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Entrepreneurship in Schools and the Invisible of Gender: A Swedish Context

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1. Introduction

For a long time entrepreneurship has been of great importance for society. Consequently its role in society has been of great interest. It is significant for the research in this area that it is multidisciplinary and there has been a struggle finding an explicit definition of the concept of 'entrepreneurship'. Now, entrepreneurship has made its entrance to more arenas than the economic ones and has become a concern for schools and education as is evident from national as well as international policies. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the concept of 'entrepreneurship' has been an item on the agenda of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as well as the European Commission. The report *Towards an 'Enterprising' Culture: a challenge for education and training* states that schools should 'go in for an enterprising culture' and that, at the same time, this implies a challenge for education (OECD, 1989, pp. 21-22). The European Commission also states the need for developing enterprising people and the importance of starting at early ages and to be a natural part of the whole school system. Children and young people are supposed to acquire an entrepreneurial attitude through teaching and learning. In this way entrepreneurship has more and more become a concern for schools and education. Schools have therefore a big responsibility for fostering and developing young people's enterprising abilities (European Commission, 2002, 2004).

In the Swedish debate on education, it is often claimed that a well-educated population is a prerequisite for welfare, because it lays the foundation for employment, growth and a sustainable society (Leffler & Svedberg, 2005). The value of education for the individual in the form of personal development and better chances in working life is also emphasized (the Ministry of Education and Science, 2001). The current interest in education and training in enterprise and lifelong learning has its origin in the employment and growth problems in the 1980s and 1990s. Entrepreneurship in schools has often been initiated by actors outside school, and in Sweden this question earlier belonged to the area of economic policy, as the Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development (Nutek) was the driving force for the introduction of entrepreneurship in education. The concept of entrepreneurship in schools has now received topical interest within the educational agenda and big efforts are made to implement the concept of entrepreneurship in the whole school system not only in Sweden, but also in the rest of the world. This raises questions of driving forces, underlying motives and consequences

(Leffler, Svedberg & Botha, 2010). Critical voices have been raised, however, claiming that the introduction of enterprise in school contexts is a way of concealing the increasing youth unemployment by transforming structural problems in society into a matter of influencing young people's attitudes (Shacklock *et al.*, 2000; cf. also Johannisson *et al.*, 2000). It would thus be a way of transferring the problems from a societal to an individual plane. Against this background, one may assume that the effort of launching entrepreneurship in schools may be seen as a mobilization strategy aimed at changing society in a specific direction (Leffler & Svedberg, 2005). On one hand, entrepreneurship is thus described as something good for both the individual and society (Stevenson & Lundström, 2002) while, on the other, it is questioned what relations between the individual and society entrepreneurship symbolizes.

In a Swedish context and especially in Swedish schools, entrepreneurship and gender issues may be regarded as a challenge in several respects. Firstly, entrepreneurship as a concept is controversial in many ways, as it has ideological and political connotations. For example, in Sweden in the 1970s the entrepreneur represented the ugly face of capitalism and the predominant attitude to entrepreneurs was contempt (Johannisson *et al.*, 2010). The attitude to the concept then developed from denial to become more affirmative. Today entrepreneurship is expected to contribute to developing the welfare of Sweden and in many other countries as well as helping countries moving out of the economic crisis and is associated with societal growth (OECD, 1989). Secondly, Sweden as a country has a long tradition of gender equality work. The concept of 'gender equality' denotes what the relationship between women and men should be like and was introduced as a political recommendation in the middle of the 1970s (SOU 2005:66). The work for gender equality has had different foci in different periods. In the 1960s the focus was on women's access to the labour market, while in the 1970s women's working conditions were in focus. It was characteristic of these decades that an institutionalization of gender equality began and structures were created to raise the status of women. Since then, there have been a development and shift of traditional gendered professions to include both genders, but there has also been a development of new professions that may be even more gender stereotyped.

2. Brief description of method and perspective

The purpose of the chapter is to problematize and discuss if entrepreneurship in schools can contribute and encourage gender crossing in pupils' choices of professions, and if so, in what ways education in entrepreneurship can develop young people's entrepreneurial capacities with a focus on gender. The research questions raised concern; what gender discourses are visible in entrepreneurship in schools? And what is the contribution of entrepreneurship to educating individuals with a focus on gender perspectives?

The empirical material consists of research material, reports, policy documents and interviews with pupils and teachers about issues related to self-image, abilities and future prospects. A total of 37 pupils from the eighth form of lower secondary school of whom 21 were girls and 16 boys and a total of 35 pupils from upper secondary school of which 25 were girls and 10 were boys participated in the study. These pupils represented two different school programmes, PRIV (Programinriktat Individuellt Val, ['Programme-Oriented

Individual Choice’]), which is an introduction programme for pupils who have too low marks for a national programme, and an Entrepreneurial programme. I also had a total of 8 teachers of whom 3 were women and 5 were men participating in the study. The interview study was conducted in spring 2008 and designed as an individual open letter based on some issues about self-knowledge, self-confidence, personal strengths and weaknesses and future plans.

In my way of analyzing and expressing myself I take a discourse analytical attitude, which means that I highlight expressions and statements in the text in order to describe how contexts, patterns and meanings are created, to elucidate what statements, concepts and theories conceptualize a certain area, in this case entrepreneurship in schools and gender. My theoretical points of departure for interpretations and analyses will be Michel Foucault’s theories of discourse (Foucault, 1993, 2002a, 2002b) and theories of gender. Although Foucault has been criticised for being gender blind (Braidotti, 1991), there is research that has further developed Foucault for feminist analysis (see for example Lindström, 2005). I have chosen to use the concept of ‘gender’, which includes sex and gender at different levels: the biological, social, cultural and theoretical level (Sporre, 1999). In this study it is sometimes analytically profitable to use Judith Butler’s concept of ‘performativity’ (Butler, 1997). According to the ethnologist Marie Nordberg, gender may be considered a performative practice, because “gender is something that comes into being through norms being repeated and practised” (Nordberg, 2005, 24). Nordberg shows in her thesis how discourse, hegemony and performativity can overlap. She thinks that while ‘discourse is the linguistic set of norms and *hegemony* is dominance and normalisation and the practice whereby a certain meaning is fixed, performativity is the act and process that creates and brings about certain subjects, experiences and practices’ (Nordberg, 2005, 27). Why, for example, do we still talk about male and female businesspersons? Our mode of expression reveals what practices are possible and impossible respectively. Discourses contribute in this way to shaping our reality. By means of the concept of discourse, I will be able to show in my analysis how it is possible to talk about a certain topic, what is accepted or not, and how this manifests itself in practical activities (Foucault, 1993, 2002a; Whinther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). What may be regarded as true and false respectively and what can be said and who has the right to speak are made visible through various exclusion procedures (Foucault, 1993). Power and knowledge are linked together and the concept of power may be seen as a method, a technique working with normalisation and control (Foucault, 2002b). The power is both restrictive and productive, since some aspects of the world are omitted or subordinated. As such, aspects of power are of importance with respect to girls’ self-image and what they express and also what strategies they develop for what they consider possible in their future.

3. Entrepreneurship in schools

Unemployment among young people and society’s changing needs are reasons why the concept of ‘enterprise’ exists on most of the OECD countries’ agendas today. Society requires creative individuals who can take initiative and responsibility. The meanings of the concepts of entrepreneurship and enterprise vary, however, which has been a problem in many different research disciplines. Considerable efforts have been made to appropriate and claim rather than explain entrepreneurship, which in turn has resulted in the concept

becoming increasingly ill-defined and all-inclusive (see among others Berglund, 2007; Bull *et al.*, 1995; Harwood 1982; Landström, 2000). According to the OECD (1989) and The European Commission (2002, 2004) entrepreneurship is about an approach to learning comprising all working methods that stimulate pupils' self-reliance, self-knowledge, creativity, energy, and ability to cooperate and communicate. The OECD (1989) report was followed by the Lisbon strategy 2000. The objective of the Lisbon Strategy is, among other things, to make the European Union the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy. The strategy contains eight key competencies for lifelong learning, one of which is 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship' and is described as the:

[A]bility to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of their work and is able to seize opportunities which arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance (European Commission, 2006).

In the Lisbon strategy it was stated that entrepreneurial competences are fundamental and linked to education and lifelong learning. For this reason entrepreneurship is not to be regarded as a separate subject. A possible interpretation is that entrepreneurship may come also to influence the subject content, which makes it reasonable to ask: How should education in the different subjects be implemented in order to be regarded as entrepreneurial? Using the discourse theory, there seem to be two competing discourses (Leffler, 2006, 2009). There is one discourse on entrepreneurship that may be interpreted as the dominant and common way of understanding entrepreneurship related mainly to business, the entrepreneurial part, which is also regarded as a narrow perspective. The other discourse is connected to education, especially to primary and lower secondary education, the enterprising part or a broad perspective. But it is not that easy when understanding entrepreneurship in a school context. A clarification that should be primarily made is that entrepreneurship in teaching and learning contexts also contains these two parts: the enterprising part that in the first place is targeted at younger pupils and the entrepreneurial part that is chiefly intended for older pupils (Erkkilä, 2000; Johnson, 1988; Stevenson & Lundström, 2002, European Commission, 2004). The enterprising teaching and learning aims at developing the pupils' power of initiative, responsibility, creativity, self-confidence and ability to cooperate, while the entrepreneurial teaching and learning is oriented towards business and entrepreneurship (European Commission, 2004). According to the European Commission, these two discourses are connected to each other. Being allowed to develop one's enterprise is however regarded as a precondition of being able to work as a good entrepreneur. The struggle for schools is in many ways a question of how the dominant discourse is understood (Leffler, 2009). Hence, in many European countries there seem to be a general agreement that entrepreneurship education in general should include both an entrepreneurial and an enterprising approach, though there is still a greater focus on entrepreneurship in for example the US (Kourilsky & Wahlstad, 2003) and Great Britain (Deuchar, 2006) and South Africa (Nieman *et al.*, 2003). The ways of teaching and learning entrepreneurship in schools is thus dependent on the context and the aim and goal.

In accordance with society's development the concept of entrepreneurship has been widened and receives now attention beyond the sphere of economics. In the last few years the concept of entrepreneurship has started appearing in contexts other than economic ones and voices are raised for a widening of the concept of entrepreneurship to comprise all sectors of society (Leffler, 2009). Nowadays we do not only talk about economic entrepreneurs; instead we highlight societal entrepreneurs, cultural entrepreneurs as well as ecological entrepreneurs to show the widened meaning of the concept (Berglund, 2007). Entrepreneurship has become a way of acting and being, and being an entrepreneur is defined as an attitude to life and working life. Efforts at entrepreneurship and enterprise in education are being made all over Europe as well as in the rest of the world with varying contents and results. The focus has often been on pupils' skills and potential to start and run businesses. This is common in many countries (the Swedish National Agency for Education, 2010). Several countries stress the importance of entrepreneurship education for economic development and focus on the specific value of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship is seen as an important factor not only for creating jobs but also for stimulating innovation in existing companies (Haftendorn & Salzano, 2003). Young Enterprise is an international familiar concept, which allows young people to learn to plan, to start and run a business and then finish them. Research within the field has mainly studied how teachers describe their different ways of incorporating an entrepreneurial perspective into their teaching. Previous studies have shown that teachers' knowledge of entrepreneurship is very limited and mainly connected to business, to the entrepreneurship discourse, and that they have difficulties in transforming entrepreneurship into an enterprising discourse (Leffler & Svedberg, 2005; Leffler, 2006, 2009; Berglund & Holmgren, 2007). One reason may hence be the connection with Young Enterprise. According to Young Enterprise in Swedish schools, it has been shown that female pupils in most cases succeed in starting companies but that they do not choose to develop and proceed with their companies, as male pupils do to a greater extent.

Another issue connected to entrepreneurship in school is whether or not entrepreneurship can be taught. Some researchers argue that entrepreneurship is an inherent ability and that children are born natural entrepreneurs. The schools' mission is thus to utilize and develop pupils' entrepreneurial abilities (Johannisson & Madsén, 1997; Johannisson *et al.*, 2000). The starting point for entrepreneurship in schools is thus that entrepreneurship, like everything else, can be taught. Entrepreneurial learning is described in terms of learning by doing, trial and error, problem solving and learning by experience, often outside the formal learning environments (Cope, 2005).

Now, entrepreneurship is clearly written in international policy in the OECD, European Commission, UNESCO as the World Bank with common keywords such as creativity, initiative, problem-solving and innovation (Leffler, Svedberg & Botha, 2010). Several researchers claim that, with regard to entrepreneurship, lifelong learning and individual freedom of choice, among other things, many countries' educational policies are being standardized into what might be compared to a global educational model and curriculum (Mahieu, 2006; Svedberg 2007; Leffler & Mahieu, 2010).

More than two decades after the OECD published their ideas in the report *Towards an enterprising culture*, the Swedish Government presented in spring 2009 a strategy for

entrepreneurship in education. This strategy was preceded by a number of different school projects in different municipalities in Sweden and was often designed as extracurricular activities (Leffler, 2006). As a background to what a Swedish enterprising culture means in comparison with that of other countries, Sweden has a low entrepreneurial activity. One reason for this is Sweden's demographic structure, with weak population growth. Other reasons are the large public sector, the sluggish labour market, underrepresentation of female entrepreneurs and 'denigration of education' (Leffler & Svedberg, 2005, 220). Research shows that there is a clear connection between educational level and entrepreneurship, and Sweden is characterized by a relatively small proportion of entrepreneurs with post-secondary education (Delmar & Aronsson, 2001). The political initiatives on the supranational level as well as on local levels resulted in a Swedish definition of entrepreneurship as a:

/.../ dynamic and social process where people, individually or in collaboration, identify opportunities and utilize them to reshape ideas into practical and goal-oriented activities in social, cultural or economic contexts. (the Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development, 2004, p. 9)

In this definition, the emphasis is on the process. An individual can, alone or together with others, 'reshape ideas' and it is a matter of seeing opportunities and proceeding from ideas to actions. But the definition also shows a broad interpretation of entrepreneurship. It is not only related to an economic context; the definition also gives us the opportunity to think beyond and outside the economic sphere, as entrepreneurship also includes social and cultural contexts. As the guidelines from the Swedish government rely on this definition, the starting point is therefore that schools should also take responsibility for entrepreneurship and therefore entrepreneurship should be integrated throughout the education system (the Government Offices of Sweden, 2009). The entrance of entrepreneurship in schools is justified on the one hand to enhance the academic quality, and on the other hand to enhance responsiveness to market needs, and is clarified by the Government, who stresses the importance of highlighting schools' academic mission and closer cooperation with working life, for the purpose of giving young people better opportunities to meet tomorrow's challenges. Therefore cooperation and interaction with the surrounding community and active entrepreneurs are important in entrepreneurship teaching and learning. The pupils need to have role models to identify themselves with.

The gender issue is also visible in the strategy, as the Government points out that it is a fact that more young men than young women start up a business of their own, and for this reason, it is important to promote entrepreneurship among girls and young women. The Government also states that the foundation for developing an entrepreneurial approach is laid at an early age by encouraging girls' and boys' curiosity, creativity, self-confidence and ability to take decisions. Further in this strategy the Government discusses the broad and the narrow perspectives by talking about 'certain aspects of entrepreneurship being more relevant in some parts of the education system than others'. This is the same recommendation that the European Commission has. In accordance with the broad aspect of entrepreneurship, the curriculum for Swedish primary and lower secondary education uses this definition as a guide for understanding the concept of entrepreneurship:

An important task for the school is to provide a general but coherent view. The school should stimulate pupils' creativity, curiosity and self-confidence, as well as their desire to explore their own ideas and solve problems. Pupils should have the opportunity to take initiatives and responsibility, and develop their ability to work both independently and together with others. The school in doing this should contribute to pupils developing attitudes that promote entrepreneurship (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, 9).

The definition points out that entrepreneurship is both an individual and a social issue, and the importance for schools to help pupils understand and discover the context, but also encourage pupils to think independently, solve problems and take responsibility. It's about an attitude to teaching and learning and it is meant to be visible throughout the education system.

4. Entrepreneurship and gender

In order to understand the problems with entrepreneurship in education and gender I will first give an overall picture of the relation between entrepreneurship and gender, what is meant by talking about gender, and what it implies to assume a gender perspective. In order to briefly summarise solid research work on sex, gender and entrepreneurship, it might be said that the point of departure is that the concept of 'gender' deals with relations between women and men and how its varied manifestations, causes and consequences are shaped (Thurén, 1996). Relations are created and re-created through individual and collective processes in the family, at work and in society at large. The debate about gender may be said to be about how we relate to the fact that humanity is divided into two groups and how as individuals we experience and describe our gender (Berg, 2000). Mythical pictures of what is typically female and typically male have always influenced and continue to influence us. These social constructions have an impact on our everyday life and thereby also on education. The gender system is constructed of two logics. One of these is precisely the dichotomy. The other is the hierarchy, that the man is the norm (Hirdman, 1988). It is the male norm that governs the picture of what characterises an entrepreneur, how an entrepreneur works and functions. The entrepreneur is generally regarded as a hero and groundbreaker. The female entrepreneur is described as something else (Ahl, 2002; Bruni *et al.*, 2004; Lewis, 2006). Entrepreneurship is thus an extremely gender-impregnated construction. Gender functions in entrepreneurship and enterprise in the same way as in the labour market and society at large. What is regarded as male and female respectively governs how the entrepreneurship is exercised in practice. Concepts traditionally associated with masculinity, e.g. 'competitive', 'active', 'independent', 'decision-making', 'stress tolerant' and 'self-confident', are also concepts identified as typical of an entrepreneur. The innovative, technical and economic aspects are placed in focus (Holmquist & Sundin, 2002). The masculine characteristics are regarded and defined as the norm and the feminine characteristics are then described as something else. The very fact that we choose to distinguish between enterprisers and female enterprisers indicates that women differ from the norm (Lewis, 2006). In addition several of the features that characterise an entrepreneur get an entirely different meaning if they are associated with women instead of with men. The positive meanings are e.g. more often male rather than female. The designation of 'enterpriser' entails that women do not get any self-evident identity confirmation through their enterprise, which men on the contrary get. The reason for this may be that individuals

construct their identity based on available discourses. The male attributes can more easily be attributed to the entrepreneur, while the female attributes make it more difficult (Ahl, 2002). Gender can hence also be linked to power. On the one hand there is 'power as dominance' and on the other 'productive power' (Pettersson, 2002). Power may be regarded in terms of dominance or oppression, where power represents supremacy and subordination respectively, but power is also that which creates our social world and affects what the world looks like and what can be said and not said (Foucault, 2002c). Our social world is created through language in different practices. Power is thus both delimiting and productive, since some ways of talking about the world are left out or subordinated (Whinter Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000).

4.1 Entrepreneurship in schools and gender

As shown above research about gender and entrepreneurship points out that the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship are male-gender concepts. As regards entrepreneurship in school, it may still be considered an unexplored area, but the limited existing research has shown that gender perspectives on entrepreneurship in schools are avoided and absent (Leffler, 2006; Berglund & Holmgren, 2010). Entrepreneurial school projects are often aimed at increasing girls' interest in things that could be regarded as traditionally male, for example technology, while no comparable idea is expressed for boys. Earlier research shows that this is a challenging task (Leffler, 2006; Komulainen *et al.*, 2009).

In my thesis (Leffler, 2006) I studied entrepreneurship in primary and lower secondary school projects, of which one perspective that was problematized was gender. One of the points of departure of the studied entrepreneurial school projects was that they should contribute to increasing the gender equality between girls and boys. As mentioned above, gender equality is emphasised in Swedish society as well as in the Swedish curriculum, and it is thus expected that schools should actively work with gender equality. The following is written about gender equality in the Swedish curriculum:

The school should actively and consciously further equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The way in which girls and boys are treated and assessed in school, and the demands and expectations that are placed on them, contributes to their perception of gender differences. The school has a responsibility to counteract traditional gender patterns. It should thus provide scope for pupils to explore and develop their ability and their interests independently of gender affiliation (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011 p 8).

What is stated in the text of the curriculum is that it is a matter of 'equal rights and opportunities', 'treatment and assessment of girls' and boys' and schools' mission to 'counteract traditional gender patterns'. The analysis clearly showed, however, what difficulties schools encountered when trying to pay attention to gender equality in the projects in question. There were no clear strategies for realising this aim in practice. Gender equality work was however more or less clearly stated as a goal in the schools' project plans. Among other things it was a matter of strengthening girls in various ways:

Special efforts will be made vis-à-vis girls /.../ one of the goals of the project is to create better prerequisites for to compete in the long term in male-dominated occupations (Leffler, 2006, p. 209).

The project plans also presupposed that the girls would increase their interest in something that could be regarded as typically traditionally male, while there was no comparable idea for the boys. It was presupposed that the girls would change and become more like boys and not the other way round.

Another picture was not to problematize gender equality at all and thereby make gender completely invisible with regard to entrepreneurship in education, which the following quotation exemplifies:

Gender equality is a natural part of our school; we make no difference here between boys and girls. It is important, however, to place a special gender perspective on the issues concerning entrepreneurship in the teaching and in the practical project work (Leffler, 2006, p. 209).

Stating that girls and boys are treated equally is common as regards gender equality. This idea has however turned out to be marred with two problems. Firstly, there is unawareness of how difficult it is in reality to treat girls and boys in the same way. We expect different things from girls and boys because we are so used to doing so (Hedlin, 2004). Secondly, the conditions for women and men are different and it may therefore be questioned whether the strategy of 'not making any difference' really is a gender equality measure. At the same time as schools think that they do not make any difference, they see a need for placing a gender perspective on issues concerning entrepreneurship. What this implied was clear neither in the project application nor in the evaluation that was later on made of the school.

Yet another way of treating gender equality was to count how many girls and boys respectively had participated in the projects, since gender distribution was something the schools should state in their final reports. The following quotation shows such an example:

There were on the whole just as many boys and girls that took part in the projects. As regards creativity we saw no difference between the genders (Leffler, 2006, p. 210).

It is thus assumed here that there is gender equality if equal numbers of girls and boys participated. The result of the study shows that gender equality work together with entrepreneurship requires knowledge of both gender issues and entrepreneurship in order to be successful.

How is entrepreneurship in schools working, giving the purpose of encouraging entrepreneurial capacities among pupils? Is running a business a future thought? What is done for the girls? What is done for the boys? What is the contribution of entrepreneurship in schools in relation to young people's thoughts of their future and their future plans seen from a gender perspective? These questions highlight big challenges for schools working both with gender equality and entrepreneurship.

4.2 Young people's pictures of their future choice of study and occupation

In the general debate about gender differences and educational achievements, Sweden adheres to the same pattern as many other countries in the Western World (the Swedish National Agency for Education, 2006). One reason for the partially infected debate is that

girls now exhibit better study results than boys previously did. This debate is also conducted in England, Australia and the USA. What distinguishes the current discussion from previous ones is that girls' lower study results were considered to lie on an intellectual plane, while today's discussion of boys' worse educational performance has to do with educational shortcomings. The report of the National Agency for Education, which is based on previous research, partially shows contradictory results. On the one hand research shows that schools have worked with trying to adapt themselves to boys' preconditions, but on the other hand later research shows that girls are now occupying more space and breaking traditional gender patterns. Schools are considered to be more adapted to girls, which is thereby regarded as a contributory reason for their higher educational performance. Research also shows that schools' expectations of girls and boys respectively influence their behaviours (Holm, 2008). Attitude investigations made in schools show however that girls have lower self-esteem than boys and that girls make higher demands on themselves than boys (Björnsson, 2005).

Despite formulations in policy documents and an active policy in the labour market, upper secondary schools in Sweden continue upholding their tradition of being strongly gender segregated (the Swedish National Agency for Education, 2006). Girls tend chiefly to choose programmes preparing for further studies, which is partly caused by some vocational programmes for girls having disappeared. As regards the vocational the tendency is that the gender segregation between the genders is increasing. The investigation of girls and boys making non-traditional choices shows that they 'drop out' more often and do not complete their studies. The problem is however not only that the pupils 'drop out' but that the schools do not support the young people who are after all interested in making non-traditional choices. The central question is what forms the basis of and is the reason for the young people dropping out. The traditional choices that are made may be seen as a reflection of the traditional expectations that are linked to various occupations. Upper secondary education, which in Sweden may now be regarded as a compulsory form of education, is far from being a gender-integrated form of education in view of the strong gender orientation that several upper secondary programmes have (Löfström, 2007).

By 'visiting' the Internet and reading about the different upper secondary programmes one can observe that the gender patterns are clearly confirmed in the introductory texts about the programmes and the pictorial material used in the information. One programme that doubtless is addressed to girls has the heading 'Unique specialisation of the craftsmanship programme' and starts with 'Are you interested in beauty and health?' We are further told that it is an education for pupils who are interested in working with people and contributing to greater quality of life with inner and outer beauty as a whole (http://www.gymnasium.se/Hantverksprogrammet_HA_Stylist_146542.htm [2011-08-08]). A so-called entrepreneurship programme also has a clear feminine specialisation with a picture of a girl and the subheading 'Trade and service'. There are similar examples in programmes primarily addressing boys and not surprisingly these are about construction and technology. But now it is not a matter of inner and outer beauty but of occupations that will make it possible for society as a whole to function (http://www.gymnasium.se/Bygg_och_anlaeggningsprogrammet_BA_Anlaeggningsmaskinfoerare_119889.htm [2011-08-08]). Former pupils (boys) talk about inner driving forces and

their own ambition serving as guidance for the future professional career. With the help of Butler (2007) we can see how girls' and boys' gender identity is strengthened through their acting in a certain way because they are girls and boys respectively. The identity's being is preceded by the action's doing. Through certain actions and behaviours gender is created as well as a conception of an identity that gives rise to certain actions. The language is of great importance. The language influences both how we think and what we are like. The language used in the information about the different upper secondary programmes builds up a female discourse about beauty and inner well-being at the individual level and a male discourse about the welfare of the whole of society at the collective level. Löfström (2007) thinks that if the future labour market will both require men in typical female occupations and women in typical male occupations, it is not sufficient to make prospective pupils choose non-traditionally; instead the structures behind the gender characteristics of the programmes must be scrutinized.

What do young Swedish people then think about their abilities and their future prospects and what differences between the genders are discernible? These young people will be our future entrepreneurs and exhibit good self-confidence, responsibility, flexibility, ability to cooperate and risk-taking. When the young people in my study were to describe themselves and describe their abilities and think about what they needed to be better at, it turned out that in the answers among the girls in the eighth form there was a care-taking discourse. Among other things they answered that they were good at 'caring about others', 'putting people in a good mood', 'listening' and 'making jewellery'. What they needed to develop was to get better at 'daring more', 'talking to people', 'putting their foot down and believing in themselves'. The boys' answers contained a clear discourse about sports when they described themselves as being good at 'ice hockey', 'floorball' and 'athletics'. When they were to talk about what they needed to be better at, their answers changed more towards school achievements such as: 'need to get better at swotting and learning things at school' or 'get better at reading and writing'. These answers are in accordance with the discourse about boys and school achievements and the importance of gender equality for knowledge and development in Swedish schools (SOU 2010:99). The upper secondary pupils' answers differ from the primary and lower secondary pupils' through the pupils' answers being marked by the school's aesthetic profile. There are also differences among the girls' answers in the different programmes. The girls in PRIV ['Programme-Oriented Individual Choice'] are good at 'singing', 'acting', 'drawing', 'making up and dressing others' hair', while the girls in the Entrepreneurship Programme are good at 'pressing issues forwards', 'taking responsibility and managing on their own', 'getting on well with people' and arguing for their things'. What the girls in PRIV think they need to get better at are 'living here and now', 'becoming more social' and 'music and notes'. On the other hand the boys' answers are more in agreement among the different upper secondary programmes. They answer that they are good at 'music', 'aesthetic subjects', 'film', but also at 'relaxing' and 'meeting people'. Like the boys in the primary and lower secondary school the boys in the upper secondary school thought that they needed to get better at 'managing school', 'swotting', 'oral accounts' and 'concentrating during lessons'. I was also interested in what the young people's plans for the future were like. The pupils in the eighth were also asked to tell me what upper secondary programme they were planning to apply for. The result is shown below.

8 th form girls (N=21) Choice of upper secondary programme		8 th form girls (N=21) Future working life		8 th form boys (N=16) Choice of upper secondary programme		8 th form boys (N=16) Future working life	
Number	Programme	Number	Profession	Number	Programme	Number	Profession
5	Hotel and restaurant	4	Hotel and restaurant	3	Sports	5	Sports
5	Children and recreation	6	Teacher of young children	3	Technology	4	Technology; welder, car mechanic
2	Design	2	Design	2	Construction	2	Outdoor work
4	Aesthetic	1	Music	1	Vehicles	1	Actor
1	Theoretical	1	Lawyer	1	Science	1	Enterpriser
1	Hair dresser	7	Do not know	2	Trade	3	Do not know
1	Hunting and fishing			1	Aesthetic		
2	Do not know			3	Do not know		

Table 1. The 8th form: choice of studies and their thoughts of future working life.

As we can see it is only one of the girls who thinks of a programme that may be regarded as a non-traditional “girls’ programme”, and only one girl who is going to apply for a theoretical programme. The other girls are going to choose vocational programmes that may be regarded as typical “girls’ programmes, in which child care is included, among other things. As regards their plans for the future most of the girls were rather vague and unclear in their answers and not related working life to the programmes they were planning to choose. 7 of the 21 girls did not know or had not thought so much about their future working life. The girls who had thought of Hotel and restaurant could imagine a future in a hotel or as a cook, but other suggestions that also emerged were working with small children or animals. Only one girl could imagine a creative profession as an interior designer if it generated money. The girl who was going to choose a theoretical programme saw herself as a lawyer in the future. As we can see most of the girls’ ideas are dominated by a caring and service-oriented discourse. On the contrary the boys are going to apply for upper secondary programmes specialising in sport, technology, construction and trade. None of the boys intends to apply for something that may be regarded as non-traditionally male. Sports and then above all football and floorball are something that several of the boys can imagine as a future occupation, either as a professional or as a coach. It is a matter of earning a lot of money. To be able to work in various technological lines of business also attracts several of the boys. One of them could however think of himself as a future entrepreneur. Most of them were also clear about what they would like to do in their future working life and kept themselves within a sports and technology discourse.

The pupils in the upper secondary school were asked to tell me if they attended a programme that was their first choice or why they had ended up in precisely the programme they were now attending, and how they looked upon their future working life. The result is shown below:

Upper secondary programme girls		Future choice of profession girls		Upper secondary programme boys		Future choice of profession boys	
Number	Programme	Number	Profession	Number	Programme	Number	Profession
5	PRIV 1 st form	5	music, art, dance	5	PRIV 1 st form	1	Teacher
						1	Psychologist
						3	film, music
						1	Do not know
20	Entrepreneurship 2 nd form	2	Teacher	5	Entrepreneurship 2 nd form	1	Children and recreation
		1	Culture, media			1	Music
		1	Industry			1	Physical work
		4	Nursing: Doctor/psychologist			2	Do not know
		1	Lawyer				
		1	Pharmacist				
		1	Writer				
		2	Enterpriser				
		1	Design				
		6	Do not know				

Table 2. Upper secondary pupils: programmes and their thoughts about their future working life.

Even if the above table is not very clear, since the gender distribution is more uneven than that of the primary and lower secondary pupils, it is interesting in several respects. The pupils are probably influenced by the fact that they attend a school with aesthetic specialisation; it is a choice they make when applying for a school with aesthetic specialisation. The girls attending PRIV regard themselves as future artistes. They will go out into the world and sing and become known. The boys in PRIV also look forward to something that has to do with aesthetics, but is not a matter of a solo career. Instead they want to make films and play in a pop band. The view of their future varies among the female upper secondary pupils in the Entrepreneurship programme. It is only one girl that has ideas outside what may be designated as traditionally female professions and she wants to work with something in industry. She also regards herself as creative and thinks that it is easy for her to get into contact with other people. The other girls keep themselves within a typically female job discourse. A relatively large proportion of the girls did not have any ideas about what they would do after completing their upper secondary education. Among the boys it is more difficult to discern any direction and whether they keep themselves within or outside any typically male or female direction.

What is then the importance of the teachers in these contexts? The answers that the teachers in my study gave show a difference between female and male teachers. The female teachers

'want to be helpful', 'create a positive working climate' and 'be flexible'. The male teachers introduce the concept of 'courage' by saying that they 'dare to test and develop the teaching and do new things' and that they have 'a clear structure' and distinguish between 'profession and private life'. In addition other studies show that most often there is a compact male and female dominance respectively among the teaching staff in the typically girls' and boys' programmes (Löfström, 2007). The classical discourses about what subjects women and men are expected to teach are strengthened. In the thesis *Taking and taking positions* the researcher has studied what discourses are at work in the science classrooms (Nyström, 2007). In the thesis it is stated that there is a hierarchical pattern not only among the different upper secondary programmes and among subjects but also between women and men who teach science. Female science teachers think that they are not considered fully competent by the pupils because they are women and are hence not expected to teach science. The researcher thinks that for this reason the teachers exist in two different worlds as regards both their own attitude to their subject and their relation to the pupils. Since language is an important part of forming a discourse, it is obvious that the dominating discourse about what is male and female respectively in subjects and attitudes to teaching further strengthens the gender segregation. Women represent the software and men the hardware. The female science teachers are in a subordinate position in the sense that they are not sufficiently masculine in their way of being and expressing themselves. From a pupils' perspective they are then given lower legitimacy as science teachers. A study of relations in schools points to teachers as co-creators of gender (Holm, 2008). The study shows that teachers often have notions of girls and boys, which governs their attitude towards the pupils in the daily educational practice. There are several studies that show that teachers' conceptions may contribute to certain forms of femininities and masculinities being actively strengthened while others are suppressed in the classroom (see e.g. Mac and Ghail, 1994; Holm, 2007; Nyström, 2007).

4.3 Entrepreneurship and gender equality

According to the above reasoning and the directives given by the Swedish Government, entrepreneurship in schools is about the education being in phase with the societal development, and it is then a matter of qualities of learning, where pupils' creativity, ability to act, ability to cooperate and responsibility should develop in collaboration, not only with the classmates but also with the surrounding society. It is also a matter of the education giving qualities corresponding to the labour market's needs. In addition there is a need to make more women choose to be enterprisers. The Government also expressed the importance of the pupils getting role models by meeting active entrepreneurs. But it is not only this that is important as regards different forms of collaboration but also what role models we have in the working life/the surrounding world that influence or way of thinking and acting. It is therefore important also to widen both teachers' and pupils' intellectual horizon and make them think outside traditional gender structures as regards choice of education. According to the policy documents the mission of education is to counteract traditional gender structures and allow the pupils to develop abilities and interests regardless of their gender (the Ministry of Education 1994, 2011). Thus schools have a responsibility and a duty to promote gender equality work. What is then the connection between gender equality work and entrepreneurship in schools? The answer is that girls'

and boys' situation and preconditions in schools and women's and men's situation and preconditions in the labour market turn out to have more than one connection. We observed earlier that entrepreneurship can be learned, that it is not something a person is born to and hence something that only a few people are privileged to practise. Both within and outside the walls of schools there are notions of girls' and boys' respective 'aptitude' for different subjects or ability to learn different things, which in turn influences attitudes and choices that are made. In addition conceptions of gender contribute to certain school subjects being given higher or lower status depending on what subject it is and what gender the teacher has (Silfver, 2010). Science and technology are subjects that traditionally enjoy high status, which in turn gives high status in the labour market. This implies that girls'/women's status can hence increase if they go in for technological and scientific subjects (Öhrn, 2004). Even if entrepreneurial learning in the main does aim at educating pupils to be enterprisers, there are insights about working life and gender that we need to take into consideration and be aware of in entrepreneurial education (see e.g. Ahl, 2004; Holmquist & Sundin, 2004). As mentioned above, research on entrepreneurship and gender clearly shows a connection with a traditional gender pattern, where male entrepreneurship represents the norm while female entrepreneurship is described as something else. Parallels are drawn between women's and men's situation in the labour market and as enterprisers, where women are chiefly active in the public sector and trade. This is recognisable in schools, since different efforts specially targeted at girls have for example been made as well as different measures aimed at increasing women's entrepreneurship in the labour market. In spite of this the gender segregation is still tangible as regards women's and men's choice of occupation. Generally it might be said that we still carry unspoken pictures within ourselves of what may be regarded as typically female and typically male respectively.

Research shows that the gender perspective is invisible and implicit when it is about entrepreneurship in a school context. (Leffler, 2006; Komulainen *et al.*, 2009). In many places, both nationally and internationally various school projects or activities called entrepreneurship are being implemented (see e.g. Kourilsky & Walstad, 2003; Leffler, 2006). Several of these are conducted for the purpose of increasing girls' interest in technology, which may still be regarded as a male specialisation, while similar projects aimed at e.g. taking an interest in nursing professions are more rare (SOU 2010:99). In some of the technology projects implemented under the heading 'technology and entrepreneurship' there is a so-called gender equality perspective. In spite of the pedagogues' task in the teaching being to identify and work with what is considered gender stereotyped the gender aspect was still invisible. The teachers noticed that the pupils made choices based on gender, but did not participate actively in widening the pupils' spheres of action. There was a marked difference between rhetoric and practice, which is not unusual as regards entrepreneurship and gender (Skogh, 2007). Another Swedish study questions whether girls attending an entrepreneurial education led by a typical male entrepreneur really have really got an opportunity as 'entrepreneuses' to form their coming life, or if they have become followers of another male hero entrepreneur (Berglund & Holmgren, 2010). They think that such a simple thing as using 'eur' instead of 'euse' in the entrepreneur creates notions of male and female aspects. There are several occupational categories whose names are clearly gendered and hence 'doorkeepers' are formed for what governs the norm. Studies also show that the Swedish upper secondary programmes' specialisations are still strongly gender

segregated, which results in many programmes being typically divided into girls' and boys' programmes and in cross-gender choices being unusual (Fransson & Lindh, 2004; SOU 2004: 43). Theories of entrepreneurship describe the entrepreneurial individual as innovative, enterprising, energetic, seeking opportunities, risk taking and responsible (see e.g. Brockhouse, 1982; Landström, 2000). It is an individual with great self-confidence that dares to take risks and accept challenges, and for this reason it is important to find out how this is visualised and emphasised in entrepreneurial teaching. But what is it then that contributes to shaping an entrepreneurial individual regardless of gender?

We can take an example from the Swedish neighbouring country Finland, which was the first country in Europe to introduce fostering to entrepreneurship in education. Studies have been made there of how girls and boys regard themselves as future entrepreneurs by analysing narratives written by pupils in the ninth form in the writing competition *Good Enterprise* (Komulainen, *et al.*, 2009). What was striking in the pupils' narratives was that the girls chiefly wrote that their ideal notion of an entrepreneur was in the field of restaurant, café, tourism, care of animals, nursing and agriculture. The femininity that emerges in the girls' narratives is however not only the caring and service-minded middle-class woman, since there is also a picture of a glamorous woman seeing an opportunity to work on an international arena. The boys stressed ideas about technology, recreation services, IT and media. The masculinity that emerges in the boys' narratives is rather suggestive of the traditional working-class masculinity. The authors think that in a comparison between girls and boys the girls are still to be regarded as 'number two' as regards access to and entries into entrepreneurship. One conclusion drawn by the authors is that the mainstream in politics is about men without admitting this. Although the entrepreneur is presented as gender neutral in policy documents, the entrepreneur is a masculine construction that is normative, which implies that feminine characters are excluded from entrepreneurial ideals. The authors also assume that entrepreneurial teaching in schools is chiefly adapted to low achieving boys who exhibit the kind of courage and inventiveness that is required of entrepreneurs, and that it is these boys that are hence considered to be in need of entrepreneurial teaching. In entrepreneurial teaching these boys receive respect in contrast to the 'ordinary' teaching that fits girls better. What can we then learn from this study? Firstly we need to keep in mind that entrepreneurial learning includes both a *broad* and a *narrow* perspective. In this case it is a matter of the latter, i.e. an enterprising perspective, where the pupils regard themselves as prospective entrepreneurs in the sense of a self-employed person. What is interesting from a gender perspective is then which lines of business girls and boys respectively identify themselves with. As we can see, it is based in this case on a traditional conception of gender. Secondly, if we take a broad perspective, the authors assume that education generally favours girls and that an entrepreneurial education favours low-achieving boys. It is not possible to draw any general conclusions about how this teaching is conducted; we can only note that the authors' conclusion is that it favours low achieving boys. The idea of entrepreneurial teaching is, however, that it should favour both low- and high-achieving pupils (OECD, 1989). In addition investigations show that girls are better at solving problems, cooperating and taking responsibility (SOU 2010:99), which are important abilities in entrepreneurial learning. A question that is relevant in this context is how entrepreneurship in education should contribute to traditional gender patterns not being strengthened and preserved? We end up again in the rhetoric and can observe that in both teachers' and pupils' statements there emerge notions of differences

between girls and boys. These differences are of importance for the handling of a subject, attitudes to a subject and the ability to teach a subject (Silfver, 2010). By talking about and to girls and boys in different ways and making different demands on girls and boys, there is a great risk that what is 'typically' feminine and 'typically' masculine will be strengthened and preserved. It is thus a matter of knowledge that influences the treatment, how teachers treat pupils based on gender. Our rhetoric reflects our conceptions and we are therefore still talking about female enterprisers and enterprisers respectively, who in the latter case are presupposed to be men. Through knowledge and awareness of how we express ourselves, what we talk about and how we relate to girls and boys, we can contribute to opening new doors. Entrepreneurship in education is hence not only a matter of making more girls choose to be entrepreneurs, but it is also a matter of changing the notions of male and female characteristics in the labour market.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have problematized and discussed questions concerning entrepreneurship in education and gender. My purpose was to study whether and in what way entrepreneurship in education might be able to contribute to more gender crossing ideas by describing the discourses surrounding entrepreneurship and gender. This is so far an unexplored area, and for this reason it is difficult to draw any far-reaching conclusions, and in addition the questions in this chapter tend to be more numerous than the answers. I have tried however to point out and hence visualise the problems that entrepreneurship in education and gender are surrounded by. The discourses that are visualised in entrepreneurship in education and gender show that gender carries a tradition where the man is the norm. The discourse is also based on education reflecting society and vice versa, which includes both teachers and pupils, but also on society being influenced and affected by the rising generation. What is the demand and what is the need, or to use a metaphor, what is the chicken and what is the egg in this issue? Discourses about occupations and gender influence pupils' choices of study programmes and occupations/ professions. In accordance with Butler's way of regarding identity as performative, that we experience ourselves as a woman or a man through our doings and actions, the gender differences between women and men are strengthened through the typically gender-coded upper secondary programmes. As long as the myth of an entrepreneurial person is based on a male enterpriser, girls will have difficulty asserting themselves as entrepreneurs. They will still be regarded as female entrepreneurs and hence also subordinate to the men. There is also a risk that girls' entrepreneurship is associated only with discourses such as beauty and nursing and that girls thereby find their entrepreneurial identity in these areas. The same applies to boys who want to make gender-crossing choices that are not included in a male discourse on entrepreneurship. If we are not observant of these problems, there is a risk that already known and ingrained gender patterns and gender structures will be further strengthened and become a part of the already established entrepreneurship discourse. Since entrepreneurship is supposed to run throughout the Swedish educational system where an entrepreneurial approach should form the basis of the teaching, one may wonder how this will affect the primary and lower and upper secondary education as regards encouraging girls and boys to develop entrepreneurial abilities such as self-confidence, enterprise, inventiveness, taking risks, responsibility and cooperation, abilities that are considered important for being able to be regarded as an entrepreneur. We could see that at

present girls apply for typically feminine specialisations and boys for typically masculine specialisations in the upper secondary programmes. A further question is what role student and vocational counsellors have in schools' gender equality work. It may be safely said that there is a lot to be done in this area. In the folder *Jämställdhet och entreprenörskap i skolan* ['Gender equality and entrepreneurship in education'] we are exhorted to start thinking in new and different ways. If we want to achieve a different result, we will have to act in a different way by breaking traditional patterns; in this way gender equality and entrepreneurship are connected. Entrepreneurship as an attitude may hopefully contribute to our critically examining our taken-for-granted assumptions and contribute to our starting to think in a different way. By making gender invisible in entrepreneurship in education we risk strengthening and preserving traditional gender patterns instead of seeing entrepreneurship as a potential opening for changes not only as regards attitudes in the teaching but also in attitudes regarding gender. Taking risks is after all an essential part of entrepreneurship. Let taking risks serve as a guide as regards bridging traditional gender patterns and widening the scope of action for our girls and boys. In this way entrepreneurship in education can contribute to increasing gender equality not only between girls and boys in schools but hopefully in the labour market as well.

6. References

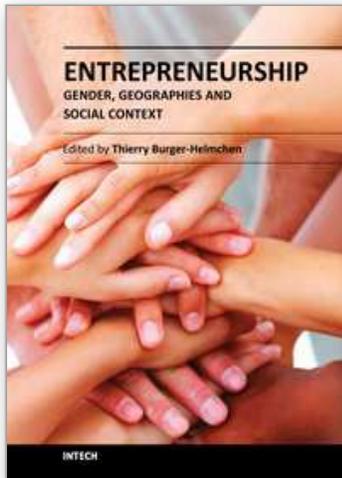
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Entrepreneurship is a main driver of economic growth and of social dynamics. However, some basic characteristics like the gender of the entrepreneur, the geographical location, or the social context may have a tremendous impact on the possibility to become an entrepreneur, to create a firm and to prosper. This book is a collection of papers written by an array of international authors interested in the question of entrepreneurship from a gender point of view (male vs female entrepreneurship), a geographical point of view (Africa, Europe, America and Latin America, Asia...) or a specific social context point of view (agricultural economy, farming or family business, etc.).

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