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Fostering the enterprising self: Gendered notions of entrepreneurship in Swedish school education

by

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Abstract

In this paper we take an interest in how the entrepreneurship discourses in society find their way into the school system, thereby fostering enterprising selves and producing gender relations. We argue that the initiatives taken to inform and transform pupils and students into 'creative', 'experimenting' and 'entrepreneurial' citizens draw upon neo liberal thoughts of infinite space of action for the individual and the market as the place of transformation and valuation; open for everyone, fair to everyone. Arguably, this tends to make the feminist project outmoded, and the notion of gender obscure. However, we will show how entrepreneurial discourses in school, drawing on the idea of enterprising self, nevertheless invoke different gender positions. This paper aims at illustrating how enterprising selves are produced in empirical cases through images and ideals of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship that are conveyed to teachers and pupils through pedagogical concepts and study materials. The analysis is based on material from three non-profit associations that are actively involved in inducing entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial learning into the Swedish school system. Of particular interest is how gender is invoked in these cases and the analysis therefore directs the attention not only to what is presented, but also of what is absent and suppressed.

1. Introduction

In this paper we take an interest in how entrepreneurship discourses in society find their way into the school system, thereby fostering enterprising selves and producing gender relations. We argue that the initiatives taken to inform and transform pupils and students into 'creative', 'experimenting' and 'entrepreneurial' citizens draw upon neo liberal thoughts of infinite space of action and the free market as the place of transformation and valuation; open for everyone, fair to everyone. Arguably, this tends to make the feminist project outmoded, and the notion of gender obscure. However, we will show how entrepreneurial discourses in the school sector, drawing on the idea of enterprising self, nevertheless invoke different gender positions. The initiatives studied all have their origins in various associations and interest groups external to the public sector school system, although the adoption of them is forcefully supported by a hegemonic political ambition to enhance, multiply and sustain entrepreneurial activities in the population through establishing the option to become self-employed as available and attractive among receptive youth. Based on this reasoning, we have identified a need to make the increase of educational concepts, aimed at encouraging the youth to acquire 'entrepreneurial' and 'innovative' capacities, subject to closer scrutiny.

We build this paper on a Foucauldian governmentality perspective (Lemke, 2001). Accordingly, "the rationality of neoliberal governmentality in its clearest i.e. most radical, form, and dissects from it the entrepreneur himself as its nucleus, who is his own capital, his (sic!) own producer, his own source of property" (Foucault, 2004: 314). The enterprising self can then be seen as a technique for governmentality and for subjectivation, self-disciplining the self into an endless series of performances and achievements aimed at surviving and thriving in the marketplace. Hence, the enterprising self cannot be reduced to a certain category of prosperous individuals, but shall rather be seen as a process that invades multiple subject positions. As Bröckling (2005) declares, "one is not an enterprising self, but is rather becoming one".

Entrepreneurial discourses in society tend to reinforce the irresistible but unattainable notion of the enterprising self, presenting the entrepreneurship as

indispensable, and entrepreneurs as precarious and admirable (Perren and Jennings, 2005; Sørensen, 2008). Much of the strong legitimacy of entrepreneurship in modern society rest upon the general notion of entrepreneurs as creative and energetic frontrunners that undertake innovative actions that in the end will mean prosperity and development for all of us (Ogbor, 2000; Jones and Spicer, 2005; Berglund and Johansson, 2007; Dey and Steyaert, 2010). However discourses on entrepreneurship have also shown to be highly gendered, implying that the identity base “entrepreneur” is dominated by masculine characteristics and expectations (cf Ogbor, 2000; Holmquist & Sundin, 2002; Gherardi and Poggio, 2007; Calás et al, 2009). Practicing entrepreneurship within such a discursive context will thus include the constant handling of identity, not least for those deviating from the masculine norm (Berglund, 2006) Consequently, the ‘otherness’ of deviators such as women, immigrants, disabled, elderly and similar “othernessed” categories are central to understanding how gender is invoked in the fostering of enterprising selves in the school context.

When linking the notion of entrepreneurship to education the consequences, in terms of the construction of desirable subject positions, appears to be of specific interest for critical inquiry (Down, 2009). Such research seek to understand how entrepreneurial concepts and acts are constructed, opening the field to critical questions concerning whom is seen as entrepreneurial (and not) and what expectations that conveys. As inhabitants of a neo-liberal society we increasingly become part of an ‘enterprise culture’ (Wee & Brooks, 2011) in which notions of employability, flexibility, project-orientation and individual responsibility are central to our way of justifying ourselves and our actions (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002). In such a context, we captivate subject positions such as the ‘enterprising self’ (Du Gay, 1996). At the surface this idea builds on traditional feminist virtues, promising the reconciliation of emancipation and self-realization (Cruishank, 1999). However, from the viewpoint of the governable enterprising self, the considerable more darksome sight of the subjugation of “hearts, minds and even souls to organizational goals of material profit and productivity” is taking shape (Fenwick, 2002).

This paper aims at illustrating how enterprising selves are produced in empirical cases through images and ideals of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship that are conveyed to teachers and pupils through pedagogical concepts and study materials. Of

particular interest is how gender is invoked in these cases. The analysis therefore directs the attention, not only to what is presented, but also of what is absent and suppressed.

The paper starts with sketching a background to the current surge in pedagogical initiatives aimed at introducing entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial learning in schools, tracing it back to both EU initiatives and national curricula. Then, a theoretical discussion on the gendering of the entrepreneurial self is presented. Thereafter a number of recent pedagogical initiatives, offering various forms of entrepreneurial training, are presented followed by an analysis on the gendering of the entrepreneurial self in three of the different concepts that are offered to teachers and students.

2. The introduction of entrepreneurship discourse in the school system

In 2000 the Heads of State and Government in Europe “committed themselves to making the European Union the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment” (Lisbon European Council, 2000). This is commonly referred to as “the Lisbon Strategy”. Embarking on this strategy entrepreneurship was given a high priority at the EU policy agenda, and held forward as a solution to creating not only economic growth and new jobs, but also social cohesion. Although problems such as industrial restructuring, unemployment and social exclusion appear as complex and difficult to handle, entrepreneurship was nevertheless (or perhaps, for that reason) seen as an importance force that mobilizes humans’ ability to take action, giving wo(men) space and control in the market game. As part of this interest the green paper of entrepreneurship was presented in 2003, followed by an action plan in 2004, which concluded that “entrepreneurship is a major driver of innovation, competitiveness and growth (European Commission, 2004a: 3). In this vein the Commission held forward entrepreneurship education as one important way in fostering entrepreneurial mindsets among young people:

To ensure that all students leaving the education system have had access to entrepreneurship courses, the Commission calls upon the Member States to

integrate entrepreneurship education into all schools' curricula and provide schools with proper support to allow them to put in place effective and high quality education scheme". (European Commission, 2004a: 8)

The interest in entrepreneurship education has not been delayed in the Nordic countries. Whilst Norway presented their strategy for implementing entrepreneurship education in the educational system in May 2004, the Danish government aimed for Denmark to be a part of the European entrepreneurial elite by the year of 2010. Finland can in this context be seen as a pioneer as they decided to integrate entrepreneurship education into the national curricula as early as 2003. (Lundström *et al*, 2005)

In Sweden the interest for entrepreneurship education in national policy can be traced back to 1998 when the policy project "Entrepreneurship in school" was first initiated. The purpose of this program was to increase interest among schools in entrepreneurial approaches developing students' enterprising qualities. A policy programme, with a 150 MSEK budget for a five-year period was proposed in 2001 (NUTEK, 2002). However, this programme was never implemented, but substituted by a three-year-long national programme with the less influential budget of 12 million SEK. This budget was used to finance a wide range of different concepts and projects as entrepreneurship education targeting different levels of the educational system in different regions, entrepreneurship in the public sector, and business counseling projects targeting different groups and evaluations.

In 2004 the Swedish interest in entrepreneurship education increased when a new innovation strategy was presented:

To gain a long-term result the interest in entrepreneurship, as curiosity and the joy to discover, need to be created in the early school years. For the youth to gain knowledge in enterprising and to contribute to positive attitudes entrepreneurship must be given a natural place in teaching. The interplay between school and company must also be developed. In upper secondary school students shall be prepared for both employment and self-employment. Efforts shall be carried out to promote the youth's creativity and knowledge in running a company. The steps taken shall in the long run lead to an increasing degree of

new companies as well as growth in existing companies. (Swedish government, 2004a: 40)

This increased interest in entrepreneurship education is recognized in the follow-up three-year long program which, by the Swedish Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communication, was granted 130 MSEK for the year 2005-2007. In this program, students in all levels of the educational system was to be given advice and education on questions concerning entrepreneurship. They were also to be given the opportunity in starting and running a business in different ways.

During this period of time, the increased interest in entrepreneurship education can also be identified in the regional policy documents. Both the "Regional Programme of Growth" (2004–2007) and its precursor, the "Regional Agreement of Growth" (2000-2003), were analysed in a Nordic study stating that stimulations of young entrepreneurship has increased (Lundström *et al*, 2005). Whilst the interest to stimulate young entrepreneurship in compulsory and upper secondary school was found in 13 of the 21 regional agreements in the 2000-2003 programs, it had increased to cover 17 regions in the follow-up regional program. This increasing interest of entrepreneurship education can be compared with the situation in the mid 1990s when only two regions were working with the issue of entrepreneurship education in Sweden. These two pioneer regions, situated in the north of Sweden, were some of the first to be hit by the restructuring of the labour market and thus also subject to intense governmental support.

The popularity of entrepreneurship education can also be seen in the increasing amount of projects, ideas and concepts being launched. In early 1980 only two projects can be identified, that mentioned entrepreneurship in compulsory- and upper secondary school. In 2004 the amount of entrepreneurship projects and concepts within the educational sphere had increased to 37 (Lundström *et al*, 2005). Two of these projects were nationally initiated, nine had also been spread nation-wide and the remaining 26 constituted regional projects.

An early definition of entrepreneurship, formulated by the Swedish Agency for Economic and regional Growth, when introducing the concept of entrepreneurship to

the world of school sustain that *"entrepreneurship is a dynamic and social process, where individuals, alone or in co-operation, identify opportunities and do something with them to reshape ideas to practical or aimed activities in social, cultural, or economical contexts"* (NUTEK, 2004). Accordingly, it is emphasized that entrepreneurship is a social process, and that it contributes to, not only economic contexts, but also to social and cultural contexts.

In 2009 the responsibility of entrepreneurship education was handed over from the ministry of industry to the ministry of education. In this vein, the policy provider has shifted from the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket, former NUTEK) to the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket). Symbolically, this take-over was manifested by the launch of a new strategy which describe why entrepreneurship is important, both in providing knowledge for those who wants to start a business as well as for stimulating young peoples creativity in developing new ideas and transform them in practice (ref Strategin). This strategy was commented upon by the education minister Jan Björklund as follows:

"We want entrepreneurship to run as a main thread through the educational system, and we hope that the strategy inspires teachers to develop their pedagogy."

One year later, in the autumn of 2010, the notion of "entrepreneurial attitude" reached its way into the national curriculum for day-care centers, pre-school and nine-year compulsory school:

An important assignment for school is to give both overview and context. School shall stimulate the creativity, curiosity and self-confidence among pupils as well as their will to try new ideas and solve problems. Pupils shall as well get the opportunity to take initiative and responsibility as well as to develop their abilities to work independently as well as together with others. School shall, by that, contribute to that pupils develop an attitude that promotes entrepreneurship. (Curriculum, Lgr 11, 2010:6)

A broad perspective of entrepreneurship is apparent in the discussions on entrepreneurial attitude. It is for instance stated in the Swedish National Agency for Education's directions for entrepreneurship in upper secondary school that entrepreneurship should be dealt with in social, scientific, cultural, or economic contexts. Entrepreneurship is thus perceived as multifaceted phenomena that contribute with many different values (not only economic) in societies. Arguably, entrepreneurial approach is constructed more in line with a broad understanding of soci(et)al and institutional entrepreneurship, something that imbues society and is part of transforming its structures, rather than as a "tool" that adds another piece of company to the market settings that prevail (e.g. Berglund et al, 2012). But it is also closely linked to the neo-liberal view of governing human being by turning her into an enterprising subject (Peters, 2005).

Hence, this overview identifies an increase of educational concepts aimed at encouraging the youth to acquire 'entrepreneurial' and 'innovative' capacities subject to closer scrutiny. This has as well been recognized in research. Where it has been argued that a traditional understanding of entrepreneurship, as a business activity, has been, and still is contested in many educational contexts (e.g. Skogen and Sjøvoll, 2010). Although, talking about entrepreneurial approach seem to have gained acceptance and legitimacy among teachers. Leffler (2006:223) refers to an enterprising discourse, based on student activity, encouraging students to take initiative and responsibility, in contrast to a business discourse. In Sweden the enterprising discourse was verbalized in an early study by Johannisson and Madsén (1997: 17) referring to a citizenship that is fostered by an enterprising attitude which calls for the same power of initiative and commitment as discerned among small business owners. The enterprising discourse is closely linked to the idea of strengthening the entrepreneurial approach among students, which has gained legitimacy in the educational context.

A study that poses the question "what do teachers *do* when they do entrepreneurship education?" illustrate that the content of entrepreneurship education varies, and also how it is organized (Berglund and Holmgren, 2007: 49). However, despite this variation teachers agreed upon that entrepreneurship education deals with enterprising in the sense of creating conditions for an entrepreneurial attitude, characterized by creativity, reflexivity and power of initiative. This seems to have

opened up for teachers to translate the idea of entrepreneurship to the context of pedagogy in which it has turned into an umbrella for a progressive pedagogy, rather than a means for creating economic growth (Ahl and Berglund, 2008); a translation which seemed to have created considerable tensions between policy and practice (Berglund and Holmgren, forthcoming).

In another study of how entrepreneurship discourses have found its way into curricula and teaching practices in Swedish schools, Leffler (2006) show that this is not merely a matter of inspiring children to start their own firms, but it is also a creeping identity transformation of both pupils and teachers towards becoming more self-sufficient, active, creative, pattern-breaking and responsible. This is done through dichotomizing entrepreneurship from non-entrepreneurship, linking it to generally accepted school ideologies, and by presenting it as necessary for the future. Leffler concludes that gender issues have been made completely invisible in the entrepreneurial discourse, and that there is thus a clear risk that boys are treated as the norm and girls as the deviant problem to be 'fixed'.

3. Theoretical framework: Gendering the entrepreneurial self in educational contexts

In entrepreneurship research the Schumpeterian view on the entrepreneur as an innovator and a person breaking the norm has gained acceptance (Landström, 2005). According to this theoretical landscape, the entrepreneur is seen as a person with certain talents, and a pioneer by introducing innovations that distinguish his (sic!) business from others'. This activity, commonly referred to as creative destruction, is seen to "reform or revolutionize the pattern of production by exploiting an invention or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply of material or a new outlet for products, by reorganizing an industry and so on. (Schumpeter, 1934)

In Schumpeter's *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (Schumpeter, 1942) the source of innovation has turned into the large company with experts working together in R&D-teams to find new solutions. This late Schumpeter was more disappointed

towards entrepreneurs' scope of action, and he foresaw that he would turn into "just another office worker" (Schumpeter, 1942:133). Economic development would thus reduce the opportunity for the capitalist variant of the radical entrepreneur to revolutionize the world. According to Bröckling (2005:15) "there are many indications that exactly the opposite has occurred", but that the entrepreneurial self has become the background – an invisible role model – against which individuals are judged, and judge themselves, in contemporary society. We are all called upon to be enterprising, since it make us flexible in adapting to market signals, finding market solutions and modifications where needs must be met, and to incessantly make decisions as 'an economic man'. This mode of conduct is, in writings on the enterprising self, argued to have infiltrated every aspect of life turning decisions into a mission of allocating scarce means to the quest toward competing goals (e.g. Bröckling, 2005, du Gay, et al., 1996). Hence, the enterprising self is not a category in itself, but rather illustrate how technologies of self invoke us to the management of others as well as our own life's. The means with towards where this management is headed varies, but the recurrent watchword for this subject seems to be - 'Achieve more!' 'Perform' - entailing the message that you are never enough, never good enough.

The idea of the enterprising Self links, from a historical perspective, well to the development of neo-liberalism, bringing with it ideas about privatization of state-owned enterprises, deregulation of markets and the supporting of private sector development (Foucault 2008). Neo-liberalism thus feeds into 'human beings' abilities to enact these principles in everyday life, thereby being part of the marketization of society. This means that ideas on neo-liberalism rests on the belief that unregulated markets deliver efficiency, growth, opportunities for each and everyone and therefore prosperity for all, irrespective of dominating and excluding structures. To put it differently, there are no structural discussions as they have come to be passé since they are incessantly changed – by individuals and due to their ability to correct themselves in the development of a growing, prosperous and just society. Lemke (2002:202) therefore implies that "neo-liberalism encourages human beings to give their lives a specific entrepreneurial form".

Hence, human beings have come to be expected to constantly engage in projects to shape her or his life as autonomous individuals, who have their freedom to choose and who are driven by a desire to continuously improve themselves. This means that the

notion of the enterprising self is no longer only connected to the entrepreneurial individual who starts a new company, but also to the very embarking of life as an entrepreneurial project. In that sense has the entrepreneur come to form a background to which we judge human beings in contemporary society:

...as schools, prisons, government departments and so forth are re-imagined as 'enterprises' they all accord an increased priority to the 'entrepreneur' as a category of person. In this sense, the character of the entrepreneur can no longer be represented as just one among a plurality of ethical personalities but must be seen as assuming an ontological priority. (du Gay et al, 1996:269-270).

The rationality of neo-liberalism thus renders the social domain to an economic reality by which every sphere in society is seen in terms of allocating scarce resources for competing goals. This calls for personal responsibility and self-care in order to manage on the market. On the one hand, then, we are trained to see the society as an inexhaustible source of opportunities by which we can become successful. On the other however, incessant expectations of having to make decisions and 'run one's life as an enterprise' has come to be a burden on the shoulders of individuals, which calls for even more market intervention. (e.g. Bröckling's (2005) discussion on self-help books and coaching initiatives, promising to solve the troubles of the confused and stressed individual).

Ainsworth and Hardy (2008) however present an interesting study on older workers in Australia. Their findings show that – still – some categories are not able to take on the “mantel of enterprise”, although they were subjected to it. As a consequence the notion of the entrepreneurial self remained untouched, maintaining entrepreneurship as the effective solution to problems of unemployment, cherishing the enterprising self as someone who has the ability to lift oneself out of the swamp. Thus, the enterprising self was found to be an aged construct. For that reason it is of interest to search into the constructions where the enterprising self intersects with the categories describing young people who are about to become workers; 'student' 'pupil', and 'child'. Do they also make up an anomaly to the enterprising self or is the continuum of enterprising selves maybe even strongest at young age? In case this would be so, what are the expectations loaded on the next generations?

This notion of the entrepreneur discloses an interesting catch 22 situation. On the one hand we are all invoked to become enterprising selves- because this is how humans are seen to be(come); an ontological priority of the subject (du Gay, et al 1986). But on the other hand “entrepreneur” is still referred to as particular persons, given high status, resources and thus a prominent position in contemporary society. We often read about people in media, sometimes as entrepreneurs conquering the market with a new technological invention, making a dream come true, creating their ‘kingdom’. At other times these people are addressed as social entrepreneurs that are successful in raising people out of poverty and achieving social change (e.g. Bornstein and Davis, 2010). These entrepreneurs are often depicted as heroes (even tough there is a fine line in turning into a ‘scam’ or a vampire). Almost exclusively they are men and/or subscribe to stereotypical ideas of masculinity. Even tough all individuals are called upon to as enterprising selves, the entrepreneur has been constructed as an almost superhuman masculine being (Ogbor, 2000). In particular, this figure seems to have consequences for women’s abilities to identify with being involved in innovative and entrepreneurial endeavours (e.g. Berglund, 2006, Warren, 2004).

Several studies also illustrate how entrepreneurship make up a gender biased concepts (Sundin and Holmquist, 1989, Ahl, 2006, Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio, 2004). Accordingly these studies have illustrated how men, and masculinity, are part of constructing men as entrepreneurial and innovative (e.g. Lindberg 2009, Pettersson, 2007) diminishing women and femininities, and even strengthening the idea of men and woman as different species (Ahl, 2006). Private high tech firms, generally populated by men and being given a masculine connotation, are thus usually related to innovation and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, innovation and entrepreneurship within the public sector generally populated by women and given a feminine connotation, is often invisible (e.g. Sundin and Holmquist, 1989; Holmquist and Sundin, 2002). Thus, women and men remain separated, not only by employment structures but also in the way that entrepreneurship and innovation is conceived in contemporary society.

4. Entrepreneurship in the Swedish school system: Analysis of a series of recent pedagogical initiatives

As mentioned in the introduction this study aims at illustrating how enterprising selves are produced in empirical cases, and also how gender is invoked in these cases. The analysis is based on a set of initiatives taken to stimulate and induce innovative and entrepreneurial thinking among Swedish schoolchildren. In its 2009 regulation letter, the Swedish Government requested that the Swedish National Agency for Education (SNAE) should “stimulate the ongoing work with entrepreneurship in schools, e.g. by supporting collaborations with working life, offering competence development, enhancing exchange of experiences and distribute economic support for developmental projects and ongoing initiatives” (Utbildningsdepartementet Regleringsbrev I:7, 2009-11-26, p.9). This request was accompanied with a specified budget limited to 10 MSEK and was handled by SNAE as a specific project “Entrepreneurship in Schools”. At the project portal the project is introduced in the following way:

A more flexible labour market implies new demands on those entering work life today.

The educational sector needs to adjust itself in order to meet societal changes.

Entrepreneurship in Schools is a pedagogical approach in the classroom as much as it is knowledge on self-employment. It is about bringing forward and develop pupils' inherent curiosity, power of initiative, and self-reliance already in the early ages.

[SNAE] was in 2009 given the assignment by the Government to stimulate work related to entrepreneurship in schools.

(<http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/entreprenorskap>)

Some of the funds were used internally by SNAE in order to map the prevalence of entrepreneurship in the Swedish school system (Skolverket, 2010a) and to produce a knowledge overview of extant research in the field (Skolverket, 2010b). Remaining funds were to be distributed to developmental projects within existing schools and to ongoing initiatives taken by external non-governmental organizations to develop, support and induce entrepreneurship in schools. The analysis undertaken in this paper focuses on the latter category. The internal school projects that were awarded funding are not well described in any official sources, and most of them are very small in economic terms. The five external initiatives that received funding from SNAE in 2012, on the other hand, are very well described and most of them were awarded substantial amounts. Together with the first and dominating actor within the field, Young Achievement Sweden, these initiatives were selected as the basis of the analysis as they

are all showcases of the priorities made on behalf of the Swedish government in stimulating and supporting entrepreneurship in schools. See table in Appendix 1.

In this paper, we have made three of them – Flashes of Genius, Seeds of the Future and Junior Achievement Sweden – subject to closer analysis as they are all based on the principle of introducing entrepreneurship into the classroom setting through various pedagogical techniques and activities. They are all well established across the entire country and employ full-time staff working actively to expanding the operations and initiate new collaborations and applications of their pedagogical ideas. The three other initiatives are all more or less external to the classroom setting and/or lacking any pedagogical ideas linking education and entrepreneurship: Transfer works with attracting guest lecturers from industry to high schools, the science centers are external activity centers combining play and experimentation, and the agricultural colleges received a general grant to introduce entrepreneurship into a stagnating economic sector. They were thus excluded from the analysis.

The analysis of the three initiatives was based on their own presentational material, as it appeared on their respective websites in May, 2012. Both Flashes of Genius and Seeds of the Future present their pedagogical ideas along with examples and material at the websites, which is included in the analysis. In addition a binder of education material for Junior Achievement is also incorporated in the corpus of text analysed. Our data analysis focused on two aspects. Firstly we traced how aspects of the entrepreneurial self appeared in the construction of subject positions among the target groups of the initiatives: children, teachers, parents, and business people. Secondly, we paid interest in how gender aspects were located and drawn upon in the three empirical cases.

Flashes of Genius

Flashes of Genius (Snilleblixtarna) was founded by a Swedish inventor/entrepreneur in the beginning of the 1990's and is today a non-profit organisation with nation-wide coverage. They offer courses and educational material for teachers in preschool and compulsory school. It is emphasised that the concept "wants to awake the interest of boys and girls for technology, natural sciences, inventions and entrepreneurialism at the

same time as it stimulates creativity, the ability to take initiative and self-reliance". It is also pinpointed that this aim goes in line with the Swedish educational plan for primary schools, pre-schools, with a reference to the new national curriculum (Skolverket, 2011). The results anticipated among children are a "stimulated curiosity and will to learn". At the website detailed teaching material with precise guidelines for how teachers can manage educational activities are presented. The activities are described in different steps and related to each year from pre-school to year five in compulsory school. After the fifth year it is suggested that schools move on to another concept – "FinnUpp ("Invent") and then finish the learning process in upper secondary school with participation in Junior Achievement.

At preschool level the educational material is mainly presented in the form of fairy tales with recurring characters representing different attitudes to creativity and innovation. For example, the characters "YesYes" and "NoNo" are introduced in the stories to teach children take different position to the possibilities and limitations of new ideas. It is emphasised that idea work is tricky since it involves both finding the road to fantasy and to find one's way back to "reality":

"There are people who will never find their way to Fantasy Land, and there are people who can but then remain there for the rest of their lives. But there are also some who travel to Fantasy Land and then return to their own world. Those are the ones who can heal both worlds".

This illustrates a claimed need to induce a separation between 'boring reality' and 'exciting adventures', appealing to traditional tales such as Odysseys and heroic myths as presented in the writings of Verne, Tolkien etc. Hence, creativity require both fantasy and anchoring in reality, as well as the ability to take the position of both YesYes and NoNo (all ideas are not in their best from the beginning, they need to be developed). By going through these exercises children are taught to be able to conquer obstacles on the way. In one of the fairy tales it is told how a genius character gets a prize for his achievements, thereby also introducing the notion of competition and social recognition:

“Diploma to Flash, for being ingenious, brave and energetic – just as a real Genius should be – and you are hereby appointed MuseumGenius by all the friends at the museum.”

The material of each consecutive school year is introduced by a fairy tale or a real-life story setting the context for the various exercises, and in the 3rd year the story of societal evolution is re-written neglecting all kinds of struggle, conflicts, oppression and revolutionary class attempts. Instead power is seen as the will and ability of each individual to take action and develop new ideas for the betterment of society. Entrepreneurs’ are made into heroes, as the forerunners in the important break of the industrial revolution, which is seen to free human being from the tough and in-locked farm life.

“Ten thousand years ago we started to adapt nature to the needs of man. We went from the hunter/gatherer society to the agricultural society where 95% of the population lived in the countryside and worked in farming. You worked and obeyed the priest and the aristocracy. You thought that everyone had been given their place in society by God and that you should remain there. You stayed within your social standing.

But about 200 years ago, entrepreneurs started to make for the cities. They started small factories of genius and people longed for a more independent life than the locked-in country life and hoped for a better future in the cities. Everyone in the families needed to work to pay for food and rent. Many of them toiled and moiled in the dirty and noisy factories, but average length of life and prosperity were on the increase.”

Stories like this – training children to see the current state as a product of hard work and inventions in the past – are followed by activities. In 2nd year one of the activities suggested is to make “re-inventions” from trash, i.e. using contents in trash bins to construct new things that can be sold. The explicit purpose of this activity is to train entrepreneurship, which is seen as the “manufacturing of products and the marketing and selling of them”. In these activities financial aspect are brought in, stressing the need of finding a target market, setting a prize, organizing the work, and planning for what to

do with a possible profit.

Seeds of the Future

The second case of external initiatives intended to stimulate entrepreneurship in schools is Seeds of the Future (FramtidsFrön). It is organised by a non-profit association offering a series of courses and pedagogical tools for teachers across Sweden. The pedagogical model is built up around a series of interactive pedagogical “tools”, each representing different aspects of entrepreneurship and future challenges rather than different age groups. In the Environmental Rally, pupils are involved in solving various real-life environmental problems. They might at the same time be involved in Radio-Active, producing and broadcasting their own radio show, and The Detectives where they inquire into historical developments and how changes have occurred in society over time. The three other tools are explicitly start-up-oriented in a traditional sense and supposed to be used in sequence as the pupils mature; My first company, HandsOn enterprising and Business orientation

Notions of the enterprising self is less visible than in Flashes of Genius, although there are explicit references to the need for more entrepreneurs to save the Swedish economy in the aims statements of Seeds of the Future. However, there are a few exceptions. In the pedagogical statements introducing the Environmental Rally, entrepreneurial learning is said to be both about fostering entrepreneurial skills and acquiring knowledge about what goes on in real-life companies. The traditional school sector is implicitly described as a closed world, irrelevant and meaningless to the pupils. Teachers are presented with the alternatives of either moving on within the traditional domains or by relating to the new, modern and meaningful notion of entrepreneurial learning.

“It is real tasks from real companies, and the pupils shall use their enterprising spirit to solve them. Entrepreneurial learning imply that the school is opened towards the society out there and that society is used in the learning processes. The consequence is that learning is seen by the pupils as meaningful. In entrepreneurial learning questions shall be formulated in order to make pupils stay thinking – not to control them. In the Environmental Rally we have formulated questions and tasks so that

pupils shall feel that it is their own concern. We have chosen to formulate open questions, you-tasks. Pupils shall use their fantasy and creativity when solving the tasks in the Environmental Rally and they shall depart from their own experiences and thoughts.”

Junior Achievement Sweden

Unlike the two previous concepts, Junior Achievement (Ung Företagsamhet) is a well-established international non-profit concept since 1919, and it was established in Sweden in 1980 by three men – a pulp and paper engineer, an Operations Management professor and a manager at the Federation of Swedish Industry. Junior Achievement focuses on students in upper secondary schools and offer instructions and a methodology which teachers and students are to use to start real-life prototypical firms, JA-firms. Over 200 000 Swedish children has started a JA-Firm as part of taking a mandatory or voluntary course. The concept is explicitly focused on firm creation as a valuable practical experience for students, and does not relate to notions of creativity and ideation in the same way as the other concepts. Students are instructed to come up with a business idea – i.e. something that fits a need and thus can be sold – and then to start organizing the firm and get the business going. The main parts of the teaching material is concerned with what needs to be done in different areas of the firm, such as accounting, sales, human resource management and so forth. Junior Achievement claims this to be most successful; according to their own statistics, 24% of the students that have been part of a JA-firm has entrepreneurial experiences ten years later, contributing about 180 000 jobs to the Swedish economy.

Junior Achievement Sweden is now also involved in extending their concept downwards into compulsory school, through the concepts Our Society (2nd-5th year) and See the Opportunities (6th to 9th year). The concepts contain teaching material and group exercises. Our Society is a general overview of how a society is constructed, what the main differences are between public and private, how decisions are made, how money circulate in an economy and what happens when circulation is stifled. See the Opportunities is explicitly related to entrepreneurship, presenting the entrepreneur as a kind of individual who sees opportunities, finds solutions, thinks creatively, can present himself and his ideas and believe in himself. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their

own entrepreneurial characteristics, practice opportunity recognition, work with creative problem solving like famous entrepreneurs and present their ideas. The final exercise is that each individual are to compile their own entrepreneurship profile, again under inspiration by examples of famous entrepreneurs. These two concepts are still not fully introduced in the market.

5. Gendering the enterprising self in the school context

The idea of enterprising self is present in the material in different ways. We have discussed in the text some expressions and we have also recognized the link between enterprising self and gender. It is not just governmentality in relation to the children - teachers and parents are also encouraged to be active, take initiative, taking control over life and so on.

In the “Flashes of Genius” concept we can see that the concept as such is supposed to be gender neutral, not least as it is explicitly linked to the national curriculum. Gender is still visible in several ways. Among the fairy tale characters, YesYes is a woman, whilst NoNo is positioned as a man. Often the figures are twisting traditional notions of gender, e.g. positioning a male character idling as a result from being in love and a woman trying to awake him from his crush by turning his thoughts in other directions. However, love is still retold in a traditional way, causing people to go astray and idling, thereby becoming an obstacle to becoming a genius. Falling in love is an escape to Fantasy Land and there is a risk not finding the way back by turning rational again. The best creativity is the rational and controlled creativity, not just wild ideas. This well illustrates how gender is masked by a supposedly gender-neutral rational enterprising self, that comes close to the classic distinction of the rational man and irrational women, invented in the enlightenment.

The actual activities are linked to traditional masculine notions on technology, illustrating great inventions of man and men as great inventors, inscribing particular technologies and sectors into the concept of entrepreneurship (usually the manufacturing of products in traditional industries or in emerging high-tech areas). If we look at what is silenced in the material there are also suppressed subject positions,

those who are not directly addressed since they are not proper for the enterprising self. Yet they serve as a backdrop against which the enterprising self can be depicted. The suppressed subject positions are vaguely sketched by associations to the domestic, being trapped in history and traditions, and being caught by one's feelings and dreams. As all children are seen as carriers of inherent entrepreneurial potential, there is always the possibility of empowerment, to "break with the circle of conduct" as Schumpeter once wrote.

In the "Seeds of the Future" concept the organization presents itself as embracing the same (gender neutral) values as the national curriculum. There are still some instances of how activities and subject positions are gendered. Schools – traditionally a feminine setting – are presented as closed worlds, ignorant to what happens in commercial settings – traditional masculine settings. Thereby, the notions of entrepreneurial learning draws upon a traditional division between feminine and masculine subject positions (teachers and businessmen) and the need for the former to open up their minds to the latter. The pedagogical tools convey an image of play and playfulness as bases of entrepreneurial learning – but play and playfulness is mainly connected to masculine subject positions. In the tool Radio-Active, playing with radio equipment and a local radio broadcast is presented as "a good way to create an interest in technology and media at the same time as the pupils may exercise their inherent entrepreneurialism" – emphasizing play as purposeful and related to technological objects. In the tools explicitly designed to promote the creation of business ideas and firms, students are presented with an "entrepreneurial puzzle", in which they are to identify the following concepts as central to entrepreneurship: "persistence, opportunities, identify, confidence, optimistic, energetic, positive, feedback, desire, risktaking, goalsetting, discipline, networking, organize, responsible, communicate, create, flexibility" – i.e. most of the traditional masculinities inherent in the entrepreneurship discourse.

In the Junior Achievement concept the firm is constructed as a prototype of a rather large traditional industrial firm, thereby inscribing traditional notions of machine bureaucracies and formalization into entrepreneurial activities. Students work in groups and are supposed to form management teams where everyone get formal managerial positions such as CEOs, CFOs, marketing managers and so forth – all of them prescribed

in the teaching material. The business ideas are also rather traditional, usually focused on some sort of simple product or gadget that is easy to manufacture, distribute – and imitate. Competition is built into the concept, every year there are national, regional and local competitions among the participators. The 2012 national award was won by two young men having invented a rubber knob to cover the end of a hockey stick, reducing the wearing out of hockey gloves and coming in a range of colours suiting different player personalities. In the two emerging concepts Our Society and See the Opportunities, gender primarily appears in the reiteration of traditional notions of masculine, individualist entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is presented in the cases as something inherent in all children but the presentation and connotations are masculine in its character. The schools' role is then to activate masculine attributes in both boys and girls. This will give consequences concerning human beings and gender. One way of viewing this is that “good enough” reasoning is dedicated for men, women are often far from the norm and have a lot of identity work to do getting good enough, they are offered tools for self-fulfillment but it will be hard to reach the level of good enough. Girls will be judged against the masculine norm and they will deviate as minority in business life. They do not have the same possibilities (action of space) to construct identity as they will represent the group of women (Kanter). Still then, men are more a confirmation of entrepreneurial heroes but women are exceptions. This means that, nevertheless the idea of a ‘neutral’ enterprising self, gender is apparent in the constructions of entrepreneurship education. However subtle, the enterprising self is thoroughly creating gendered subject positions.

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Appendix I

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|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| | Flashes of Genius (Snilleblixarna) | Seeds of the Future (FramtidsFrön) | Transfer | The association of Swedish science centers | The association of Swedish Agricultural colleges (Naturbruksgymnasierna) | Junior Achievement Sweden (Ung företagsamhet) |
| <i>SNAE funding 2012</i> | 1.200 000 SEK | 1 000 000 kr | 600 000 kr | 250 000 kr | 250 000 kr | 0 |
| <i>Target group</i> | Offering courses to teachers at compulsory and secondary schools. | Offering courses to teachers at all levels from preschool to upper secondary school | Students at upper secondary schools | Children of all ages | Students at agricultural colleges | Teachers and students at upper secondary schools. Now introducing concepts for compulsory school. |
| <i>Main focus</i> | Increase interest and ability related to technology and science, innovations and inventions. | From creative play to enterprising, affecting attitudes and mindsets. | Linking guest lecturers from industry into upper secondary schools | System of external venues across Sweden offering settings in which children can play and experiment | System of 55 agricultural colleges across Sweden | Training entrepreneurial attitudes and skills through starting and managing small ventures. Mandatory in many schools across Sweden. |
| <i>Examples of main concepts and tools</i> | Tools, machines, inventor promenades | Environmental rally, Radio-active, Detectives, My First Company, Hands-on enterprising, Business orientation | Technology, business life | Play, experimentation | Agriculture, tourism, environment | JA-firms, JA-alumni, Our Society, See the Opportunities |
| <i>Stated main aim</i> | The concept of "Snilleblixarna" is aimed primarily at teachers who [...] wants to awake the interest of boys and girls for technology, natural sciences, inventions and entrepreneurialism while it stimulates creativity, the ability to take initiative and self-reliance [...] Other results are stimulated curiosity and will to learn. | The aim of FramtidsFrön is to increase childrens' self-reliance by encouraging their natural entrepreneurial abilities. If Sweden shall be able to keep up with the international developments we must bring forward many creative and courageous entrepreneurs. | Transfer's idea is to use guest lecturers as role models in providing to upper secondary school students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights – transfer knowledge • Inspiration – encourage learning, entrepreneurship and individual initiative • Entrances – contacts and openings in business life | At our Science Centers science come alive! The next generation of engineers and scientists is here given a joyful and inspiring encounter with exciting science and ingenious problem solving. Through interactive experiences and experiments, the curiosity, joy of discovery and creativity of all visitors are encouraged. | The agricultural colleges' main offer is a vocational program with much more variety than you think. What about agriculture, forestry, gardening, garden design, golf course maintenance, grooming of horses and hounds, sports fishing, water management, wildlife management, adventure tourism or environmental protection? | Junior Achievement is a non-profit, politically neutral association aiming at collaborating with schools in order to introduce entrepreneurialism and a devoted business life into the Swedish educational system. Through our courses, Ung Företagsamhet gives children and youth the opportunity to train and develop their creativity, go-ahead and their entrepreneurship. |

