depend on the lack of gender composition influencing activities, but that the power distribution that transform the composition into action has not been observed.

The results have implications for board research as well, since it imply a non-unitarian view of the board, which contrast to the main-stream unitarian view of the board as a co-operative team. Much research of board composition is focused on the independent character of directors (Westphal & Zajac, 1995). Our results indicate that research should also consider the dependency within the board, in order to find out the power distribution within the board, and thereby be capable of finding out whether there exists a team within the board.

We conclude that concepts can hide and reveal gender differences, and that organisations can create images of differences in gender characteristics which basically are produced by the gender structure of the organisation.

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