

A global entrepreneurship wind is supporting or obstructing democracy in schools: A comparative study in the North and the South

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Abstract

Policy documents for schools and education are being increasingly standardised all over the world and some research claims that a global curriculum is developing in which aspects such as entrepreneurship, lifelong learning and sustainable development are common denominators. This is regarded as a sign that economic rationality is gaining more and more ground in education alongside, or at the expense of, a democratic educational ideal. The aim of this study is to discuss one of these aspects, entrepreneurship, as a concern for schools and education and to put entrepreneurship in relation to the democracy-fostering mission of education. What do the policy documents have to say about entrepreneurship? Is there an inherent opposition between the entrepreneurial and the democratic justification of education? The paper is organised in two steps. The first step illustrates the global spread of entrepreneurship in policy documents for education through examples from the north and the south, respectively, in this case Sweden and South Africa. The second step deals with the concept of “democracy”, which is of crucial relevance to education. Both connections and conflicts between fostering entrepreneurship and fostering democracy are discussed, and an integrative perspective is tested as an alternative to dualistic attitudes.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, democracy, global, Sweden, South Africa, comparative study

Introduction

Since schools and education play an important role in the development of societies and countries, there are many interests that want to gain attention as regards how education is best justified and organised and what knowledge should be given priority. One concept that is more and more being brought forward and discussed in educational contexts is *entrepreneurship*. Concepts are seldom semantically fixed once and for all. Meanings are shaped by the context they are part of and change over time. This is not least true of entrepreneurship. The concept has ideological and political connotations, which has made it controversial in some societies during some periods of time and regarded as essential during other periods. As for Sweden in the 1970s, entrepreneurs represented the ugly face of capitalism and the predominant attitude

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to entrepreneurs was contempt (Johannisson et al., 2010). Today entrepreneurs are expected to contribute to Sweden, as well as the rest of the world, moving out of the economic crisis and are associated with societal growth (OECD, 1989). As for South Africa, economic growth and unemployment are still a big challenge for this country. The transition from apartheid and minority rule to democracy requires that all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era. Like many other developing countries, South Africa has a great shortage of entrepreneurs, especially in the formal sector (Van Aardt et al., 2000). In the last decade the concept of “entrepreneurship” has also been widened and made a concern at the global level for schools and education, which raises questions of the driving forces, underlying motives and consequences. On one hand, entrepreneurship is thus described as something good for both the individual and society (Stevenson and Lundström, 2002) while, on the other, it is questioned which relations between the individual and society entrepreneurship symbolises (cf. Rose, 1999; Popkewitz & Boch, 2001). What values does entrepreneurship bring to education? The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report showed that the higher the level of education of an individual, the greater the tendency to pursue entrepreneurial activities and the greater the probability of starting a new venture that progresses past the start-up stage (Driver et al., 2001).

In this explorative paper, examples are given of how supranational actors interpret and bring forward entrepreneurship as a competence that education should stimulate and the effects of this at the national level. We have chosen to study two countries, South Africa in the south and Sweden in the north, i.e. two countries with different educational histories and cultures. This is thus a comparative study that analyses policy documents and research in these two countries. Against the background of the questions raised in the first part of the paper, the second part of the paper conducts a searching discussion of fostering entrepreneurship in relation to the concept of “democracy”.

The paper explores whether there is a causal relationship between the independent variable (entrepreneurship education in schools) and the dependent variable (supporting or obstructing democracy) by addressing the question: Is entrepreneurship supporting or obstructing democracy in schools in Sweden and South Africa? A comprehensive literature review is presented and a qualitative approach is taken whereby policy documents in Sweden and South Africa are discussed and compared.

The primary objective of the study is to determine whether entrepreneurship is supporting or obstructing democracy as a concern for schools and education.

The secondary objectives include:

- what do the policy documents state about entrepreneurship; and
- is there an inherent opposition between the entrepreneurial and the democratic justification of education?

A global entrepreneurship wind...

Several researchers claim that, with regard to entrepreneurship, lifelong learning and individual freedom of choice, among other things, many countries' educational policies are being standardised into what might be compared to a global educational model and curriculum (Mahieu, 2006; Svedberg 2007; Leffler & Mahieu, 2010). Entrepreneurship is seen as an educational concern in, for example, Australia, the USA and India as well as in many Asian, African and European countries (North, 2002; Shacklock, et al., 2000; Mahieu, 2006; the Swedish National Agency for Education, 2010a). It is often supranational organisations and federations that bring forward and pursue these issues. Before giving examples of some of these organisations and how their policy documents for increasing entrepreneurship in educational contexts are formulated, it is appropriate to elucidate what is meant here by the concept of "entrepreneurship". Much has been written about entrepreneurship, and what researchers in the field above all seem to agree on is that the concept has various meanings and is difficult to capture. But there are also other criteria that most researchers agree on. In order to narrow down the concept, a brief survey is made from entrepreneur and entrepreneurship in general to entrepreneurship in educational contexts in particular.

Entrepreneurship in schools

Entrepreneurs have interested researchers in several different fields. Interest has among other things been directed at entrepreneurs' *actions*, *personal qualities* and *learning*. In economic and business administration research, just as in everyday speech, entrepreneurs' actions have primarily been associated with the economy and starting and running enterprises (Bull et al., 1995). In attempts to specify the distinctive features of entrepreneurs, epithets such as innovative, active, risk-taking, opportunity seeking and co-ordinating are used. The ambition to associate particular qualities with entrepreneurs has, however, been considered simplistic and criticised in subsequent research (Landström, 2000). Entrepreneurs' 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).

The understanding attached to the concept of "entrepreneurship" in the educational context reflects the background described above in an economic tradition (education in running a business), conceptions of what constitute entrepreneurial abilities (teaching that encourages entrepreneurial competencies, such as innovative, creative and risk-taking) and entrepreneurial learning (project work, learning by doing, co-operation with the surrounding community) in combination with a wider understanding of an entrepreneurial attitude. Where the main emphasis is placed varies, however. This has led to research talking about both a broad and a narrow understanding and application of entrepreneurship in education (Erkkilä, 2000; Gibb, 1993; Johnson, 1988). The broad understanding aims at developing abilities such as power of initiative, energy, creativity, co-operation and responsibility, while the narrow understanding

is more directly aimed at the pupil acquiring knowledge of business and enterprise (Stevenson and Lundström, 2002).

These two perspectives may also be discerned in the various definitions of entrepreneurship, which in a Swedish context is exemplified partly by the broad perspective and is defined as a dynamic process where individuals identify opportunities and reshape ideas into practical and goal-oriented work in, for example social, cultural or economic activities (Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development, [Nutek,] 2004). In a South African context the narrow perspective is more visible as it is connected to the possibility to identify opportunities in the market mainly with the intention to start businesses (Nieman et al., 2003).

In several European countries there seems to be a general agreement that entrepreneurship in connection with teaching should include both a broad and a narrow approach (Leffler, 2009). In many other countries entrepreneurial teaching is equated with enterprise, thus a narrow approach, while the broad approach aiming at developing the pupils' inner entrepreneurial abilities has so far been equally firmly established neither in primary and secondary schooling nor in higher education (Co & Mitchell, 2006; Erkkilä, 2000). In, for example, the USA, Great Britain and South Africa the emphasis is primarily placed on enterprise, although discussions are being conducted about paying greater attention to the broader approach (Hill, 2003; North, 2002). One example of this is the case of South Africa. Botha (2009) emphasises that there is a growing need for entrepreneurship education and training programmes in South Africa. But despite such widespread acknowledgement of supply and demand, there is a disparity in the content and quality of entrepreneurship education programmes on offer, including curriculum designs, delivery methods and forms of assessment (Matlay, 2006). Dhliwayo (2008) supports this notion and states that the "new" entrepreneurship teaching style in South Africa should be action-oriented to encourage experiential learning, problem-solving and creativity and provide the best mix of enterprising skills and behaviours needed to create and manage a business. Researchers in South Africa also suggest there should be increased use of more interactive methods such as role-playing and simulation for students to practice analytical and decision-making skills (Co & Mitchell, 2006; Botha 2009), which puts a greater emphasis on the broad approach.

In a Swedish school context, a broad definition is used and focuses on improving pupils' abilities to develop competencies which are useful in enterprising behaviour, which is described in terms of creative thinking, power of initiative, communicative ability, openness and assuming responsibility, often in co-operation with the surrounding community (Johannisson & Madsén, 1997; Stevenson & Lundström, 2002; Leffler, 2006; Svedberg, 2007). Among the majority of Swedish and European researchers, entrepreneurship as everyday enterprising behaviour and thus as an attitude to life are considered to be the most appropriate point of departure for approaching entrepreneurship in schools (Johannisson, 2010). In the classroom, this means pupils are expected to have and should be given opportunities to take initiatives, look

for solutions and to be proactive in their learning. According to teachers, teaching and learning are not primarily a matter of transferring knowledge from teachers to pupils; it is about more than just a subject (Berglund & Holmgren, 2007; Svedberg, 2010). In both South Africa and Sweden there is a consensus that outside classroom methods are useful when pupils are exposed to real-life projects (Svedberg, 2007; Botha, 2009; Leffler, 2009).

In conclusion, the key to establishing a culture of entrepreneurship in both countries depends on all the stakeholders, including government, educators and learners themselves (Isaacs et al., 2007; Johannisson & Madsén, 1997; Mahieu, 2006). In South Africa and Sweden researchers state that more and more emphasis is being placed on the fact that entrepreneurship education should be included in all school systems. Preliminary research suggests entrepreneurship education in schools can have a significant positive influence on four areas crucial to entrepreneurship (Orford, et al., 2004):

- learners' self-confidence about their ability to start a business;
- learners' understanding of financial and businesses issues;
- learners' desire to start their own business; and
- learners' desire to undertake higher education.

Overarching policy for entrepreneurship in the south and the north

In the following we will look at how the issue of entrepreneurship has been put forward both on the African continent and in European countries through, on one hand, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP) and, on the other hand, the European Union (EU) and the Lisbon Strategy.

Education is one of UNESCO's principal fields of activities and the organisation has worked to improve education worldwide viewing it as a key to social and economic development (www.unesco.org). In collaboration with several organisations, e.g. the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, UNESCO has created the BEAP, a programme with catchwords like quality, equity and inclusion in education. Components that the BEAP has been conceived to cover are curriculum development, teacher education, school development, systemic change as well as linkages with sectors other than education. The BEAP shows, among other things, that "[t]he introduction of entrepreneurship education is seen as a major milestone to reform education systems in order to improve relevance to better prepare young people for life and work" (BEAP, 2009: 4), and is described in the following way:

Entrepreneurship education is conceived in a broad sense, as a pedagogic approach to fostering self-esteem and self-confidence by stimulating and nurturing the talents and creativity of the individual. At the same time, it helps build the relevant skills and values that will assist learners in expanding their perspectives on schooling and future opportunities (BEAP, 2009: 45).

The EU is an economic and political partnership among 27 countries in Europe. The Union deals with issues concerning employment and growth, the economy, peace, security, justice, climate changes etc. In 2000 in Lisbon the European Council set out strategic goals for the coming decade in the so-called Lisbon Strategy. 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.¹ The strategy contains eight key competencies for lifelong learning, one of which is "sense of initiative and entrepreneurship" and is described in the following way:

[T]he ability 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*).

UNESCO and the EU are thus examples of two different supranational policymakers that advocate the fostering of entrepreneurship in education.² The connection to economic growth is obvious and is justified with concepts such as "development" and "growth" and, as regards the EU, also with terms indicating competition. A closer text analysis visualises several common features in the policy documents. One point of departure is that entrepreneurship education should be included in national curricula and promoted at all levels in the education system. But in order for education to be an effective tool, it is not enough to include entrepreneurship in policy documents. In addition, the importance of teacher education and the competence development of teachers dealing with this issue is emphasised.

There is also a consensus as regards what form of pedagogical approach is considered to support the entrepreneurial approach. It involves action-oriented teaching methods such as problem-based teaching and learning, project-based teaching and learning, hands-on learning and opening schools up to co-operation with working life.

In the descriptions of what is desirable in the learner there is almost the same basic sense irrespective of whether the terms used are knowledge, skills or attitudes connected to entrepreneurship. It is also a matter of fostering self-esteem and self-confidence (BEAP), personal fulfilment and development (Lisbon Strategy), expanding their perspectives on schooling and future opportunities and being able to seize opportunities that arise. The BEAP also mentions the importance of making children more proactive and independent of patriarchal structures, something that lacks a counterpart in the Lisbon Strategy.

One question to be raised here is if the overarching policy documents and the rhetoric that is developing are of any importance at the national level as regards individual countries' educational policy and policy documents. So let us move on and look at policy documents in the two studied countries.

Policy documents in South Africa and Sweden

Research shows that overarching policy documents indeed have an impact on national levels (Mahieu, 2006) and on classroom practices as well (North, 2002; Svedberg, 2007). The way in which entrepreneurship is described in educational policy documents varies however between the countries. A not too uncommon approach is that entrepreneurship primarily concerns the education of older pupils and is related to business and enterprise, thus the narrow approach. In *the Revised National Curriculum Statement 2005* in South Africa, entrepreneurship is included as one of the learning areas under the heading Economic and Management Sciences (EMS). As early as the beginning of the 1990s attempts were made through various projects and programmes to introduce entrepreneurship into the school curriculum (North, 2002). The ambition was that the approach should be overarching and based on a whole, i.e. not as a special subject. At the same time, the focus seems to be placed on the economic reality. The education system appears to play an important role in developing entrepreneurial skills and shaping attitudes in several ways. Effective schooling should provide crucial skills in verbal and written communication and in numeracy. Depending on the grade level and subject choices, schooling may also develop awareness and skills in areas more specifically related to business such as economics, accounting and entrepreneurship (Orford et al., 2004). Since 2000, entrepreneurship has been introduced into the curriculum for grades 3 to 9. For these grades, entrepreneurship forms part of the EMS curriculum. According to Isaacs et al. (2007) entrepreneurship development and training are not a new phenomenon. As far back as 1994 a co-co-ordinated entrepreneurship strategy (through the 2005 Revised National Curriculum for Grades R–9) was developed and implemented. However, this strategy for Grade 10 was only implemented in 2006, for Grade 11 in 2007, and for Grade 12 in 2008, respectively. Entrepreneurship forms part of Business studies (which is an optional subject) for grades 10 to 12 (Orford et al., 2004).

According to Issacs et al. (2007), the teacher-training curriculum in South Africa plays an important role in implementing entrepreneurship in schools. At the primary level teachers are supposed to teach basic entrepreneurial skills, but the emphasis seems to be on the economic approach. Several other examples may be found in South African policy documents for grades 10–12 where entrepreneurship is principally stressed in practical subjects or in subjects where pupils can eventually see an opportunity to develop a business. Already in the introduction under the heading “The development outcomes”, one of the objectives is that pupils should develop entrepreneurial opportunities. A close examination of how entrepreneurship is described in the different subjects shows that it is above all the narrow enterprising part that is emphasised. Although the curriculum document for grade R–9 contains keywords stressing that the pupil should develop lifelong learning, self-confidence, critical and active citizenship, which in themselves may be associated with the keyword of entre-

preneurship, the concept itself is missing (Revised National Curriculum Statements Grades R-9; 10-12). As seen from the above discussion, although the policy documents state that entrepreneurship is included in the curriculum for South African schools, it seems as if it is not happening in all schools. However, the Department of National Education in South Africa sees as its great challenge how to organise education in a way that satisfies needs, new preconditions and opportunities by stimulating the development of a knowledge society that utilises all individuals' creative and intellectual abilities (Department of National Education, 2007).

In the Swedish curriculum the concept of "enterprising" is included in the pre-school curriculum (Lpfö 98), although not in the curriculum for forms 1-9 or in the upper secondary curriculum (Lpo 94; Lfp 94). Keywords that may be associated with entrepreneurship are however frequently appearing (Johannisson & Madsén, 1997; the Swedish National Board for Industrial and Technical Development [NUTEK] 2000; Leffler, 2006; Svedberg, 2007). Only in recent years has the stimulation of entrepreneurship become an explicit objective of Swedish educational policy, and in 2009 the government adopted a strategy for entrepreneurship in the field of education (Government Offices of Sweden, 2009). In the strategy the government on one hand talks about entrepreneurship as education that inspires young people with skills and enthusiasm to set up and run a business and, on the other hand, that entrepreneurship should be integrated throughout the education system. It is about an approach to learning where pupils' power of initiative, creativity and chances of turning ideas into action are abilities that contribute to developing the knowledge that is necessary not only for succeeding at school and for starting and running enterprises but is also valuable for individuals and society in a broader sense. The Swedish curricula have recently been revised and the perspective of entrepreneurship will now have an impact on the new versions. In the new Education Act there is a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship (Government Bill 2009/10:165) as is also the case in the proposal for a new curriculum for primary and lower secondary schools. For younger pupils the focus is on a broad understanding of entrepreneurship and for upper secondary schools this is supplemented with knowledge of business start-ups and running a business. As regards teacher education there is, however, a different situation. In the new proposition "Top of the class, new teacher education programmes" (Government Bill 2009/ 10:89) entrepreneurship is mentioned neither as a concept nor as an approach to teaching, although the Swedish National Agency for Education (2010b) in its survey *Entrepreneurship in Schools* sees teacher education as an important part of the implementation of entrepreneurship in schools.

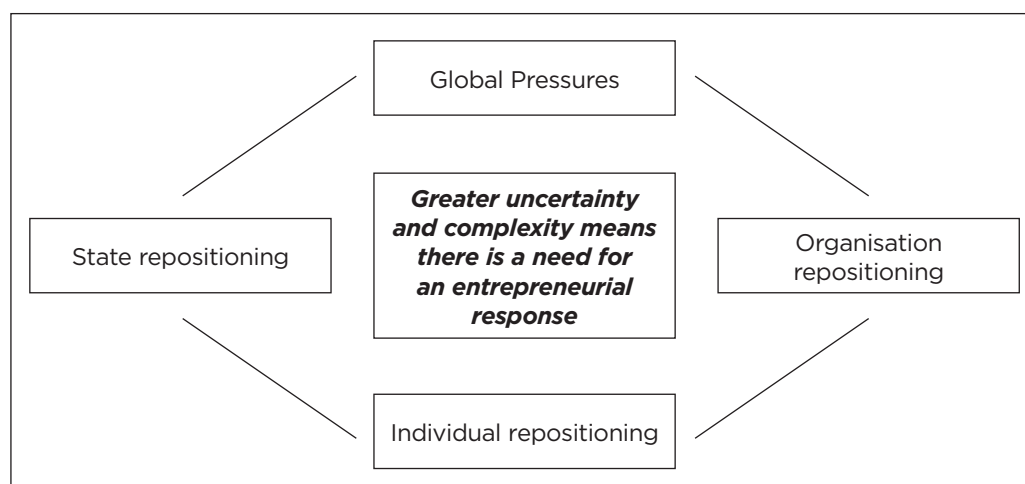
The two studies thus show that the wind of entrepreneurship has reached the education systems of the two countries but has been put into practice in somewhat different ways. In the South African policy documents the idea of entrepreneurship has been explicitly stated for several years, but in the Swedish education policy documents this is something new. In spite of this, work has been going on in Sweden throughout the

21st century with various entrepreneurial school projects, which may be seen as an example of how policy formulations can be transferred from the supranational to the local level and, so to speak, passes by the national level (Mahieu, 2006).

Two reasons for education

The global entrepreneurship wind, which we have described above, may be understood in different ways. One interpretation is that an economic rationality has grown increasingly strong, which utilises the opportunities of education as regards achieving economic growth. In terms of neoliberal thinking, education is seen as an investment in human capital and is thus an investment for both society and individuals. Gustavsson (2009) is one of those who have discussed the way in which the function of education has shifted over time. After periods of oppression, dictatorship and strongly authoritarian ideals (e.g. the Second World War and apartheid), education, which had previously been principally humanistically justified, came to be justified by democratic ideals. A central mission has been to educate democratic citizens. Based on this interpretation, the introduction of economic concepts such as “entrepreneurship” in educational contexts may be seen as one of the signs that the democratic approach has become accompanied by, or has acquired competition from, economic rationality. Developing individuals’ innovative thinking and entrepreneurship spirit is encouraged in such a perspective as an investment in human capital. Entrepreneurship is seen to bring benefits at both the macro and micro levels of economic development. Gibb & Cotton (1998) support the idea of a macro-micro spectrum of benefits which can be gained from entrepreneurship and illustrate these in terms of the various changes and pressures at the global, societal, organisational and individual levels (graphically illustrated in Figure 1).

Figure 1: Entrepreneurship education and the changing world



Source: Adapted from Gibb and Cotton (1998:8)

At the global level, the reduction of trade barriers, together with advancements in telecommunication, technology and transportation, all combine to provide more opportunities as well as more uncertainties in the world. Timmons & Spinelli (2004) support the latter by pointing out that, in a free enterprise system, changing circumstances, chaos, confusion, inconsistencies, lags or leads, knowledge and information gaps and a variety of other vacuums in an industry or market spawn opportunities. These authors add opportunities as situational, meaning that some conditions in which opportunities are spawned are idiosyncratic, while at other times they are generalisable and can be applied to other industries, products or services.

According to Gibb and Cotton (1998), at the societal level, privatisation, deregulation, new forms of governance, mounting environmental concern and the growing rights of minority groups are all presenting society with greater complexity and uncertainty. At the organisational level, decentralisation, downsizing, re-engineering, strategic alliances, mergers and the growing demand for flexibility in the workforce all contribute to an uncertain climate. Finally, at the individual level the individual is now faced with a wider variety of employment options, the probability of ending up with a portfolio of jobs, more responsibility at work and more stress. In addition, on a personal level, today's individual may be a single parent with more responsibility for managing credit and securing finances for their future (Gibb & Cotton, 1998). Given the above, it is apparent that, at all levels, there will be a greater need for people to have entrepreneurial skills and abilities to enable them to deal with life's current challenges and an uncertain future.

The education system has always been regarded as a political instrument for attaining specific goals. The connections described above between supranational policy formulations and national policy documents hence give us occasion to mention a few things about the reasons for UNESCO's and the EU's involvement in educational issues. UNESCO is a collaborative organisation whose rationality is driven by democratic and social objectives, which means that it also works for economic development. There is a certain ideological difference in comparison with the OECD and the EU, which are primarily driven by economic rationality, even though the organisations also safeguard democratic values. These different points of departure ought to be reflected in the formulations about entrepreneurship in schools, but they are surprisingly similar.

Undeniably the introduction of entrepreneurship in educational contexts has economic driving forces, but we want to carry the discussion past from this observation. Does the economic justification imply that democratic dimensions are marginalised or are they quite simply a prerequisite for each other? In the following section the concept of "democracy", which is central to education, is located in relation to entrepreneurship.

... supporting or obstructing democracy?

Our view is that the relationship between the fostering of entrepreneurship and the fostering of democracy in education is implicitly present in parts of what has been written about entrepreneurship in education (Johannisson & Madsén, 1997), and the issue is also touched upon in the field of democracy (Ellström et al., 1996) although it has seldom been openly discussed and made explicit. The question of how this relationship may be viewed and discussed is, however, well founded. But before trying to conduct a searching discussion of this, there is reason to briefly mention some aspects of the democracy-fostering mission of education.

The democracy fostering mission of education

The fact that education is associated with democracy and democratic values is elucidated in policy documents all over the world as well as in the two countries exemplified in this paper. We do not claim to render and analyse these policy documents in full here. Yet it may be briefly mentioned that the South African policy documents (Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9; Grades 10-12) describe objectives and values to do with social justice, democracy and equality. These are considered important not only for individuals' personal development but also for guaranteeing that South Africa's identity rests on values differing from those that apartheid was based on. The objective is to create lifelong learning based on an independent individual's versatility, empathy and ability to read and do arithmetic with respect for the environment and opportunities to participate in social life as an active and critical citizen. Learners are, according to Schoeman (2003), not born with an understanding of the principles of democracy. However, as citizens of the future they have to be prepared for their future responsibilities as citizens of a democratic society. Many institutions help to develop citizens' knowledge and skills and shape their civic character and commitments: family, religious institutions, the media and community groups exert important influences. Schools, however, bear a special and historic responsibility for the development of civic competency and responsibility. Schools are needed as much for political as for educational reasons: the quality and nature of the citizenship of the future will depend on schools more than upon any other institution. The notion that South African schools have a distinctively civic mission has been recognised with the introduction of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002). There are similar formulations in the Swedish curriculum for primary and secondary schooling (Lpo 94; Lpf 94). It stresses the importance of education both communicating and securing the values that social life rests on. The teaching should be conducted with democratic working methods and prepare pupils for active participation in society. Pupils should be allowed to develop their ability to exercise influence and take responsibility by taking part in planning and evaluation. Pupils' rights to personal development should contribute to their ability to participate in social life with responsibility and freedom. The teacher hence has a key position

and a duty to work for pupils' democratic development. The democratic forms of the teaching should prepare the pupils for participation and joint responsibility and for the rights and duties that characterise a democratic society.

According to a Swedish study (Oscarsson, 2005), Swedish pupils generally have an unreflecting conception of democracy and often equate democracy with the right to vote in general elections. Pupils learn about democracy at school but seem to be given limited training in participatory democracy, and there are weak connections between pupils' views of their opportunities to influence at school and their will to influence in society. In the classroom environment, Oscarsson (2005) thinks that the dialogic democracy (deliberative) perspective with valuation exercises and dilemma tasks linked to pupils' own life worlds is an example of teaching situations where pupils' democratic competence obtains a chance to develop. Similar results are reported in a South African study (Finkel & Ernst, 2005) where pupils' knowledge and understanding of democracy increase when teaching is based on interactive and participatory methods such as role-plays and realistic tasks. In both cases it is a matter of allowing pupils to develop democratic competence through conversations and discussions about everyday and real problems. Another study of teachers' understanding and implementation of democracy within their teaching environment found that teaching and learning must promote holistic development and cannot be viewed in isolation from context (Excell & Linington, 2008). It must be considered against the complexities of education in South Africa today where, for example, overcrowded classrooms, shortages of resources, and language of teaching and learning may all impact upon teacher practices. How the work is realised in a school and which attitudes and approaches teachers communicate and take up themselves are important for fostering democracy (Gustavsson, 2009; Worgs & Caldwell, 2007). Worgs and Caldwell (2007) state there are also connections between pupils' democratic fostering and society's democratic development. Issues like these, which concern the democratic mission of education and how pupils' democratic fostering is organised in teaching, have developed into an extensive international field of research (see e.g. Arko-Cobbah, 2001; Lockyer et al., 2003; Worgs, & Caldwell, 2007). In summary, it may be stated that conceptions of how citizens can best participate in society are fundamental, irrespective of whether it is a matter of democracy or of entrepreneurship as the educational ideal.

Beyond a dualistic view

How then can we approach our main question of whether the entrepreneurship wind that is sweeping across the north and south supports or obstructs the fostering of democracy in schools?

One approach to the issue is to assume that *democracy and entrepreneurship are two incompatible ideals*. In generalised terms, one educational ideal may be said to advocate an education that fosters good citizens by means of schooling that

represents democracy, equality and levelling social differences. Knowledge has an intrinsic value and cannot be reduced to a means for societal development. The other educational ideal advocates schooling that walks in step with the demands of present-day society and supports individual freedom of choice, independence, initiatives and responsibility. Society's rapid pace of change requires knowledge production and lifelong learning. Based on overarching policy documents and national regulatory documents, both the individual and the collective dimension appear in these ideals, even though entrepreneurship to a higher degree emphasises the individual aspects, while democracy seems to be collectively held as a core value to a greater extent. As seen earlier in the paper, the learning approaches to entrepreneurship and democracy are similar.

Another way of talking about the fostering of democracy and the fostering of entrepreneurship in education is to *contrast the two countries against each other*. Looking for interpretations with other points of departure than one's own culture is a way of widening one's understanding of a phenomenon. The two countries differ widely in terms of their historical and contemporary historical experiences, e.g. South Africa's collective memory of colonialism and apartheid versus the Swedish taken-for-grantedness of peace and democracy has an impact on how the democracy-fostering mission of education is formulated. One basic feature we can discern from our survey of the two countries' policy documents is that the democracy-fostering mission of South African education rests to a stronger degree on a society-centred view of democracy, while the Swedish policy documents to a greater extent reflect a shift from a society-centred to a more individual-centred view of democracy. In both countries it is emphasised that entrepreneurial activity is low in comparison with the surrounding world (North, 2002; Henriksson & Stenkula, 2007). The entrepreneurial culture is weak, which is especially true for black South Africans, who make up the largest part of the population. The rediscovery of the entrepreneur who takes risks, breaks new ground and innovates is seen as a way to effectively address unemployment and revitalise the economy (Co & Mitchell, 2006). If reasons for the low level of entrepreneurship in South Africa are sought in colonialism and apartheid, explanations of reasons in Sweden are sought in the welfare state and the social welfare's care of the citizens. However, critical voices have been raised that claim the introduction of entrepreneurship in school contexts is a way of concealing the increasing youth unemployment by transforming structural problems in societies into a matter of influencing young people's attitudes (Shacklock et al., 2000; Johannisson & Madsén, 1997). It would thus be a way of transferring the problems from a societal to an individual plane.

As mentioned, the ideological and political associations has made the concept of "entrepreneurship" controversial in Sweden in some periods of time. Although entrepreneurs in the political rhetoric are expected to contribute to Sweden moving away from the economic crisis and the high youth unemployment, a critical attitude still

exists among many people in schools. The broad perspective on entrepreneurship, which takes general competencies and more contexts than merely economic ones into account, has however facilitated the introduction of the fostering of entrepreneurship in educational contexts.

Above we have thus discussed democracy and entrepreneurship as two incompatible ideals and also tried to compare the two countries' democratic and entrepreneurial fostering. In the conclusion we will carry the discussion further by introducing *an integrative perspective*. This involves looking for connections and distinguishing what unites the fostering of entrepreneurship and the fostering of democracy in education. In both policy documents and regulatory educational documents as well as in research we have found similar vocabularies in the descriptions, such as the individual's initiative, power to act, involvement, responsibility, collaboration, the right to develop one's potential and the importance of putting the activities of schools in relation to the surrounding community and world. Both an outlook on people and a view of knowledge with common denominators may be discerned in these concepts. Gustavsson (2009) as well as Spinosa et al. (1997) think that a prerequisite for both democratic and economic development is that people are given opportunities to develop their inherent potentials, their capacities. When research discusses how pupils' democratic fostering can be organised in teaching, application is emphasised, i.e. that democracy cannot merely be communicated but must also be applied through democratised teaching. Somewhat simplistically one might say that democratic classrooms foster democratic citizens. The same conditions apply as regards entrepreneurship in educational contexts. Pupils' entrepreneurial abilities develop in environments that allow them to take initiatives of their own, challenge problem-solving and innovations, and encourage the creation of knowledge alongside the management of knowledge (Svedberg, 2010). In both cases, it is thus a matter of applied and action-oriented learning where e.g. social and responsible entrepreneurship requires ethical and democratic considerations. The findings of this paper seem to underline that policy documents for both countries have formulated the need and support for entrepreneurship as well as the support for democratic principles. There seems, however, to be many challenges to achieving these ideals as laid out in the documents and it seems that in practice they are not being realised as stipulated.

Concluding remarks

In this paper we have discussed the concept of "entrepreneurship" education in schools and its relationship to the democratic fostering of schools. We observed that a global entrepreneurship wind is blowing in both Sweden in the north and South Africa in the south and that this wind contains basic common strategies for encouraging and developing new opportunities for employment and growth. This cannot be regarded as merely isolated labour market needs but also affects our view

of teaching and fostering. The rhetoric about the concept of “entrepreneurship” is strong and effective and contains keywords such as innovation, activity, risk taking, seeking opportunities and co-ordination. Society wants individuals capable of seeing opportunities in a changing time. The task of education is to take part in societal changes and use relevant teaching methods for this purpose. Learning by doing, trial and error, problem-solving and learning experience in co-operation with the surrounding society are some examples. The above discussion indicates a certain cultural adaptation of the concept of “entrepreneurship” and of what is described as a global curriculum. The different contexts in which the two countries exist also stand out in the way in which the fostering of democracy is justified. South Africa has to address high unemployment, outsidership and the social problems this leads to. For this reason, the need to educate and train young people in the field of entrepreneurship has been stressed as important. There are similar problems in Sweden, albeit to a considerably smaller extent. In South African texts a further approach appears where entrepreneurial education is a matter of “empowering people”. As early as the beginning of the 1990s experimental activities were going on and entrepreneurship since then has been introduced into the education system and at various training centres. Irrespective of whether it is about the formal education sector, the private sector or non-governmental sectors, a narrow interpretation of entrepreneurship seems to be prevalent, i.e. the economy and business activities seem to dominate the application.

Different policy documents at the supranational level thus reflect a consensus in their rhetoric and have influenced policy documents at the national level. As regards the democratic fostering of education and fostering of entrepreneurship we have also seen that through participation pupils should be allowed to act on the basis of real problems. Pupils’ activity is thus emphasised. Neither entrepreneurship nor democracy can be learned solely theoretically. Theory and practice must go hand in hand. Similar ambitions behind both the teaching of entrepreneurship and fostering of democracy may be found in the two countries, so as to transform pupils into independent, creative, opportunity seeking and responsible individuals. In education it is consequently the broad aspect that is aimed at, even if the final goal is economic, namely creating new job opportunities. What chiefly distinguishes the two countries as regards fostering and education in entrepreneurship and democracy may be traced in the countries’ contextual differences.

Yet there are fears linked to the introduction of entrepreneurship in schools’ activities, and these should be taken seriously. One point of departure in this discussion is about what ideology society is based on and the risk that entrepreneurship will lead to individualisation and competition at the expense of civic responsibility. Still another fear is that market forces will enforce economic rationality in schools. Pupils’ education and development will then be chiefly seen as a means and not as a goal in itself. The basis of these fears may, among other things, be found in the emphasis seen in

both the Swedish strategy and the South African policy documents on entrepreneurship from a narrow perspective.

Finally, we would like to return to our heading “A global entrepreneurship wind is supporting or obstructing democracy in schools”, and turn the formulation around and instead argue that the fostering of democracy provides important support in ensuring that the fears associated with entrepreneurship in schools do not come true.

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Endnotes

- ¹ EUROPE 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth will replace the Lisbon Strategy. In this strategy too the importance is emphasised of aiming school syllabuses at creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship. <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/>
- ² Other organisations could also have been discussed here. As early as 1989 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published the report *Towards an enterprising culture: a challenge for education and training*.