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CULTURAL CAPITAL AND THE INDUSTRY-GENDER INTERACTION IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP (SUMMARY)

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

CULTURAL CAPITAL AND THE INDUSTRY-GENDER INTERACTION IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Principal Topic

There is a significant gender gap for entrepreneurship and business ownership, as well as a large industry differences between male and female entrepreneurs. Gender segregation with respect to industry seems to be stronger among entrepreneurs than among employed. To understand how these differences occur, they should be seen as a part of the general gender division in society. Building on Bourdieu, Elam (2008) pointed at gendered cultural capital as an important factor explaining gender variations. She argued that differences in institutional and dispositional cultural capital result in dissimilar approaches to entrepreneurship. Building on this, two broad explanations can be put forward for the gender differences on industry. First, industries with long historical roots as male areas still tend to be considered as masculine, irrespective of actual facts. Women may not have the relevant dispositional cultural capital, and may face lower legitimacy as entrepreneurs in these industries. Second, industry patterns of entrepreneurship may be shaped by education and experience. Through education the path dependency of dispositional cultural capital can be broken allowing women and men to move into industries not traditionally typical for their gender. However, gender division of education and work gives women and men different institutional capital to bring into entrepreneurial activity. This study analyses these two explanations through a detailed examination of the interaction of gender and industry among entrepreneurs.

Methods

Data from the Norwegian register on business enterprises is combined with data from the Norwegian share holder register to create a unique data set on business owners. These are official Norwegian registers, including owners of all private (unlisted) limited companies in Norway in 2008. In total 331090 private owners are included in the data set (26% women, 74% men), with data on the owner (gender, ownership share, location) and on the firm (industry, number of employees, sales turnover, firm location, number of owners).

Results and Implications

Analyses indicate that dispositional and institutional capital explanations are both valid. Gendering processes of industries seem to be more conservative for entrepreneurship than for employment. Even though some industries over time change from male dominated to more balanced, the gender divide in entrepreneurship remains strong. Comparative analyses on new industries and traditional industries, and male and female dominated industries are presented.

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