

Abstract

In the following I will present a short summary of my master thesis. My general interest is organizational learning in entrepreneurial companies. My interest has been developed through an internship with an entrepreneurial company, YWC Sports, which produces big sport events in Denmark. My internship was during fall 2011. At that time the company was a couple of years old and had three employees apart from the director and owner, who had started up the business. During my internship I was doing research on the organizational structures, action, interpretation and internal relations.

In this project the problem being elaborated upon is – loosely interpreted from Danish – “what can hamper organizational learning in entrepreneurship companies?”

To clarify this I include theories on organizing, organizational learning, entrepreneurship research and three different forms of empirical work.

Science

I approach my field of research through the perspective of critical realism. This means that I relate critically to my own prejudices concerning: my field of research, my understandings of YWC Sports and also how the public discourse affects the understanding of entrepreneurship in general. I believe that reality, also as a field of research, exist prior to ideas or assumptions about it. Also I believe that reality is constantly changing and developing towards something new. That is of course an assumption in itself. However, the essence is that social science cannot be approached as if reality is a closed unit or system defined by ones expectations about it. There will always be structures that affect the subject of research, beyond the researchers assumptions. Neither can it be approached as merely a social construction. An analogy from Heraklit puts it this way: You can never swim in the same river twice, as the water continuously flows and the shores are eroding.

This is an important issue in my project, as it seems there are very different approaches to entrepreneurship.

The theories

I have a great interest in the thinking of Karl Weick and his approach to organizing and organizational learning. Especially concerning improvisation, interpretation and enactment.

This is a focus that allows me to elaborate on structures that can not be experienced directly, but effects the way actors interpret actions in the organization. Due to this interpretation they act according to a certain culture, discourse etc.. Therefore I can analyze deep and transcendent structures that influence the development of organizing in YWC Sports.

Furthermore, I include a text on Nordic Entrepreneurship Research (NER), which initiates a historical development, through a classic understanding of organizational theory, but which also distinguishes between quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches in general.

Empirical cases

The Project is based on three different kinds of empirical work: Qualitative studies at YWC Sports, NER and three publications on entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurship course from three different national institutions.

The empirical work from YWC Sports represents a qualitative research, which focuses on new institutionalism but also on Weick's concepts – enactment, improvisation and interpretation.

Besides using NER as a theoretical approach I also see NER as a representation of an academic discourse on the subject.

Finally, I relate my work to a professional discourse, that seems to have a particular approach to entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

I finally conclude that a single minded focus on control, quantitative method and approach, classical business disciplines will result in a lack of ability to develop an organizational framework that allows for interpretation and organizational learning. That seems to be a dilemma as the professional discourse on entrepreneurship emphasizes focus on control, quantitative method and approach, classical business disciplines.