

Stridh, Kicki; Scholten, Christina

Conference Paper

Sustainable regional growth and development in the creative knowledge economy: Gender perspective on regional development and innovation in the food industry in Skåne

50th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Sustainable Regional Growth and Development in the Creative Knowledge Economy", 19-23 August 2010, Jönköping, Sweden

Provided in Cooperation with:

European Regional Science Association (ERSA)

Suggested Citation: Stridh, Kicki; Scholten, Christina (2010) : Sustainable regional growth and development in the creative knowledge economy: Gender perspective on regional development and innovation in the food industry in Skåne, 50th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Sustainable Regional Growth and Development in the Creative Knowledge Economy", 19-23 August 2010, Jönköping, Sweden, European Regional Science Association (ERSA), Louvain-la-Neuve

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/119105>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.

Sustainable Regional Growth and Development in the

Creative Knowledge Economy

Gender perspective on regional development and innovation in the food industry in Skåne

Keywords: Gender equality, innovation, food industry, regional development, learning

Kicki Stridh, Brohusets FoU

Christina Scholten, Malmö University

Introduction

Hard efforts are made to ensure the mature economies in the EU to develop further and keep track of the leading position in the global economy. Emphasis is put on innovation and technology development as a strategy to ensure growth. The Lisbon agenda on growth and innovation has enforced the EU economies to develop programmes to support and enhance regional growth and development. Various measures have been taken by the Swedish government to support innovation and national strategic growth potential industries or sectors have been identified and supported by national funding. The government programmes on innovation and growth is described as necessary and thereby of national interest. However, large amounts of money is spent in what's termed as prioritized industrial segment. In the Swedish case bio technologies; ICT and electro technology; material technology and other priorities which are connected to Swedish basic industry are pointed out (Governmental bill 2001/02:2). These are areas of traditionally male interest with strong connection to technology and the making of a masculine gender.

The problem

According to the gender equality bill, women and men shall have equally opportunities in all areas of life. This is also true for how common resources in society are shared between the sexes. When governmental funders of research and innovation ask for gender equality

measures in funded projects, this indicates some kind of problem. How the problem is formulated and addressed, gives however different outcomes (Bacchi 2009). To get hold of the problem The Hub's industrial partners was invited to a gathering on the question of gender, food business and development. The aim with the gathering was to collect ideas and anchor the research project within its stakeholders. It was a half-day programme and started with an introduction to research on gender and gender equality and regional development and women's purchasing power. The second part was based on group discussions where the topics were related to innovation, gender and growth within the food process industry. In the following round table discussions, representatives from the industry were convinced that norms and values in this sector are quite traditional, meaning women tend to hold lower and men superior positions within the industry and in research. It was also put forward that norms and values guides business leaders in recruiting competent co-workers and senior advisors and middle managers. The norm stated a young male, but according to students at the universities, women are overrepresented and most likely to search for employment as technicians and engineers in the future. Another issue put forward was about how to promote innovative and attractive working conditions. In these cases gender was acknowledged as one key indicator.

The problem described to us by representatives of the innovation system we are working with, were about absent women in the innovation environments. Connected to this problem, was the issue of missing good potential ideas that women would contribute to, if they were part of the innovation system. The aim with this paper is to give a contextual description of the applied gender equality research project Gender equality in the Skane Food Innovation Network and present some findings made this far. In this paper we address the following questions:

- How is gender acknowledged within the innovation system Skane Food Innovation Network?
- Are measures taken to improve gender equality within the Skane Food Innovation Network?
- What impact might the Skane Food Innovation Network have on regional development from a gender equality perspective?

The findings presented below are the results of ongoing discussions and workshops with stakeholders of the gender mainstreaming project, development discussions with process leaders and the steering committee, analysis of newsletters presented by the innovation hub, interviews with the board of Skane Food Innovation Network and national statistics.

The paper starts with introducing the research field of regional development with a gender perspective. Next part discusses gender and innovation policy. There after we describe food and food process industry. The fourth section describes the Skane Food Innovation System (below referred to as The Hub). Finally we present some of our findings and reflections this far and we conclude the paper with discussions on strategic issues concerning women, entrepreneurship and regional development in relation to The Hub and national innovation policies.

Regional development and gender mainstreaming

The Swedish membership in the EU and the Lisbon Treaty, have contributed to developing national policy and programmes on growth and innovations (Skr. 2006/07:23, Skr. 2007/08:23, Skr. 2008/09:34), as well as regional development programmes which regulates the participation in the European regional development programmes.¹ As members of the EU, the organizing principle of triple helix constellations in which industry, research and public bodies develop and operationalize regional growth and innovation programmes has become an institutionalised model of how to enforce regional R&D-processes (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000, Leydesdorff 2000, Leydesdorff & Meyer 2006). Besides policies of growth, the Swedish government has since the mid 1990s declared the importance of applying a gender perspective in regional development and through policies on gender equality and gender mainstreaming supported the importance of acknowledge women's position in and outcome of regional development and growth (Prop. 1993/94:140, Prop. 2001/02:4, SOU 2005:66, SOU 2007:13). This policy is enforced by the European Union Commission on Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (<http://ec.europa.eu/>) addressed in the roadmap of gender equality. As a national agency, Vinnova² is compelled to enforce

¹ Se <http://www.sweden.gov.se/>

² The Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems

receivers of national funding to adopt a gender perspective in the supported activities. The Skåne Food Innovation Network has agreed on working with a gender perspective, however, this knowledge area needs to be addressed with competence.

Gender research

Based on feminist studies and women's movement, gender research has developed in complexity (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005, Hill Collins 1989). We are drawing on feminist organization research (Acker 1992, Kanter 1977, McDowell 1999, Wahl 2001), gender and technology studies (Cockburn & Ormrod 1993, Nyberg 2009) together with gender and place (Massey 1994, McDowell 1999) which gives the frame for understanding what terms women in organisations are facing and the making of gender, technology and innovation. By this we see gender as a social construct based in geographical, historical, cultural and social contexts, something which is done every day by everyone (Candice and West 1988, Connell 2002, Hirdman 1990, 2002, McDowell 1999, Rose 1993). Gender studies bring analyses in what ways society is gendered and what implications these gendering processes have on women's and men's abilities and opportunities in society. Both researchers and politicians stress women's generally subordinated positions and asymmetric power relation between the sexes (UN, EU, and Swedish Government). Gender researchers' adopting a social construct perspective claims gender to be variable and instable, which indicate that the interpretation of gender changes by time and place. Cockburn and Ormrod reflect on shifting from women studies to a gender perspective:

“we have to tackle the prevailing blindness to gender itself – including the neglect of the masculinity of male actors (Cockburn & Ormrod p. 10)

In this project, we have to investigate how gender becomes significant and what interpretations might be extracted out of various situations. The Hub stretches its ambitions from the farming sector, towards services and technology and entrepreneurship, which force us to, according to our theoretical framework, make gendered practices visible and evaluate them out of a gender equality perspective.

Gender equality

Unequal living conditions and economic differences between men and women are as true as ever which calls for gender equality projects (National census 2009, Jackson 2001). The Swedish government has since the mid 1990s made explicit that gender equality is one by several qualitative issues that needs to be addressed in regional-, growth and innovation policies. There have been and still are arguments on how to establish partnerships for regional development, build networks and who is represented in these networks (Cooke, 2005, Doloreux & Parto 2005, Pettersson 2007, Rönnblom 2005). In a Swedish perspective, criticism was early drawn upon the partnership for regional development programmes constellations (Horelli & Roininen 1999) as male bodies of institutional power (Rönnblom 2002). Governmental agencies on regional development have supported feminist based initiative to promote changes towards more gender equality within regional development policy.

Gender and innovation policy

The gender equality policy implies that all aspects of life shall be equal to women and men. Research has shown that policy tends to have gender imbedded and policy programs turn out to have different outcomes according to gender (Friberg 1993, Pettersson 2002, Rönnblom 2002, Scholten 2003). Innovation is a concept which is coded masculine with its strong connection to science and technology (Blake and Hanson 2005, Lindberg 2007, Pettersson och Saarinen 2005). The feminist research claims that the concept of innovation and persons connected to innovations such as entrepreneurs and innovators needs to be challenged and filled with new interpretations (Hanson and Blake, 2005: 686).

The problem of ours and others concern is the identifying process of becoming an innovator or entrepreneur, what actions and outcomes that are described as innovations and by whom this judgment is given.

In comparing the Nordic countries innovation policies on how gender mainstreaming policies works Pettersson (2007) reach similar conclusions. In her concluding remarks she notes that gender is somewhat included in policy documents, but gender mainstreaming is absent in terms of producing side documents. In analyzing the representations in the innovations

policies, the absence of the “other” results in a white middle class, educated man as norm for innovation policy:

These representations of people as lacking can be interpreted as producing an image of who is seen as an asset and as able in the innovative society – well-resourced men (Pettersson a.a. p.61)

Malin Lindbergs research on innovation systems points to an important process in the making of strategic innovations and governmental supported triple helix constellations. In the paper “The Swedish Innovation Policy – a question on gender and technology”³, Lindberg (2008) refers to former Vice President for the Swedish Federation of Business Owners, Gunvor Engström, who criticized the Governments priorities for industrial development and innovation by defining them as traditionally male. In her research, Lindberg analyze the innovation systems that have been supported by governmental funding. Her conclusions are that technology play an essential part in the social constructing process of what is acknowledged as an innovative milieu and that two branches are especially important in governmental supported innovation: industry related or classified as basic industry and modern IT and biotechnologies (Lindberg, a.a. p. 8). These are sectors in which women seldom are described as entrepreneurs and are constantly missing or left out in the compiles of innovations which are being supported by triple helix arrangements and governmental funds.

The Hub and gender equality – a case

The spatial context of The Hub

A common description of Skane refers to the fertile soils and mild climate, suitable for farming. People living in Skane are in folklore described as with good appetite who enjoy feasts. One of the most fertile soils are found in Skane and large scale agriculture has been an important business. This has changed, however. Because of technical improvements, the agriculture sector nowadays almost runs itself. In Sweden, 1,2 percent of the labour force is working in agriculture and 1,4 percent is working within the food process industry, which in Skane is located to the western part of the county (National statistics, 2010). Still, the food

³ Sveriges Innovationspolitik – en fråga om genus och teknik, presented at the Technical Museum.

business represents is the 4th most important business in Sweden and almost 50 percent of the Swedish food business industry is located in Skane. The county is characterized by its uneven distribution of people, businesses and higher education. Of 1.2 billion inhabitants, 75 percent are living in the western parts, with focus on the west coast. 15 percent of the total workforce is employed by the industry and less than 10 percent are employed in the food business sector, life science and telecom industries. The level of education differs between the western and eastern parts, as the regional business, where more “modern”, knowledge based industry are located to the west and manufacturing industries to the east.

The Skane Food Innovation Network

The Skane Food Innovation Network started on initiatives from the industry in 1994 and the main task is to improve the technical standards in production and improve the yield within the industry.⁴ Food is extremely gendered. In almost all times and cultures, everyday food gathering and preparation is work done by women. Allen and Sachs (2007) describe it as “the most basic labor of care.” (2007) Even though the share of women ownerships of farms has increased, women’s benefits from farming are less compared to men’s. Flink (1992, in Allen and Sachs) describes the agrarian ideology as traditional according to gender roles that “projects different ideals for men and women” (p. 5). In the Swedish case, farmers wives were not acknowledged for the work done at the family farm in the national census before 1950 (Nyberg 1987). Still women are underrepresented in national census according to the Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF). Investigations made by the federation on operational management at the farm, (Den osynliga entreprenören) concluded that 32-38 percent of the managers are woman, compared to the national censuses 16 percent.

Several observations made by the authors of this article are valid for the Swedish situation. The members of The Hub’s steering committee confirm the traditional situation according to gender equality in the food business sector in Sweden which Allen and Sachs describe. The Hub is then working with an innovation system which could be described as feminine gender coded compared to other governmental funded innovation systems such as The Fibre Optic Valley. All together, the innovation system stretches from soil and farming to bio

⁴ <http://www.livsmedelsakademin.se/om-oss/> 100610

technologies, including services, logistics and consumers behaviours in between. In this broad attempt various sectors are defined as more masculine or feminine. As Pettersson mentioned above according to the national innovation policies, gender have been observed by the steering committee but not analysed out of a gender equality perspective. Members of the steering committee often return to gender divided workplaces and the absence of women in R&D. And perhaps attention needs to be drawn to the situation in the Swedish food sector.

In an article in the The Swedish Government Official Reports (1997) on women and power in Sweden, Gunnel Forsberg described Skåne characterized as a region with a traditional gender contract. In the report, three contracts were identified: a traditional, a modernistic, and an untraditional. The traditional gender contract indicates a strong gender divided labour market and a family based organization of everyday life (p.57), which position women inferior compared to men. According to regional disparities when it comes to education, business and work life, this traditional gender contract certainly differs between the knowledge region of the west and the more traditional region in the east.

Applied gender research

A model to follow?

Vinnova's framework to promote change processes by applied gender research in the funded innovation clusters is to form teams of researchers and practitioners, with the idea that theory based intervention shall support change and learning (Fürst-Hörte 2009). In our team we have outlined a working schedule where we look into the food industry field with knowledge and analytic methods from areas we find relevant: i.e. gender perspectives on organizations, entrepreneurship, innovation and regional development. This knowledge forms the basis for designed intervention and learning from the change processes. The whole process is based on interactive research theory and practice (Hansson 2000) and stems from the stakeholders experiences of necessary and relevant research issues. What the research team contribute to is methods, gender research and knowledge in promoting gender equality.

Where to start?

Where to start the work on gender equality is a delicate question. The main reason to implement a gender perspective in the activities initiated by The Hub is to broaden the opportunities to make business and strengthen the innovation system and “make unexpected things to happen.”⁵ The gender mainstreaming project is thought of as a tin opener making it easier to open up for new products or services or whatever might be explored in this project. This ambition has left the floor open for the research team to develop and practice a variety of activities and interventions.

In the project, the steering committee and the process leaders of The Hub was early identified as important actors within the innovation system. They were the gatekeeper we had to address in order to make change possible. As a Hub, organizing and supporting activities within the innovation system, the research group tried to encourage the leadership to learn more about gender equality and strive for improvements of what a gender perspective is about and how to adopt strategies and methods on how to ask for, support and work with gendered awareness within the innovation system.

From former gender equality research and other research groups within the Vinnova launch for applied gender research, we have learned that posing gender related questions and call for changes and develop strategies are frightful and often positions people in a situation of defense and resistance (Amudsdotter 2009, Andersson, Amundsdotter, Svensson and Däldehög 2009). Initially, The Hub’s steering committee was interested and participated in two workshops on what a gender perspective might contribute to. The research group was also dependent on the steering committee to formulate relevant problems as the steering committee identified or were presented before by the members in the network or the board of The Hub. After two workshops however, the initiative was questioned and tutorial discussions on gender equality out of each steering committee member’s area of responsibility was conducted instead. These dialogues gave fruitful results on how to address gender equality, by identifying other strategies in recruiting competence to specific projects; how to develop PR-materials with gender awareness and how to build teams and create advisory forms for stakeholders.

⁵ Slogan of The Hub.

Lately, however, the steering committee has made points to the research team which could be counted as some kind of resistance. By interrupting the research team from continuing working with the steering committee they have questioned the focus on them, by describing them as unimportant, mere the glue that put the innovation system together. The steering committee are now asking for more outward activities and useable tools to break the gender segregated working life within industry in order to create more innovation and growth. The Hub is at the same time reorganizing and the entrepreneurial board, one of the Hubs important decision council, has decided not to deal with jam- and lemonade businesses, as they describe it, but with advanced high-tech development projects and entrepreneurs who want to expand their businesses. The other kind of business development may instead use other sources of finance and advice, such as the county administration board's rural development department.

There have been several activities running parallel in the project. Early we mapped the sex distribution within the board and the steering committee of The Hub and made interviews with the members of the board. The board had formally decided to work with gender equality and accepted the applied gender equality research project.

The steering committee and the board

Gender equality considers all fields within the network. One is how steering committees and partnerships are built and put together, with arguments that women should not be added, but acknowledged from the beginning. When our project started, the steering committee was made up by seven members, of whom three were women; the CEO, the PR-responsible and the economist. The four men were researchers with various backgrounds and managing director at the county administration board.

The sex distribution of the board was two women and nine men. The women were the CEO of The Hub and a researcher at the Swedish University of Agricultural Science. The men are vice presidents of large food business industries or heads of departments of public bodies. The government has described how to put partnerships on regional development together. In the case of The Hub, one option was the regional business leadership and these are predominantly men. The first activity in our project was to interview the members of the board to get what picture they possessed according to gender equality and what issues out of this perspective that needs attention. First it might be of interest that the board is represented by 10 men and 2

women. Second, none of the members were aware of the gender equality project, which they formally had accepted according to the steering committee.⁶

The importance of leadership and management when it comes to development processes such as gender equality mainstreaming projects is well documented by researchers (Andersson, Amundsdotter, Svensson, Däldehöj 2009, Mark 2007). It became evident early, however, that gender equality issues never been discussed properly by The Hub's steering committee or the board. Some people had made reflections and described the gender equality issue as follows:

"Women's unwillingness to start businesses within these lines of business, is the only concrete gender equality problem, as I recognize it" (Member of the Board)

"Det enda konkreta jämställdhetsproblem som jag ser i dom här branscherna är kvinnors obenägenhet att starta företag"

This quote works well with the former and present government's ambitions to promote women entrepreneurship (Nilsson 1998, Scholten 2003). Even if women tend to start businesses in the western parts of Skane to the same extents as women in general in Sweden, they start their business in other business sectors.

In the interviews with the members of the board, it also becomes clear that distinctions are made between men and women and that women lack the interest and the ability to become an entrepreneur or industrial leader:

"I think it will be different in the next generation. I have no scientific proofs, but experienced that women are less interested in taking responsibility for the workforce, leading assignments or this kind of stuff. They aren't as interested in advancement [as men are]" (Member of the Board)

I nästa generation kommer det att vara annorlunda, tror jag, även om det finns ett jämställdhetsproblem att kvinnor faktiskt, utan vetenskaplig bas men erfarenhetsgrundat, är lite mindre intresserade av att ta ansvar för personal, ledande uppdrag eller den här typen. Man är inte lika karriärsugen"

⁶ The Board has changed its members since the interviews were conducted, the gender distribution is however the same as before.

Unofficial benefit systems and networks and homo social recruitment to managerial positions (Wahl 1992) works towards women's possibilities to be acknowledged as competent and interested in senior positions. This quote is an example of creating women as "the other" (Beauvoir 1952, Hirdman 1990).

Women's biological sex, by being the parent giving birth, is also preventing circumstances:

"They can't be sick and they can't be on maternity leave. It is somehow natural that you can't. You aren't a leader of a business if you count on all that security" (Member of the Board)

"Dom kan inte vara sjuka och dom kan inte vara barnlediga. Det ligger ju lite i naturen att det är så. Du är inte företagare om du räknar med all den tryggheten"

The biological sex and cultural construction of women as main providers for children which is by women a preferred subject position are held against women without reflections made if this statement should include everyone. Women become reduced to biology and body, a traditional patriarchal conclusion feminists have defended since the days of the first feminist wave in the late 1900-century women's movement (Gemzö 2002). This board had, though, in discussion with the steering committee decided to work with applied gender equality. The main reason for working with this issue, according to the interviews, was based on creating legitimacy towards the governmental funder who asked for gender equality measures. Another point made by one of the members of the board, was that it was an issue typical of the day.

The Hub's newsletter and gender

The Hub has its own newsletter, presented in the journal Swedish Provisions⁷, directed towards the food process industry and its stakeholders. Like most media it wants to report what activities is taking place. According to gender equality, one starting question according to representation is; whom is represented and in what way? This is important, because if

⁷ Svenska Livsmedel.

people are excluded from the public scene, they become absent and thereby lacking (Pettersson 2007).

In the analysis of the newsletter, we have used a model provided by Hellspong and Ledin (2008). The text model is structured around context, structure and style with emphasis put on the content- and the interpersonal analysis. There are 19 newsletters examined, started with the very first one in 2005 stretching to the end of 2008. It turned out that women were mainly described as project members and PhD students while men were presented as professors, entrepreneurs or business leaders and project managers. Male persons tended to be acknowledged in several issues, not for presenting new projects or results, but as a reminder of ongoing activities. The “lack” of women, described by the steering committee, might be understood by this first analysis of how The Hub presented itself and its stakeholders.

In this paper we focus on the gender dimension within the newsletter and we made following observations:

Table 1. Women and men in the newsletter. Number of hits in the text.

	Women	Men
Number of persons mentioned	48	95
Persons mentioned with an academic title	15	23
Persons mentioned as Ph.D students	8	2
Persons referred to as professors	5	8
Persons mentioned as project managers	6	11
Persons mentioned as senior manager/ CEO	2	13

The result of this analysis has been questioned, and perhaps out of good reasons, by representatives of the innovation system. The arguments are based on referring to the gender divided labour market within the food process industry and food innovation system, however.

The concluding remarks by this exercise, is that women are described differently from men and the aim with this mapping was not to designate scapegoats, but to give examples of why gender awareness is important and how improvements might be enhanced. If women are neglected in reports and newsletters, they become absent. Still, there should be good potential for women in the innovation system in the future, at least when it comes to trained persons within higher education.

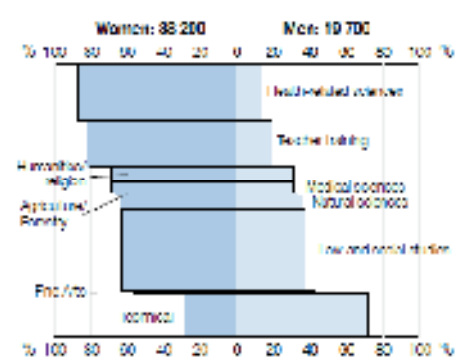
Women in the innovation system: The student advisory board and the FUNCFOOD Ph.D's

The Hub has created a student advisory board. The students represent The Hub at different fairs and exhibitions, and in exchange they get in contact with industries in Skane and Sweden. Until 2010 the advisory board has exclusively been represented by young women. From 2010, 3 men and 9 women are involved in the advisory board after the process leader of The Hub actively was looking for male students interested in the assignment. This unequal representation is somehow representative for the education system. In Sweden, women are in majority in higher education in general. The only discipline where men still outnumber women is in the faculty of technology, except for chemistry, life-science and food science (National census 2008).

Table 2.

Students completing higher education by field 2006/07

Number and sex distribution (%)



Source: Statistics in Higher Education, National Agency for Higher Education

The Hub has been one of the supporting organizations of the Functional food multi-disciplinary research programme at Lund University. 9 PhD students represent a group of upcoming scholars within the food innovation system, trained at the Functional Food Science

Centre. This programme is a triple-helix constellation where the university, the regional body for health and medical care system and commercial and industrial development and the industry collaborate and have contributed to its financing. The selection process for gathering and recruiting the best potentials to the PhD-programme was thorough. In an interview, one of the project manager declared that it turned out to be women who presented the most attractive profiles in the recruitment interview. However, in the international review of the programme the head of the department and the research programme was criticized for not having recruited any men and the evaluators referred to the lack of gender equality policy. The Hub have had some economic interest in the programme, but it seems that it never occurred to the steering committee or the board to make any gender equality analysis out of why nine women were recruited, how it could be that the programme was led by women and what kind of implications this experience might bring to the future. If women are seen as a scarce resource by The Hub and other representatives of the innovation system, this group of researchers should be of highest interest. At the mid of 2010, seven out of nine women have accomplished their PhD-thesis, several are on maternity leave and two of them have positions at the university.

In the eye of the beholder

The initial question the steering committee of The Hub addressed the research team on applied gender research was about the absent women in the innovation system. This calls for some reflections on the innovation system when this system embraces all from the activities done by the farmer to the laboratory at the university and everything in between. In this analysis we return to the three questions posed in the beginning:

1. How is gender acknowledged within the innovation system Skane Food Innovation Network?
2. Are measures taken to improve gender equality within the Skane Food Innovation Network?
3. What impact might the Skane Food Innovation Network have on regional development out of a gender equality perspective?

None of these questions can easily be answered in one way or the other. They are complex and it becomes necessary to analyse this papers findings out of both strength and weaknesses. First it can be concluded that The Hub has an idea of gender in terms of absent women within the innovation system. According to the members of the board, the problem is connected to women's unwillingness to start businesses. It is well documented by feminist researchers that "the entrepreneur" or business leader has strong connotation to masculine ideals (Holmquist och Sundin, 2002, Pettersson 2002). The statement made by the steering committee on women's absence is also about resources. The main argument is that women's ideas are needed to support and strengthen the innovation system by develop new products and services. This perspective has two sides: one in which women become an objectified resource (McDowell 1999), possible to utilize for the benefit of the innovation system, or where women uses the innovation system out of their own purposes and raise claims to equal opportunities. In this The Hub has to reconsider what implications these two perspectives carry with them.

Another finding in the project this far, is that gender equality is thought of as an issue for others, not for the steering committee or the board of The Hub. Taking gender equality seriously and working towards lasting changes craves for analysing the very own enterprise. Since gender equality is about power, it easily becomes uncomfortable to recapitulate before this kind of results. In that case it is easier to demand for changes elsewhere. The steering

committee and the board as the council of entrepreneurs are all three bodies of masculine power within the innovation system. This has little to do with the numbers of men and women represented in these constellations. The masculine construction of these decision making organs is also about what issues are considered as important, interesting and necessary for innovation and growth.

Things are starting to happen in The Hub. One example is that the process leader of gender and open innovation participates in thematic workshops and open innovation meetings on gender equality. Gradually the steering committee is recognizing the impact by adopting knowledge based awareness of the importance of gender equality. Improvements have been made in recruiting competence to innovation teams, where process leaders actively ask for other competences and persons than usually are working in these constellations. The recruitment to the student advisory board has been taken under revision and both women and men are today represented in this panel. Another important step taken is how The Hub is described on the Internet and in its PR-brochures. Today, illustrations are carefully selected and the newsletter is more professional edited out of a gender perspective.

The important council of entrepreneurship at The Hub play a significant in deciding what is constructed as innovations with potentials. The council has been recruiting new members in order to broaden the base of competence within the council, at the same time, the council has decided to focus technological advanced projects. Traditionally innovations are strongly connected to technology and certain aspects of masculinity (Lindberg 2008). Entrepreneurs in the jam and lemonade business have to find support from elsewhere, according to members of the steering committee. There are certainly women developing advanced technical devices, and the Centre of Excellence, Anti diabetic Food Centre at Lund University, is run by women. The question on why to focus on technical advanced innovations might perhaps relate to where The Hub is located. Situated at the Science Park Ideon, in Lund at the western part of Skane, academic entrepreneurship in science and technology is a strong influence.

Women entrepreneurs in the “jam and lemonade” business are more located to the east and supported by the Science Park Krinova, where Smakplats⁸ offers services of various kinds. The Hub has interests in Smakplats as well, and Smakplats is integrated within the innovation system as well. The challenge for The Hub is to create an innovation system where both forms

⁸ Place of taste.

of innovation processes and entrepreneurship are counted for in order not to create an “outsiders” within-situation for women and men with low-tech entrepreneurial ambitions.

The last question address whether The Hub will provide regional development with a gender equality perspective or not? First one has to define the role of The Hub in relation to its members in the network. The mission of The Hub is to establish possibilities for innovation and growth. Creating these structures of possibility is about mediating contacts, and get people to know about each other and discuss ideas. By systematically structure these mediating activities, The Hub might contribute to a development in Skane where both women and men are participating in develop the food business segment further. The members of The Hub, are businesses with its own organisation and structure. The internal business decisions cannot The Hub interfere with, but when new projects are on The Hubs agenda, the steering committee and its process leaders might ask for representatives out of a gender equality perspective.

So far gender equality in this analysis has focused on representation in terms of numbers. More difficult is to establish non-traditional innovation subjects as potential development areas. The process leaders and members of the steering committee at The Hub is convinced that working with gender equality will raise questions, not in terms of women and men in the first place, but by looking at and examine present processes and innovations and thereby discover new areas of practising, or processes, concepts or products. Working with gender equality has quality dimensions, and it is challenging to figure out how gender equality could be a quality indicator in industrial processes.

Concluding remarks

Gender equality is not an issue for women solely. It also addresses norms and values according to men, i.e. if women are described as missing or in minority this is dependent on who is describing the situation or who's in control of what's being done. When The Hubs newsletter described what was going on in the innovation system during 2005-2008, men at prestigious positions were presented. When it comes to action taken by the individual, the situation becomes different.

Women are not absent from the innovation system. They dominate at the university educations with few exceptions and they are prosperous in their studies. They attend The Hubs advisory board and work as ambassadors at fairs and exhibitions. In specific research programmes they have out qualified men and by that, they together with the management of the research programme have been accused by not addressing gender equality policy properly.

The research team on gender equality within the Food Business Innovation Network continue the work for the next one and a half year. By then, we tend to start a mentors programme for middle managers; introduced a course package in gender equality in the trainee-programme administrated by The Hub and developed a model on how to implement gender equality as a quality indicator in production processes within organisations, just to mention some of our interventions.

Women can do without The Hub and the innovation system in Skane. The innovation system, however, cannot do without the competence women possess. But to attract bright minds of all kinds, The Hub has to continue to do the homework, ask itself what it is representing, and if the answer isn't satisfactory enough, figure out, with some help, how to make it more pleasant in the eye of the beholder.

References

- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: a theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society*, vol 4, iss. 2 pages: 139-158.
- Allen, Patricia and Sachs, Carolyn. (2007). Women and Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food. *International Journal of Sociology of Food and Agriculture*. Vol 15(1).
- Andersson, S, Amundsdotter, E, Svensson, M och Däldehö, A-S (2010). *Middle managers as change agents*. Fibre Optic Valley.
- Bacchi, Carol (2009). *Analysing Policy: What's the problem represented to be?* Pearson. Australia.
- Blake, Megan K and Susan Hanson (2005). Rehtinking innovation: context and gender. *Environment and planning. A*. Vol. 37. P.681-701
- Cockburn, Cynthia & Ormrod, Susan (1993). *Gender and Technology in the Making*. London, Sage.
- Connell, R.W (2002). *Om Genus*. Göteborg. Daidalos.
- De los Reyes, P och Mulinari, D (2005). *Intersektionalitet: kritiska reflektioner över (o)jämsliddhetens landskap*. Liber, Malmö.
- Den osynliga entreprenören*. LRF 2009.
- Etzkowitz, H and Leydesdorff, L (2000). The dynamics of innovation: from National Systems and "Mode 2" to a Triple Helix of university–industry–government relations. *Research Policy* (29) 2000. 109–123
- Forsberg, G (1997). Rulltrapperegioner. *Om makt och kön*. SOU 1997:83, s.31-68. Stockholm. Fritze.
- Friberg, T (1993). *Den andra sidan av myntet*. Bräcke. Glesbygdsmyndigheten.
- Fürst-Hörte, G (2009). *Behovet av genusanalys*. Vinnova. VR 2009:16
- Hansson, A (2000). *Praktiskt taget. Aktionsforskning som teori och praktik*. Ak. Avhandling. Göteborgs universitet.

- Hellspong, L och Ledin, P (1997). *Vägar genom texten*. Lund. Studentlitteratur.
- Hirdman, Yvonne (2002). *Genus – om det stabilas föränderliga former*. Malmö. Liber.
- Holmquist, C och Sundin, E (2002). *Företagerskan*. Studieförbundet Näringsliv och Samhälle. Stockholm.
- Horelli, L och Roininen, J (1999). *Ex-ante evaluering ur jämställdhetsperspektiv av Sveriges tillväxtavtal*. Helsingfors, Tekniska högskolan.
- Hudson, Christine & Rönnblom, Malin (2007). Regional development policies and the constructions of gender equality: The Swedish case. In *European Journal of Political Research* 46: 47-68, 2007.
- Kanter, R Moss (1993). *Men and women of the corporation*. New York. Basic Books.
- Leydesdorff, L (2000). The triple helix: an evolutionary model of innovations. *Research Policy*. (29) 2000. 243–255
- Leydesdorff, L and Meyer, M (2006). Triple Helix indicators of knowledge-based innovation systems: Introduction to the special issue. *Research Policy* 35 (2006) 1441–1449.
- Lindberg, Malin (2008). *Sveriges innovationspolitik – en fråga om genus och teknik*. Teknikdagar på Tekniska Muséet 8-10 april 2008.
- Massey, Doreen (1994). *Space, Place and Gender*. Minnesota University Press.
- McDowell, Linda (1999). *Gender, Identity & Place*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Nyberg, A (1987). Vad är förvärvsarbete. *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift*. 8:1, s. 54-65.
- Nyberg, A-C (2009). *Making ideas matter: gender, technology and women's invention*. Ak. Avhandling. Luleå tekniska universitet.
- Pettersson, Katarina (2007). *Men and Male as the Norm? A Gender Perspective on Innovation Policies in Denmark, Finland and Sweden*. Nordic Research Programme 2005-2008. Nordregio, report 4.
- Pettersson, Katarina (2002). *Företagande män och osynliggjorda kvinnor. Diskursen om Gnosjö ur ett könsperspektiv*. Ak. Avhandling. Kulturgeografiska institutionen, Uppsala universitet.

Pettersson, Katarina & Saarinen, Ylva (2004). *Kluster som regionalpolitiskt redskap i ett könsperspektiv. Män som hjältar i manliga kluster*. Emma resurscentrum.

Regeringens proposition 1993/94:140. Regioner och bygder i utveckling.

Regeringens proposition. Prop. 2001/02:2. FoU och Samverkan i innovationssystemet.

Regeringens proposition 2001/02:4 En politik för tillväxt och livskraft i hela landet.

Rose, G (1993). *Feminism and geography. the limits of geographical knowledge*. Minneapolis. University of Minnesota Press.

Rönblom, M (2002). *Ett eget rum. Kvinnors organisering möter etablerad politik*. Ak.avhandling. Umeå universitet.

Rönblom, M (2005). Letting women in? *Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 13:3.

Scholten, C (2003). *Kvinnors försörjningsrum. Hegemonins förvaltare och murbräckor*. Ak. Avhandling. Institutionen för kulturgeografi och ekonomisk geografi, Lunds universitet.

SKR. 2006/07:23 Sveriges handlingsprogram för tillväxt och sysselsättning 2006-2008

SKR. 2007/08:23 Sveriges handlingsprogram för tillväxt och sysselsättning 2006-2008, Uppföljningsrapport 2007

SKR. 2008/09: 34 Sveriges handlingsprogram för tillväxt och sysselsättning 2008-2010

SOU 2005:66 Makt att forma samhället och sitt eget liv. Jämställdhetspolitiken mot nya mål.

SOU 2007:13 Regional utveckling och regional samhällsutveckling.

Whal, A, Holgersson, C, Höök, P och Linghag, S (2001) *Det ordnar sig*. Lund. Studentlitteratur.

West, C and Zimmerman, D (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*. Vol 1, iss. 2. Pages 125-151.