

Private Equity plagued by macho culture

**A Review of Gender Equality in
Swedish Private Equity firms**



AllBright

”Firms pressing rewind”

Only three per cent of all partners in private equity (PE) firms are women, while 15 out of 18 firms have management teams consisting of men only. Not a single role model for gender equality can be found in one of society’s heaviest spheres of power.



Photo: Linnéa Jonasson/Appendix Fotografi

Virtually all people in Sweden are affected by private equity firms’ operations in some way. The firms have a total turnover of about 300 billion SEK, which is approximately eight per cent of Sweden’s GDP. These firms have a huge influence on the economy and society. But only a few women are invited.

“The industry is growing their own myth”

A narrow view of competence and a tough myth can be blamed for the absence of women. Several of the 30 interviews illustrate a lifestyle job incompatible with family and leisure. An effective myth keeping women in family formation age away from the industry, but far from the truth if we listen to the few women in private equity.

Private equity firms do not mince words when portraying themselves as tough, durable and ready to sacrifice everything for work. One may ask what private equity firms may achieve of this spectacle when they only attract a small group. A group characterised by people named Johan and Henrik, with a degree from Stockholm School of Economics.

The myth of the male private equity investor has spread to the universities and only 17 per cent of women studying finance are aiming for a job in private equity. Such a homogeneous industry risks losing perspective and lucrative investment opportunities.

Investors such as state pension funds and insurance companies are managing taxpayers’ money and must push for a change. Private equity firms depend on investors and the investors should therefore use their power to demand transparency and social sustainability. It should be in the interest of both investors and the public to demand firms to make distribution in terms of gender and gender equality action plans visible on websites and in annual reports.

The absurd uniformity is likely to affect societal developments in a negative direction. Sameness can cause great hazards and the private equity industry appears to be a leaking pot. An insusceptible industry opens up for slips and excessive profit withdrawals from the public welfare.

Politicians, students and investors have every right to push the PE industry, but in the end the companies themselves need to take a long hard look in the mirror. Homogeneity is embarrassing. There is still time to examine the culture, overcome myths and invest in self-help. Equality is a question of justice and community. The men behind the myth are stuck in the past.

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Lack of women at the top

There is a stark absence of women in private equity firms. Women constitute merely 14 per cent of investment teams and only hold 3 out of 92 senior positions. All companies have failed their equality assignment.

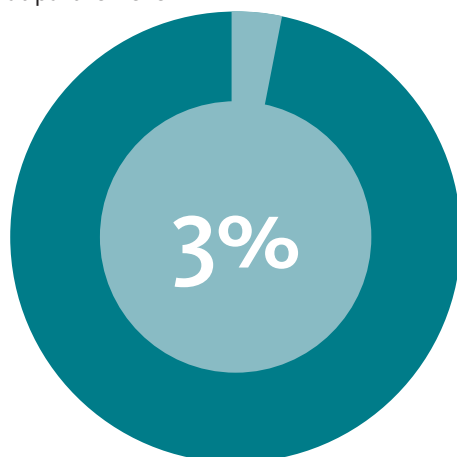
AllBright have examined gender equality in the so-called buyout sector,* i.e. firms buying majority stakes in unlisted companies with stable revenue and limited risk. The aim is to streamline, develop and sell at a profit. These private equity firms own companies that employ four per cent of all workers in Sweden.

The most senior positions of private equity firms are called partners. A lot of power and influence is in the hands of the partners, but the positions are reserved for men. When counting faces we are met with alarming results. Only three per cent of partners are women. Numbers that would make any other sector ashamed.

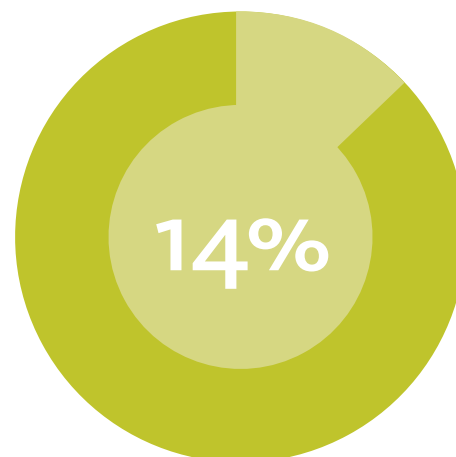
Some positions are making the distribution of women and men more balanced. Women can be found in HR, communications, administration, and in the reception. These are important positions that however won't allow promotions to partner level. A future partner has the power to influence the firm's direction through being in charge over investments. The proportion of women in investment teams is just over 14 per cent, thanks to a few companies.

Private equity firms have failed miserably with equality. Some 30 interviews with partners illustrate that they recognise the business benefits of gender equality in theory. Many argue that women responsible for investments tend to have a comprehensive societal perspective, a holistic approach and that they principally follow their values. These are valuable perspectives in an aggressive industry with great impact on many people's lives. In reality however, many company representatives are unaware of how they are in fact sustaining the male dominance. Or how to change it.

Percentage of women at partner level



Percentage of women in investment teams



Women constitute a minority at both partner level and in investment teams

* The selection of companies is based on Swedish Private Equity & Venture Capital Association's (SVCA) list of members of the buyout sector. The sample meets the following criteria: companies being in the buyout sector, majority owners, having Swedish partners, and owning Swedish corporations.

No equal companies

The first review of equality offers a miserable result: zero equal companies and extremely mediocre in senior positions. The most equal company has 25 per cent women at partner level. Private equity firms seem to have overlooked the fact that mixed groups make better and more creative decisions.

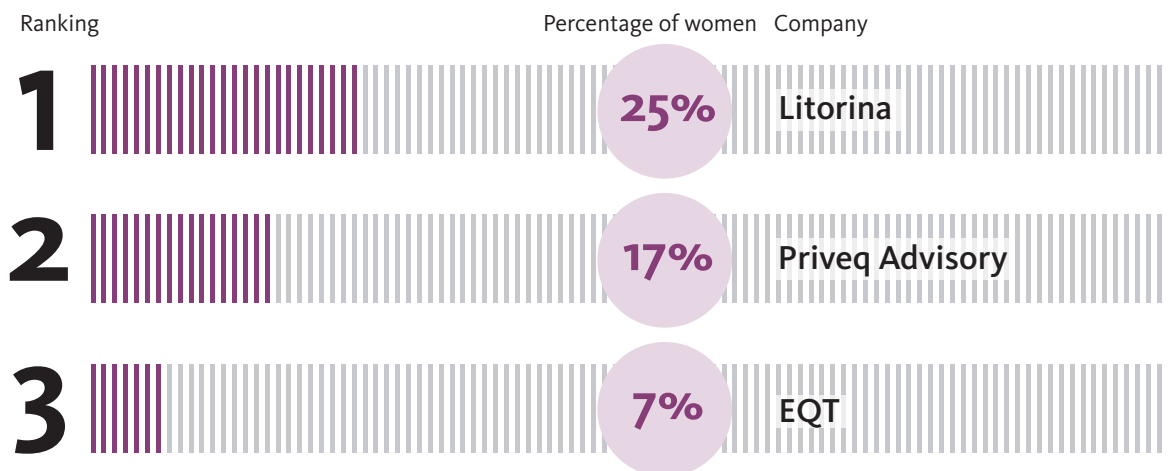
There are no good role models among the private equity firms. None of the 18 companies reviewed are equal at partner level. A majority of the companies are male-dominated while just one out of six companies have a woman in the partner group.

Only three of the reviewed companies can present a partner group with more than one gender represented. Swedish private equity firm Litorina is topping the list with 25 per cent women. A quarter of women is as good as it gets in a male-heavy industry such as private equity. Priveq Advisory arrives second with 17 per cent women. PE giant EQT comes third with a figure that in any other case would put them on the shame-list: seven per cent women at partner level.

The companies' position in the ranking does not say much about the actual number of women. 25 per cent compared to 7 may seem like a big gap but the actual difference is really just the number of men. All companies presenting women at partner level do it in singular form. None of the three companies have more than one woman in the partner group. To claim that the gender balance of private equity firms is miserable is to state the obvious.

Figures are private equity firms' best branch. But the figures show that little has happened with the distribution of gender in the industry. The fact that only three of the reviewed companies have women in the partner group is ominous. It is embarrassingly scarce in the top and extremely crowded in the bottom of our ranking. The numbers are so weak that the whole industry appears as a stumbling block rather than ambitious and proactive. It is remarkable that a sector dependent on predicting trends and striving forward are nurturing such a regressive culture. The figures should significantly risk the companies' credibility.

Percentage of women partners



Only 3 of 18 companies have women at partner level

4 of 5 companies reject women

No other sector is as mediocre. 83 per cent of the private equity firms are completely lacking women at partner level. Company representatives blame an absence of women but interviews suggest that the problem lies with the companies.

The bottom of the list is overcrowded. 15 companies are competing for the spot of being the worst at taking advantage of all competence. None of them have succeeded in recruiting or promoting a woman partner.

The PE's that have the largest partner groups and therefore should have the greatest chance of hiring women are Akademibokhandeln's owner Accent Equity Partners and healthcare company Capio's owner Nordic Capital Advisory. These two have 9 and 12 men as partners. If the companies are serious about welcoming women they should think about what signals they send out. The private equity industry appears to be a man cave.

In discussions with the firms many claim to be actively looking for women. The problem is rather described as a lack of competent women. However, it's highly unlikely that only three women are available for the whole sector. Interviews with employees instead suggest an inability to identify skills when manifested in a woman. AllBright appeals to the few companies that have women at partner level, to let the women handle future recruitments. They seem to find it easier to appreciate competence regardless of gender:

“Many men are recruiting and men find it easier to recruit other men. (...) I usually participate in recruitment processes and I view the girls in a different way. I see myself much more [in other women] than what I see the guys doing.”

Companies with zero women at partner level

0%

IK Investment Partners
Accent Equity Partners
CVC Capital Partners
FSN Capital Partners
Procuritas Partners
Axcel Management
Segulah Advisor
Adelis Advisory
NC Advisory
PAI Partners
Bridgepoint
CapMan
Ratos
Alder
Altor

15 of 18 companies have zero women at partner level

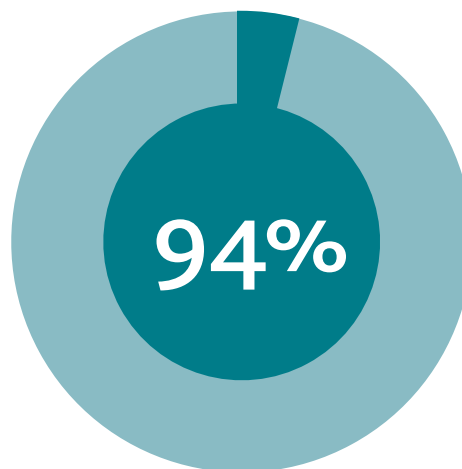
Many closed doors in Private Equity

Swedish investors in private equity firms are too focused on investments rather than how private equity firms are run, managed and operating. The otherwise so careful investors seem to wear blinders.

The Swedish investors, such as insurance companies, state pension funds and banks, are both investing in and lending money to private equity firms. Unlike private investors, these giants have a responsibility to millions of taxpayers whose money they manage. Investments should bring high returns, but not at any cost.

Unlisted PE firms operate without transparency. 94 per cent of those surveyed are not listed and therefore not subject to the same disclosure requirements as listed companies. Private equity firms need not present management, board members or partners on their websites. This loophole helps companies escape examination of who's getting employed or promoted. The question is how much competence companies are deprived of as a result of this lack of transparency. A strategist at one of the companies that invest in private equity:

Percentage unlisted buyout firms



“Buyout firms don’t see available competence. They employ like-minded. It’s the responsibility of management that there is a fair succession.”

Reviewing the equality of Swedish PE firms means knocking on many closed doors. Only after extensive emailing and a dozen phone calls, AllBright manages to get hold of the names of all partners and investment advisors in the 18 companies. A search for ‘gender equality’ gives a hit in just one of the 18 companies’ websites. CVC Capital Partners is the only company that brings up the subject in a section called career. The other companies do not seem to have anything to communicate about gender equality.

The concealment of private equity is no natural law. Investors, employees and customers that put pressure on these companies can force a different order. Stakeholder’s pressure on PE firm Triton after the Carema scandal improved press contacts and a website that is now topping the list of transparency. People familiar with the industry suggest that external demands have a potential for change. An investor:

“We have some exits soon and when we make new investments we will make tougher requirements. We must get better at social sustainability goals.”

The increasing demands from investors are discussed in corridors and boardrooms of PE firms. It’s evident that investors have started to demand an improved recruitment base. In order to secure revenue, firms need to absorb potential criticism. A senior at one of the companies concludes:

“Our investors want us to change the companies we own. Macho finance is no longer sustainable. We need more leadership and knowledge of people and business culture, not just typical financial expertise.”

Private equity sinking the financial sector

Private equity firms are the financial sector's major villains. The listed companies in the financial sector has 27 per cent women in management, compared to three per cent women in top positions of private equity firms. There are plenty of options where women are more welcome than in private equity.

If the gender imbalanced PE firms got listed on the stock exchange it would mean death for the financial sector's promising development towards equality. With the PE firms' 97 per cent men, the financial sector would decline from 27 to 19 per cent women. Meaning going from third place at AllBright's equality ranking by sector to a shameful shared sixth place. It becomes painfully clear that PE is far behind their colleagues in other financial spheres.

The listed companies of the financial sector accounted for a major boost last year and impressed as the third most gender equal sector in AllBright's ranking. The sector presented 27 per cent women in management teams and 32 per cent in boards. These figures speak of a progressive industry on the way out of male dominance.

The PE sector has nothing up against the rest of the financial sector. When other financial firms have their minds set on equality, PE firms are stuck in male dominance. If the industry would be reviewed as a separate entity the result would be even more discouraging. The constant bottom of AllBright's rankings, the power supply sector with zero women in management, is also the only sector worse than private equity. A shameful second to last place in the equality rankings should make every responsible investor sceptical and every progressive PE firm to realise the importance.

It's clear that women with financial degrees have many options where they feel more welcome than in PE. That many women are looking to work in banks, accounting firms or other financial spheres must be seen as a sign of self-preservation. Ambitious women find role models and strategically select the industry they want to work in. If PE firms are interested in attracting the best competence, it's about time they think about how this could be done. However, if they prefer their shielded male bunker they can continue on their path.

Figures from the AllBright report 2016

Ranking	Industry	Management team	Board
1.	Real Estate	33%	35%
2.	Consumer Services	28%	28%
3.	Financials	27%	32%
4.	Health Care	27%	26%
5.	Telecom	25%	27%
6.	Materials	19%	21%
7.	Consumer Goods	17%	31%
8.	Industrials	15%	28%
9.	Technology	14%	29%
10.	Oil & Gas	7%	16%
11.	Utilities	0%	10%

If the financial sector included PE firms, their ranking would descend from 3rd to 6th place

If PE were ranked as a separate sector they would end up 11th

Prospective partners also male

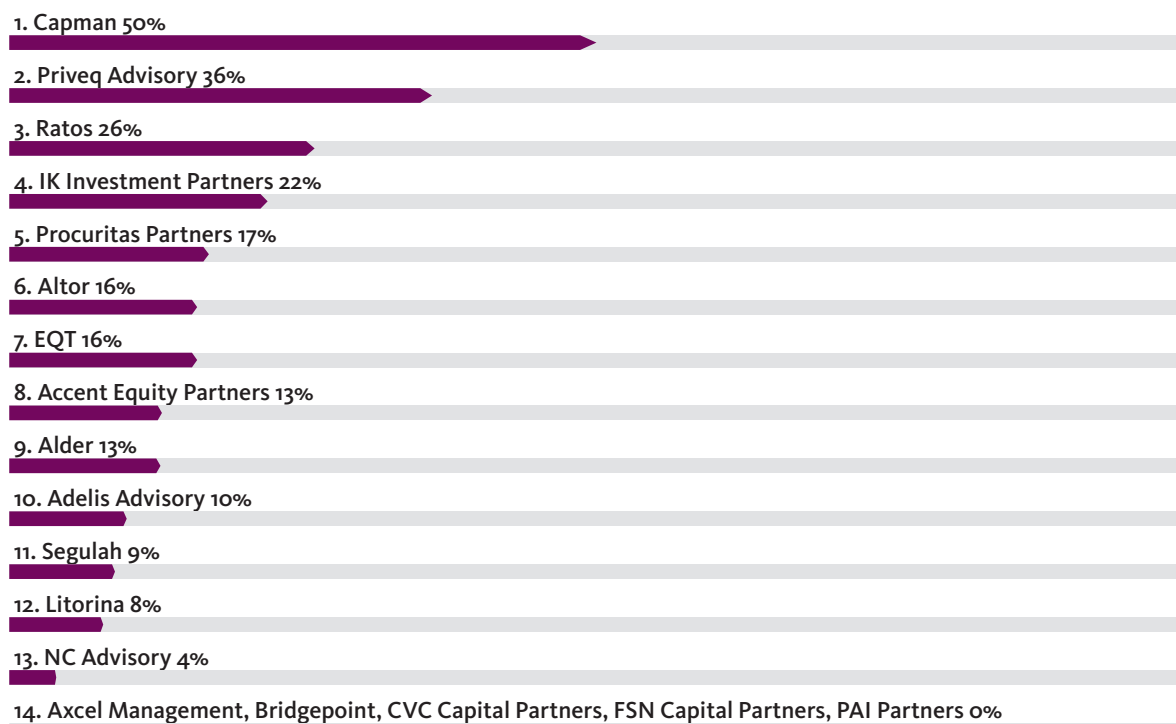
Private equity firms recruit prospective partners among their investment advisors. Investment advisors are working in investment teams that generally include partners. Only one of seven people in investment teams is a woman. If companies continue to recruit partners internally they will continuously fail equality.

The succession is clear. Those who have worked hard and excelled the investment team have a chance to become partner. The proportion of women in investment teams is therefore of major importance for a future chance of equal partner groups. Unfortunately there is no light in the end of the tunnel. Only 14 per cent of the investment teams are women. The most gender equal investment team is found at Capman. The company astonishes us with 50 per cent women in investment. Capman has the best chance for an equal partner group in the foreseeable future; it remains to see if they take that chance.

Priveq can be proud of the second most equal investment team, where 36 per cent women are responsible for investment in different ways. In the remaining 16 companies women constitute less than 30 per cent of employees in the investment teams. Five companies break the record of women aversion. Axcel Management, Bridgepoint, CVC Capital Partners, FSN Capital Partners and PAI Partners have neither women as investment advisors nor partners.

The pool of prospective partners gives little hope of a brighter future. In the best of worlds, women within investment teams that have not yet reached partner level would end up there in the future. In reality, chances are low that a partner position is of interest to all of them, and it's far from certain that they are all given the opportunity. If companies continue to recruit internally, gender equality will linger.

Percentage of women in investment teams



Five companies are completely lacking women in investment teams

Absurd demands shed women

11 per cent of partners are named Johan and Henrik while women make up three per cent. There are thus more Johans and Henriks than there are women at partner level. A partner position also requires a Master's degree in Finance from Stockholm School of Economics and experience from an investment bank in London. The template for recruitment is narrow.

Johan and Henrik are the most common names in partner groups. There are 174 000 Johans and 61 000 Henriks in Sweden today, compared to about five million women. These two names being more common than women is outrageous. The companies' representatives claim that they are recruiting the best competence, whilst recognising the narrow template for potential candidates. One partner agrees that the perception of competence is limited:

“You must have worked for 1-3 years. We don't only hire people from London, but also from Swedish investment banks (...) so we recruit a little wider, but not much.”

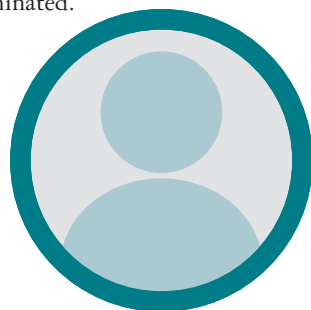
The dominant profile includes a degree from Stockholm School of Economics via a London bank or a position as a management consultant. 44 per cent of all partners have graduated from Stockholm School of Economics. According to recruitment managers at the PE firms, this narrow template is a must to cope with the job. The unwillingness to expand the view of competence is obvious. The profile requires an early focus on finance and an interest in private equity. This is an excellent barrier to deter women who have chosen the path too late. An employee says:

“The pool is small and there is a tight funnel into the industry. It feels like they look wider now. Guys have a clearer picture of what they want earlier - or give the impression of it - than girls. It is therefore important to find other ways to attract girls”

Not only narrow ideas of who is capable of what are standing in the way of women wanting to pursue a career in private equity. If you have the right degree and qualifications your next challenge is to answer before a crowd of men who seem to believe that competence is found only in their own reflection. A partner shares his view on recruitment:

“You're looking for a person that has a high probability to cope with the task, and that person in turn is probably similar to previous recruitments. If they recruited an Anders earlier, they will recruit an Anders again”

The otherwise so venturesome partners don't dare to challenge the view of competence and have overlooked the fact that diverse groups will lead to better performance and financial returns. The door into the prestigious industry is only open for a small group of men while nearly shut for women. Firms taking gender equality seriously need to demonstrate it in recruitment processes. They must seek competence outside of their comfort zone, and macho profiles must be eliminated.



The normative person

Name: Johan or Henrik

Age: 48 years

Education: Master in finance

University: The Stockholm School of Economics

The most common profile among partners is a 48-year-old man named Johan or Henrik with a degree from Stockholm School of Economics

Wanted: childless professionals

The prestigious private equity industry is mythical and partners seem trapped in their own myth. Several partners show awareness of a gender imbalance that must be corrected, but it seems to be a lack in knowledge of how exactly that's going to happen.

Company leaders are growing a myth about an industry where only a small group is welcome, and where even fewer people can cope. They don't do much to change the perception of a demanding profession. Many of them are instead connecting the absence of women with the high tempo. Partners seem to enjoy the benefits of being a select few that can handle more than others. A senior gives his view of the business:

“It is an exceptionally hard business in periods when we must make a bid or sell. We work around the clock which gives the atmosphere a macho impression.”

The fact that few women are working in PE is explained by the impossible equation of balancing work and family. The idea that men and women are different and have different relationships to family and private life is kept alive. A partner gives his views on this topic:

“I am perhaps prejudiced, but many women don't want to choose between work and family. Some professions demand that choice. You can't change the job.”

The argument that women fall out because they choose family is recurrent in all male-dominated industries. That men with children are making a career without difficulty is explained as a result of free choices. The myth of PE firms doesn't seem to fit with responsibility for home and children.

Applying the same reasoning women should not be able to have a wide range of professions, such as in the emergency rooms at the hospitals owned by the very same private equity firms. Women with family occupy high positions in a great number of areas in society. The question is whether PE is a tougher industry than being a CEO, party leader or foreign minister. A woman offers a slightly more nuanced picture:

“I don't see why the industry would suit one gender better than the other, or why it can't be combined with family. Although it's challenging at times, it's a flexible profession with good opportunities for planning your time.”

The myth of the mother with sole responsibility for family misses an important detail. Women in positions of power are often sharing equally with their partners and have no problem of balancing work and private life. More equal men means higher demands for gender equal workplaces. Firms that want to attract competence must stop treating parental leave and childcare as a deviant behaviour.

Some companies have become more aware and recognise this as a matter of management and division of labour. They realise that balance is good for both workplace culture and investments. Others see it as an expensive investment to employ more people. They view responsibilities in a different light and while some would like to “summon the spouses for reprimands” others declare inequality “not a business problem.”

“I tolerate a macho atmosphere”

There are 34 women out of 238 employees with responsibility for business in private equity firms. Three of those are operating at partner level. Despite the male dominance, women claim that the industry suits both women and men.

Female investors and partners describe a challenging and interesting industry, and encourage women to pursue a career in private equity. They speak of a flexible work situation possible to combine with family and they stress that more women would be interested in the industry if they had greater knowledge of what it encompasses. At the same time the PE women understand why they are so few: bad reputation, male dominance, and a problematic corporate culture. A senior says:

“You become more aware when climbing to a certain level in an organisation. You become aware of the differences and unspoken rules that exist.”

The corporate culture described as macho is part of their daily work situation. The strategies to cope are various. Several interviewees emphasise the importance of good and respectful co-workers and managers, while others argue that the key to success is to embrace the macho culture in different ways. An investment adviser explains:

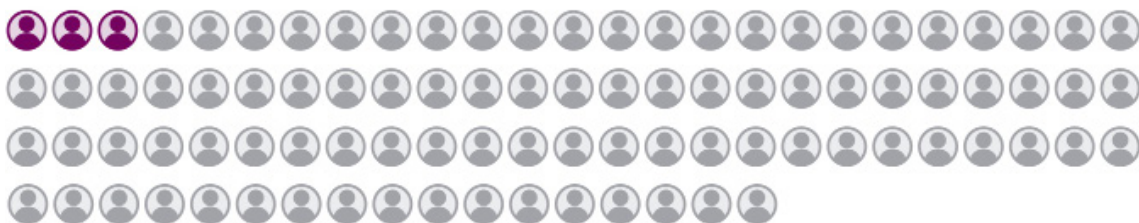
“You have to be heard. You have to position yourself. I’m trying to learn how to say something, even though it’s already said. Such personalities get rewarded, but few women are like that.”

Partners of both sexes have a common view of too few women seeking a career in private equity. The question is whether it’s the women’s fault that they do not feel welcome. High-performance students probably view the poor representation of women and the lack of female role models - and there’s a reason for it. Both students and women in private equity discuss the role model effect. Why bother pursuing a career in private equity, unless there are female role models that render it possible. A woman talks about the benefits of more than one woman:

“Having another woman in meetings makes a world of a difference. She can say that these women are good, they just have a different way of expressing it.”

Typical of male-dominated industries is that few women have the energy to strive all the way to the top. Instead, the firms are leaking of qualified women. It’s windy at the top, but without role models and allies it can easily get stormy. More women are not only good for business, they are needed to challenge the myth and change the corporate culture.

Number of women partners



3 out of 92 partners are women

PE firms overlooking women's demands

Only one of five women students would consider a career in private equity. Among men the interest is significantly greater, more than every second man can imagine a career in private equity. Women students demand an equal workplace and role models of both genders.

A survey sent to economics students at Sweden's largest universities gives an indication of the future. Out of 108 respondents 44 per cent of students are women, but only 17 per cent of them see a possible future in private equity. That few women are interested is in line with the firms' explanations, saying a lack of interested women is the main obstacle to gender equality.

Would you like to work in the private equity industry?



More men than women want to work in private equity

That few women seem interested in a career within PE is not set in stone, since nearly half of them have still not decided. They could be attracted to the industry, but the companies are cutting the branch they are sitting on. When asking why PE is not an attractive industry, a picture close to the myth the partners say they want to crush emerges. The PE industry is described as “macho” and “male-dominated” with “shabby ideals”. The claims of PE firms actively seeking for women do not seem to have reached future professionals, rather the opposite. One student describes:

“It's too risky. Besides it feels like an industry that openly don't think women belong.”

Is it important for you that your employer offers a gender equal workplace?



More women than men find gender equality important in their future workplace

Women students have another explanation for why they are avoiding the industry. 92 per cent say that it's important that their employer offers a gender equal workplace. A requirement that none of the PE firms can live up to.

Gender equality in private equity 2017

Partners are overlooking that gender equality is a crucial factor for women pursuing their career. Instead they assume that women are intimidated by the high tempo and would rather focus on family. The students who took the survey give no such indication. If companies want to attract women they need to show that a career is possible regardless of gender.

Are role models of the same sex important for you in your workplace?



More women than men are looking for role models of the same sex in the workplace

For women studying finance it's crucial with role models of the same sex. They want to see that a career is possible and that their gender is no barrier. 62 per cent of surveyed women say that it's important for them to have female role models. Firms with low proportions of women in investment teams and partner level are sheltered. One student says:

**“Obviously it affects me if I'll get a female boss.
Then I see no major obstacles for women.”**

Industry representatives, professors and students believe that the universities are failing to engage more women in finance. The gender imbalance of older universities has long been in favour of men. The explanation for this is poor information about what finance degree may lead to as well as a grave shortage of women role models. Among lecturers in the master's program in finance at the Stockholm School of Economics we found one woman and nine men. When both students and lecturers are male, it is easy to get the impression that women shouldn't bother. A student who opted out of finance reports:

“I chose a major that felt more open and where women lecturers could be found. It feels more comprehensible and it's important to have role models.”

The figures in the student survey paint a future as short of women as in the present. The PE firms seem to miss out on a whole generation of competent women and risk missing lucrative investment opportunities. A more diversified industry may seize more modern trade patterns and the impact of digitalisation.

If PE firms want to secure competence for the future, they need to handle the myth of their industry. Company representatives' statements of a tolerant culture, reasonable working hours and a quest for equality need to be communicated to the students. Currently, the students view the industry as follows:

“A harsh atmosphere and still a long way to gender equality at the office.”

Private Equity longing for duplicates

45 per cent of economics students find a career in private equity promising. Their motivations differ from other economists: they are attracted to a greater extent by money, power and reputation. What does this contribute to society and investors?

Prospective PE professionals, i.e. economics students from Sweden's most prestigious universities, have a common image of the industry. Tempted by money, thrill and trade, they want to make a name for themselves. A student expresses why he wants to make a career in private equity:

“The dynamics, the prestige and the power.”

Value maximisation, risks and “the challenging work” are other appealing factors. Students with a passion for private equity are accepting the conditions and will thus bring minimal potential for change. Prospective PE professionals are duplicates of those currently working in PE and seem to be attracted to the myth of the industry. A student about what motivates him:

“The opportunity to make money. The thrill of balancing risk against dividends.”

What is your main career goal?

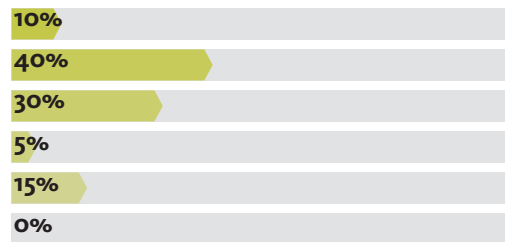
Students who want to work in private equity:

- To be safe and secure in my job
- To be devoted to a good cause and feel that I serve a higher purpose
- To achieve a balance between work and private life
- To be entrepreneurial or creative/innovative
- To have a high income
- To make a name for oneself



Students who don't want to work in private equity:

- To be safe and secure in my job
- To be devoted to a good cause and feel that I serve a higher purpose
- To achieve a balance between work and private life
- To be entrepreneurial or creative/innovative
- To have a high income
- To make a name for oneself



A higher proportion of the group who doesn't want to work in private equity indicate that their main career goal is to be devoted to a good cause compared to the group who wants to work in private equity

Several of the responses reveal significant differences in motivations between prospective PE professionals and other economics students. When asked about the most important career goals “to be devoted to a good cause and feel that I serve a higher purpose” dominate among other economics students. Even among those who want to work with private equity in the future, this is the main driving force while not to the same extent. Among those striving for a career in PE, 14 per cent responded that they want to make a name for themselves compared to no one in the other group.

Gender equality in private equity 2017

Which of the following factors are most important for you when choosing a workplace?

Students who want to work in private equity:

- Good management
- Salary
- Flexible working hours
- Equal career opportunities
- Good values



Students who don't want to work in private equity:

- Good management
- Salary
- Flexible working hours
- Equal career opportunities
- Good values



Within the group that doesn't strive for a career in private equity, good values are more important than a high salary

The most important factor for students when choosing a job is good leadership and management. Second place for students with other career plans than private equity are good values. For those who strive for a career in private equity the second most important factor is a high salary. Only 11 per cent of them have good values as a determining factor. Prospective PE employees are playing into the hands of critics. They don't hide the fact that money is a key driver.

An interesting result regarding the importance of gender equality emerges in the results of students striving for a job in private equity. 91 per cent of those who don't see PE as an alternative consider gender equality important. For prospective employees this figure is only 74 per cent. 36 per cent of those who state gender equality as important find the need to further explain their definition of equality. It becomes clear that gender equality is seen as important, but the measures to achieve it is not necessarily desirable:

“Gender equality yes, but not to pursue it with poor measures.”

Prospective professionals are again reproducing the PE industry. They support gender equality but seem to believe that the PE industry will achieve it without any efforts. 8 out of 10 add that competence must precede gender. Arguments of gender equality as an opposition to meritocracy are common in male-dominated industries. That more women would mean less competence is a myth typically grown by men. That only three out of all Swedish women would be competent enough to become a partner in a private equity firm seem indifferent to people in the industry as well as prospective employees.

Some are trying to shatter the myth and challenge the macho culture. In recent years Stockholm School of Economics has worked to attract more women to finance and business. Out of 92 students at the master's level in 2016 32 per cent are women as compared to 22 per cent in 2015. The Stockholm School of Economics is slowly taking steps toward breaking gender norms and ensuring equal career opportunities. It's fundamental that other universities follow their lead.

Guidelines for Private Equity

AllBright has asked directors, employees, investors, students and other stakeholders about how to change the gender imbalance. The answers combined with AllBright's expertise on successful gender equality initiatives form a list of concrete guidelines for private equity partners. Firms that are serious about gender equality should follow the advice below. There are no excuses for continuing on the same path.

Problem 1: "Buyout firms don't see available competence. They employ like-minded"

Advice: Initiate meritocracy. Professionalise recruitment, widen the search, hire and promote on merits, not gut feeling. The methods and cases you are using may judge and punish women according to male norms. Employ individuals with different perspectives and take advantage of the business benefits that comes with greater diversity. Become a mentor; it can bring reciprocal benefits.

Problem 2: "A harsh atmosphere and still a long way to gender equality at the office."

Advice: Work actively and long-term towards gender equality, not only in recruitment but continuously throughout the organisation. Do not wait for a new generation to solve the imbalance. Be observant of structures, communication patterns and underlying prejudices and norms. Identify and handle problems. Be good role models in the management group and communicate objectives.

Problem 3: "If they recruited an Anders earlier, they will recruit an Anders again"

Advice: Challenge the boss norm. Encourage all talented leaders to strive for a management position. Challenge the notion of the male boss. See and take advantage of all competence. You need it and won't find it in your own reflection. Pay attention to performance and results.

Problem 4: "I'm trying to learn to say something, even though it's already said. Such personalities get rewarded, but few women are like that."

Advice: Pay attention to performance. Do not measure work according to time spent in office or heard at meetings. Who is perceived as an ideal employee? What behaviour gets rewarded? Criticise the internal culture and norms and consider their implications. Carefully study what gets rewarded and ask yourself why.

Problem 5: "Macho finance is no longer sustainable."

Advice: Challenge stereotypical gender roles. Set the attitude through managers and encourage employees to share responsibilities at home too. Encourage parental leave regardless of gender and make it possible for anyone to combine family and work. If men are equal it's easier for women who may otherwise be forced to choose between career and family. Employees returning to work after parental leave are often more efficient and able to prioritise.

Problem 6: "It's important to have role models"

Advice: Take control over the image you communicate. Search for prospective employees and break the myths surrounding the industry. Collaborate with universities and make appearances at career days. Show students that both women and men in the organisation prioritise gender equality.



The AllBright vision is to promote diversity in Swedish directorates. The overall mission is to promote a business industry that see the potential in every individual and that recruits based on meritocracy. AllBright offers lectures and seminars on the subject of workplace diversity and is recurrently visible in Swedish media. AllBright works continuously with the mapping and scrutinizing of listed companies gender distribution at top positions. Once a year, 'The AllBright report' is released, encompassing a mapping of the management groups of listed companies in Sweden. Every autumn we make an impact in a specific area. In 2015, we released the report "Sökes: 220 kvinnor" (Wanted: 220 women) about board of directors within the listed companies. In 2014 AllBright released a report called "Kvinnor arbetar, män gör karriär" (Women work, men do career), mapping the lawyer sector. In 2013 AllBright released a report called "Lika Barn leka bäst" (Like attracts like), mapping the demographics of the board of directors within the listed companies. In 2012, AllBright released "Makten i Kulisserna" (The power behind the curtains), mapping the nominating committees of the listed companies. A collection of these reports can be downloaded on the AllBright website: please go to: www.allbright.se/rapporter

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The AllBright report,
March 2016



The AllBright report,
March 2015



The AllBright report,
March 2014



The AllBright report,
February 2013



The AllBright report,
February 2012



Private Equity plagued by macho culture, March 2017



Wanted: 220 women, September 2015



Women work, men do career, November 2014



Like attracts like, November 2013



The power behind the curtains, September 2012