

# Preface

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While writing this book I have repeatedly come back to the Kierkegaardian aphorism that you have to live your life forwards but understand it backwards. Authoring this text has obviously been very important to me. It has for several years engaged me as a whole human being, but I have always argued that it is more important to be authentic than professional. Therefore it is neither a coincidence nor a deliberate move by me as a scholar to inquire into entrepreneurship as practice. The reason is rather that I have finally understood that I always wanted to increase my understanding of entrepreneurship by trying to live it.

My personal maxim implies that I have constantly been involved in local life, privately as well as professionally. This is not as prosaic as it sounds but includes for example living through a storm that kept our home in the middle of the woods without electricity for weeks and experiencing the Klondike atmosphere during the creation of two Swedish universities, in Umeå in the north and Växjö in the south. As a researcher, as a teacher, as a volunteer I have been hanging around with local entrepreneurs all my adult life. They have made my local life into an ongoing adventure that in turn has inspired me as a scholar.

Research must, though, be universally relevant: not necessarily the findings or even the methods but certainly its ability to make other researchers relate to it, however idiosyncratic it may appear. That is why I am immensely grateful to those colleagues in the international community of entrepreneurship scholars who in 2011 contributed to a special issue of *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* that invited me to reflect on my way of doing research. Denise (Fletcher, Luxembourg), Kathryn (Campbell, Canada), Bill (Gartner, USA), Daniel (Hjorth, Denmark), Olav (Spilling, Norway) and Chris (Steyaert, Switzerland) – thank you! I now understand that you made my global professional life.

Obviously it is the ‘glocal’ me that has made it into an existential urge to inquire into entrepreneurship as practice. It is in the nexus between the global and the local, the being as both a scholar and a community member, that I have found the meaning of life.

I dedicate this book to the memory of my two supervisors, Erik Johnsen and Dick Ramström – not because they spent endless hours scrutinizing

my manuscripts but rather because they did not. Neither did they tell me early in my career that they always had trust in me. They actually told me this very late – Erik when we met a last time at an informal meeting with a small group of practitioners in the countryside, just a couple of months before he passed away. Dick never told me, but his widow, Inger, did – at Dick's funeral.

Whatever else makes glocal life worth living, Ullabell has provided.

Bengt Johannisson

Sandebo, November 2017