
**Entrepreneurship
Research:
Past Perspectives
and Future Prospects**

Entrepreneurship Research: Past Perspectives and Future Prospects

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Entrepreneurship Research: Past Perspectives and Future Prospects

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Abstract

Since 1996 the Swedish Foundation for Small Business Research (FSF) and the Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development (NUTEK) have been rewarding research on small business and entrepreneurship with the FSF–NUTEK Award for research on small business and entrepreneurship. This award is given to leading scholars who have had the greatest impact in shaping the field of small business and entrepreneurship research. In particular, FSF and NUTEK invited these pre-eminent scholars of entrepreneurship to share their views, insights and expertise on where the field of entrepreneurship and small business research is coming from and where it is heading. The articles contained in this 10th-year Anniversary Issue of *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship* reflects the best of the best of scholarship in the field of entrepreneurship and small business research.

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Introduction

Since 1996 the Swedish Foundation for Small Business Research (FSF) and the Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development (NUTEK) have been rewarding research on small business and entrepreneurship with the FSF–NUTEK Award for research on small business and entrepreneurship. This award is given to leading scholars who have had the greatest impact in shaping the field of small business and entrepreneurship research. The award was made on the basis of meticulous scrutiny of leading scholars in entrepreneurship and small business all around the world. The final recommendations and selection are made by a highly qualified panel of experts. The award winners span a broad spectrum of academic fields and disciplines, ranging from management to economics, sociology, and political science to regional science. Information concerning the award along with a list of the winners can be found at <http://www.fsf.se/fsf-nutek-award/winners.htm>

The ambition behind the award was and remains threefold:

- (1) to highlight the importance of research that is being produced in the areas of entrepreneurship and small business;

2 Introduction

- (2) to further stimulate and promote scholarly work within these fields of research;
- (3) to diffuse the state-of-the art research among scholars, practitioners, and people involved in small business development.

Since then, this research field has generated increasing interest and the issues are constantly being given greater importance on the agenda. We at the FSF and NUTEK are very proud to look back at these 10 years of rewarding outstanding research, and confident that the research awarded has contributed to our increased understanding of the small business sector and entrepreneurship in general.

While celebrating the 10th-year anniversary, it is natural to look back and reflect on the past for just a moment. Still, we at FSF and NUTEK opted to approach our 10th-year anniversary by looking ahead. We asked each award-winner about their view on the future of this research field. In particular, FSF and NUTEK invited these pre-eminent scholars of entrepreneurship to share their views, insights, and expertise on where the field of entrepreneurship and small business research is coming from and where it is heading. The articles contained in this 10th-year Anniversary Issue of *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship* reflect the best of the scholarship in the field of entrepreneurship and small business research.

Included in this volume of *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship* as an insightful overview of how entrepreneurship as a scholarly field of research has evolved over time by Arnold C. Cooper of Purdue University, "The Development of the Field of Entrepreneurship." According to William J. Baumol of New York University, scholarship is now coalescing into an academic field, as he argues in "Entrepreneurship and Small Business: Toward a Program of Research." David B. Audretsch of the Max Planck Institute explains the interest, importance, and significance of the coalescing scholarly field of entrepreneurship as reflecting the shift from the managed economy to "The Entrepreneurial Society." Charles Sabel of Columbia University focuses on the issue of geography and the spatial role of entrepreneurship in asking, "What to Make of the Changes in Industrial Districts? Three Questions." A more historic view of scholarship on small business and

entrepreneurship is provided by Giacomo Becattini in “Some Notes on the Empirical Basis of the Role Attributed to Small business and Entrepreneurship in the Thought of Alfred Marshall.”

Howard E. Aldrich of the University of North Carolina offers his views and insights on “Trends and Directions in Entrepreneurship Research.” David Birch reflects on entrepreneurship research to address the question, “What Have We Learned?” Paul Reynolds offers insights into “Understanding Entrepreneurship: Achievements and Opportunities – A Personal Assessment.” In “A Critical Mess Approach to Entrepreneurship Scholarship,” William Gartner tries to make sense of a disparate and evolving literature on entrepreneurship.

Three of the prize-winners provide explicit views and insights into public policy toward entrepreneurship. In “A Formulation of Entrepreneurship Policy,” Zoltan J. Acs of George Mason University explains how and why philanthropy plays a key role in linking entrepreneurship to economic growth. Similarly, Ian C. MacMillan of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania focuses on “Social Wealth Creation via Experimental Entrepreneurial Philanthropy.” Finally, David Storey of the Warwick Business School provides an overview of “Public Policy on Entrepreneurship and SMEs in Recent Years.”

We hope that these state-of-the art insights into exciting ideas and reflections in the area of small business and entrepreneurship research will prove to be as rewarding to you as they are to us at the FSF and NUTEK.

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