Preface

This book was written during the summer and fall of 2009, just after we had finished a large 5-year research program from where the data and ideas for this project emerged. We are indebted to Carin Holmquist at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) for managing this project and seeing Karl through his PhD studies, and to Johan Wiklund for valuable help at the beginning of this project, as always providing plenty of energy and good advice.

During the course of writing this book, we received encouragement, inspiration, and advice from a number of colleagues across the world:

In Sweden, our colleague Karin Hellerstedt encouraged and co-authored one of the chapters in this book. Karin's insights in both economic and sociological theories and her vitality and expertise in advanced econometric analyses aided our research efforts greatly. Sergiy Protsiv at SSE kindly helped us to produce the map of entrepreneurial regions in Chapter 3. Jan Andersson and Håkan Sjöberg at Statistics Sweden provided invaluable feedback on the particularities of the matched employee–employer data utilized in this book. Dan Johansson, Sven-Olov Daunfeldt, Daniel Halvarsson and Niklas Elert at the Ratio institute read the work carefully and provided invaluable feedback. Pontus Braunerhjelm's insights into entrepreneurship and economic geography helped us improve Chapter 3, and also spurred us on to consider the potential policy implications of our work.

In the United Kingdom, the Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) Group at Imperial College Business School provided a haven of stimulation for Karl after finishing his PhD at SSE in the spring of 2009. The stimulation of interacting with the I&E group, one of the most entrepreneurial and creative research groups in the world, made our work better, easier and above all much more enjoyable. In particular, the tutelage of Bruce Tether awoke our interest in the dynamics and importance of the service sectors, and contributed to much of what is found in Chapter 1. Discussions with Erkkö Autio, also at Imperial College, increased our belief in the importance of context for the study of entrepreneurship.

In Germany, Ulrich Witt, Alex Coad, Guido Bünstorf and the Evolutionary Economics Group at the Max Planck Institute of Economics kindly invited us to present the book and provided invaluable feedback.

In the United States, our prior joint work with Tim Folta on the individual-level databases connected to this book challenged us to hone our analytical skills and allowed us to learn from the deep theoretical and empirical insights of Tim. Discussions with Woody Powell and Glenn Carroll awoke our interest in organizational sociology and spurred us on to seek cross-fertilization between their theoretical work on organizational evolution and our own more economically-oriented work. Howard Aldrich convinced Frédéric with his 1999 book that evolutionary theory provided important insights into understanding entrepreneurship. Frédéric cannot write this Preface without thanking Scott Shane, a dear friend and sharp colleague. Frédéric still remembers a train ride between Jönköping and Huskvarna when they started to discuss the use of these data and how they could provide an interesting basis for research.

The help and encouragement from all these scholars and experts notwithstanding, all potential errors and fragile spots in the empirical analyses and theoretical interpretations contained in this book remain our own.

Finally, we are also deeply grateful to those who have stood behind this project financially. A first thought goes to Göran Marklund at Vinnova. We would also like to thank Tillväxtanalys (former ITPS) and especially Björn Falkenhall for his early support. Other financiers were Entreprenörskapsforum (FSF) with Anders Lundström and Handelsbankernas Forskningsstiftelse. Their support is gratefully acknowledged.

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Lyon and Stockholm, June 2010