

Foreword

What makes great research? We all have a good sense of what makes good research, but what makes it great? Great questions.

This book should give the reader some ideas about the great questions that were embraced in August 2008 at the ESU conference at Høgskolen i Bodø.

At a recent Academy of Management research consortium, we asked a room full of past, present and future entrepreneurship scholars three simple questions:

1. What is the single most important question in entrepreneurship research (from your perspective)?
2. What is the one thing that you are most curious or most passionate about in entrepreneurship?
3. What is the number 1 thing on which you are focusing your research efforts?

Would you be surprised to know that almost everybody had three different answers to those questions? So my co-presenters and I asked ‘Why?’ (Note: this is a very good way to annoy your colleagues.)

In Bodø, if I had asked that question of the presenters, many (if not most) would have had similar answers. From their perspective, early stage as it might be, they were working on something they saw as very important to our understanding of entrepreneurship and a topic they were deeply curious (maybe even passionate) about.

I can still remember the fire in the eyes of some of the participants sharing their enthusiasm for their topic, whether Sophie Bacq on social entrepreneurship or Olga Belousova on corporate entrepreneurship (or the passion that Sara Carter and Jonathan Levie still have for their own work or even the joy of finally meeting Lars Kolvereid and seeing that his passion for entrepreneurship’s Most Important Question remains unabated).

Part of this is to the credit of their advisers and mentors, but ultimately I think it speaks to the great potential of the students and junior faculty presenting. It also speaks to the faculty driving the conference (Jonathan,

Sara, Paula, Alain, Elisabet, Odd Jarl and the rest) who fostered an environment where we could all follow our passions, while insisting on rigour in both theory and method. Nevertheless, it was very clear to me that the next 'crop' of new colleagues in entrepreneurship will be exceptional.

The Bodø conference made me a big fan of ESU (the host institution, Høgskolen i Bodø, won my heart as well). I look forward to finding new ways to help ESU continue its fine work. How can I help?

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