

Share, size and industry of women-owned enterprises

Statistics on the share, size and industry distribution of women and men-owned enterprises provide key information on gender differences in entrepreneurship. They enable comparisons of the economic importance of women-owned enterprises across countries and over time. Moreover, they show how women entrepreneurs tend to own relatively smaller enterprises and select different industries with respect to men. The statistics have been primarily obtained by linking business registers to population registers or other administrative data. They are limited to sole-proprietor enterprises given the complexity of classifying enterprises with more than one owner along gender lines.

Definition

The share of sole-proprietor women-owned enterprises indicates the proportion of sole-proprietor enterprises who are owned by women. The size distribution of women and men-owned sole-proprietor enterprises indicates the proportion of women and men-owned enterprises in three size classes of number of persons employed (1-4, 5-9, 10 or more). The sole-proprietor is excluded from the count of the number of persons employed. The distribution of women and men-owned sole-proprietor enterprises by industry shows the proportion of women and men-owned enterprises in three aggregations of industrial activities. The first aggregation "Manufacturing, Mining and Utilities" includes NACE Rev. 2 (ISIC Rev. 4) sections B to E, the second aggregation "Trade, Transportation and Accommodation" includes NACE Rev. 2 (ISIC Rev. 4) sections G to I, the third aggregation "Professional and Support services" includes NACE Rev. 2 (ISIC Rev. 4) sections M and N.

Sole-proprietor enterprises are unincorporated enterprises with one single owner – female or male – who is a person with unlimited responsibilities over losses and debts of the enterprise. Statistics refer to sole-proprietorships with at least one employee.

Comparability

Different legal definitions of sole-proprietor enterprises and different economic incentives for incorporation can limit comparability across countries. The size distribution of sole-proprietor enterprises might be affected by country regulation. In New Zealand, for example, if a business reaches a reasonable size, financial advisers recommend setting up a limited liability company to continue the business. For the Netherlands, data are not available for NACE Rev. 2 letters P, Q, R and S. Data for Norway refer to 2010 and data for Mexico refer to 2008.

For Japan, the figures refer to the number of men and women sole-proprietors with and without employers, and not to women and men-owned sole-proprietor enterprises. Japanese data are thus not fully comparable to other countries, given that one single sole-proprietor can own more than one enterprise. Korea uses establishments instead of enterprises as the statistical unit.

Highlights

The proportion of sole-proprietor enterprises which are owned by women is comprised between 20 and 40%. The average size is significantly lower for women enterprises in all countries, with the exception of Sweden. The proportion of women enterprises is relatively higher in wholesale and retail trade, transportation and accommodation, while it is relatively lower in manufacturing.

Source/online databases

Statistics produced for the OECD by national statistical offices.

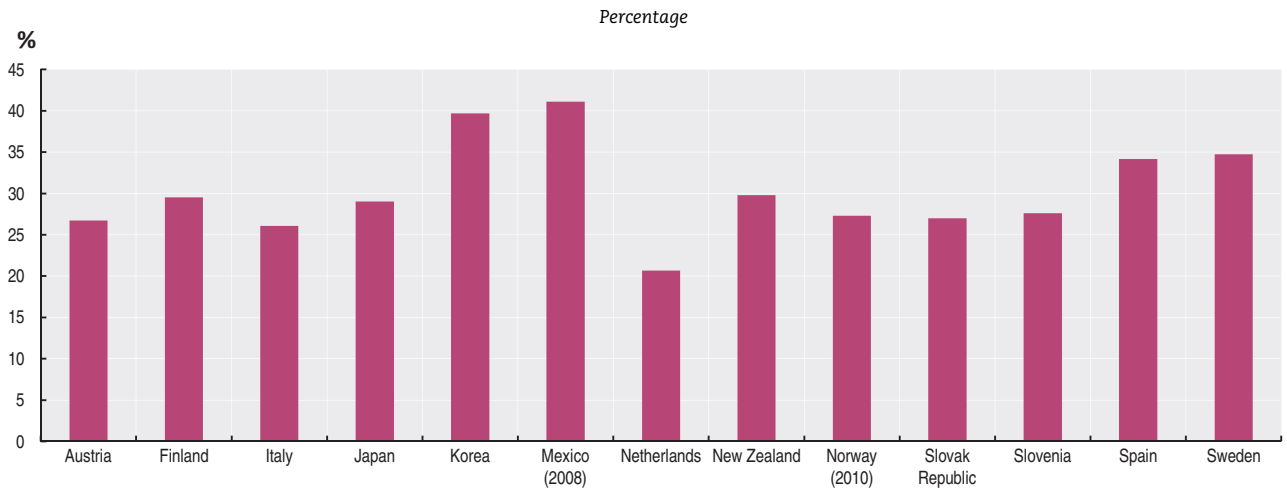
Statistics Norway (2011), "Ownership and roles in business enterprise sector", www.sbb.no/eigazskap_en.

For further reading

Eurostat/OECD (2007), Eurostat-OECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics, OECD Publishing.

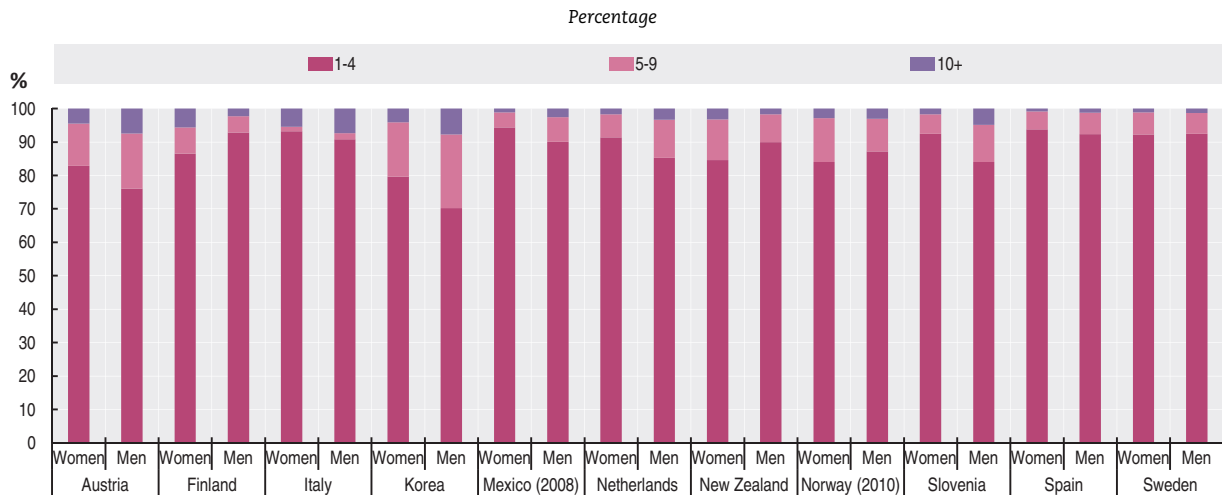
OECD (2004), Women Entrepreneurship, Issues and Policies, OECD Publishing.

Figure 7.3 Share of sole-proprietor women-owned enterprises, 2009 or latest available year



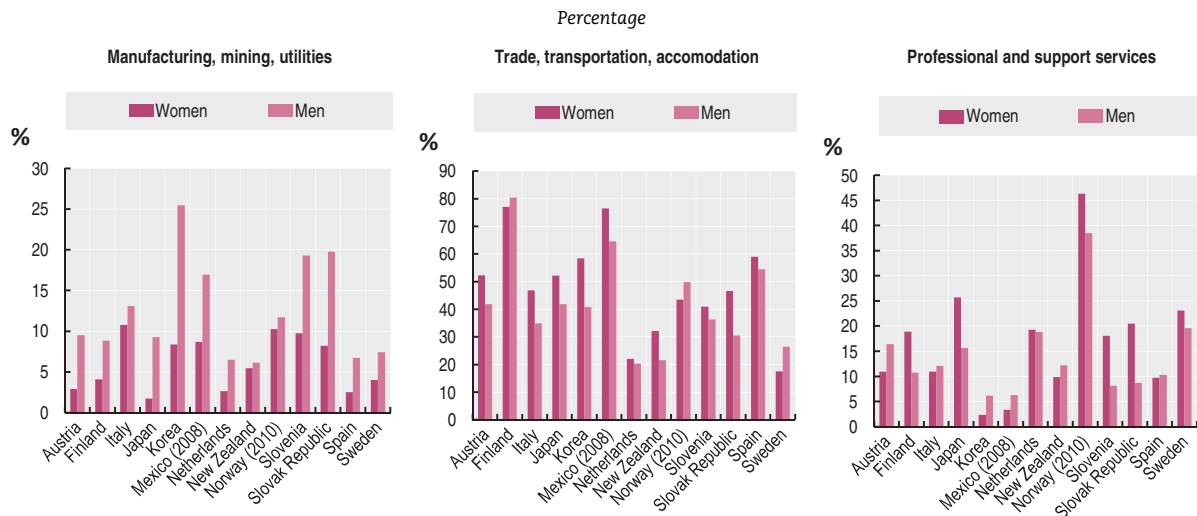
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932597714>

Figure 7.4 Size distribution of women and men-owned sole-proprietor enterprises, 2009 or latest available year



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932597733>

Figure 7.5 Distribution of women and men-owned sole-proprietor enterprises by industry, 2009 or latest available year



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932597752>



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