

Creating worlds: Political Agendas of Entrepreneurship¹

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Abstract

This paper wants to argue that the impact and role of entrepreneurship in the new millennium can be far larger than currently acknowledged. One of the main obstacles to the development of entrepreneurship as a societal phenomenon, is its close involvement with economics, rendering entrepreneurship as an economic phenomenon to be explained through economic theory. In this article, we would like to explore the consequences if we consider entrepreneurship as a policy rather than only economy, and indicate the innovative power released when we turn the focus of entrepreneurship beyond its economic ambition into the (everyday) scenes where people are creating worlds of their own. Entrepreneurship can then be considered a scene of multi-sided and multi-sided possibilities, requiring an estimation of its political and ethical effects. The *first part* will trace the 'narrow' agenda of entrepreneurship research in how it is influenced by policy-makers. A *second part* elaborates the idea that entrepreneurship is a form of cultural innovation effecting people's forms of

¹ Paper presented at the 11th Nordic Conference On Small Business Research, Aarhus, Denmark, June 18-20, 2000. The author acknowledges the LOK Research Center (Management - Organization - Competence) for financial support for this study.

everyday life. In *a third part*, this view on entrepreneurship as inventing everyday practices will be elaborated conceptually by including the work of Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus, and de Certeau. In *a fourth part*, the prerequisites for a political agenda of entrepreneurship will be sketched.

The narrow agenda of entrepreneurship and its research

Entrepreneurship research of the last twenty years, say the entrepreneurially inclined eighties, and the unsurprising and reproductive nineties², has downplayed on its own innovative possibilities to have political implications. The main reason we see is the fact that entrepreneurship has borrowed mainly an economically inclined discourse in order to gain credibility and legitimacy. Entrepreneurship was a good thing to engage in and to give research attention because it could be part of the economical agenda, namely adding to the gross national product. In that sense, entrepreneurial endeavours were regarded very much as single cases and discussed in their adequacy according to economic principles. The main target of many economic policy makers has been to emphasize job creation, and entrepreneurship is considered a privileged road to enhance the creation of new jobs. For instance, in the formulation of the jobs strategy of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), they consider entrepreneurship a central topic of policy debate and declare that ‘entrepreneurship matters’ because of its potential in helping job creation³. It is the primary reason to foster entrepreneurship and to make their overall policy guideline (p. 28): ‘As more countries move towards fostering entrepreneurship, the evidence is mounting that, implemented comprehensively, entrepreneurship policies represent an effective response for countries wanting to strengthen their adaptability and improve their economy’s ability to create jobs’.

One does not need a discourse analysis to illustrate that approaches of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs are effected in a mainly economic discourse. It becomes obvious from reading such a report like the OECD-one (‘Entrepreneurship is central to the functioning of market economies. Entrepreneurs are agents of change and growth in a market economy...’ p. 11) as

² One could claim that in the nineties entrepreneurship became ‘taken over’ by the concept of ‘enterprise’ and that as a consequence entrepreneurship became centralised in the discourse of managerialism, losing the potential of its marginal workings, i.e. playing with the boundaries of current economic and other life habits (for a discussion, see Hjorth, forthcoming, and du Gay, 1996 or Fournier and Grey, 1999).

³ I will not discuss if one can claim a relation between entrepreneurship and job creation.

from considering one of its mainstream conferences, like the RENT-conference (which in 1999 was entitled 'Entrepreneurship and Economic Development'⁴). It can be read in the report of the European Commission to the Council of Ministers, 'Fostering entrepreneurship: Priorities for the Future' where the belief is that 'Europe's place as an economic power depends on its future entrepreneurs and the competitiveness of its enterprises. They will be the motor of the market economy'.⁵ It can be seen in the recent 'struggle' to embrace entrepreneurship as part of management in general (see Hjorth, 1999) and the believe in 'enterprising' (du Gay, 1996). It can also be seen in that research part of entrepreneurship and SME-literature, which is called policy-making. For instance, De (2000) in addressing the SME policy in Europe distinguishes four overall objectives: to improve competitiveness, to foster economic growth, to create employment and regional/structural development. It seems that an European policy is only an economic policy. In light of the so-called 'new economy' where a new wave of entrepreneurship can be noticed, one can be dubious that entrepreneurship will be approached any different than in an economic way. The new economy is after all called the new *economy* (see Steyaert & Hjorth, forthcoming).

The aim of this paper is not to contest such an economized treatment of entrepreneurship, rather to question the narrow scene on which entrepreneurship is supposed to play its role. The idea I will elaborate here is that entrepreneurship is a form of cultural innovation, not only effecting if people have a job or not, but effecting people's forms of everyday life, in which economic prosperity is one criterion among others such as ecological, cultural, or social criteria. I think that entrepreneurship has been and will remain the 'new dogma' of economics: it is accepted because it creates wealth and jobs, but I want to underline that the whole issue is disconnected from the question how our societies, communities and worlds should look like, beyond its economic criteria, acknowledging social, cultural, political and ecological criteria. This implies a discussion of ontology, politics and ethics, how is entrepreneurship part of creating the world we want. Of course, you might understand I don't see this as a task for entrepreneurship only⁶, but we should consider our contribution to *the question, in what ways entrepreneurship and its research is involved politically and ethically in society?* The outcome of this paper might both be that we reconsider the way we conceive

⁴ And one could wonder why only economic development?

⁵ Quoted in Reynolds, Hay & Camp (1999).

⁶ In this we join a more general discussion where questions have been put to the competitive model of the market economy (see Petrella, 1993 or Bouwen & Steyaert, 1999) and those who have been emphasizing that for entrepreneurship (see Solomon, 1993).

entrepreneurship as the way policy and politics of entrepreneurship and SME's have become performed as a research topic of entrepreneurship.

The invention of everyday practices

If the field of policy-making is driven by an economic view on entrepreneurship, one might ask then what entrepreneurship is all about, and the grip policy-makers want to hold on it by 'fostering' it. The question has been raised before but the idea is that we have to keep asking 'what is entrepreneurship?'. Many scholars are tired of thinking about and answering this question. But maybe, they have taken this question too narrowly as a definitional one. The question is rather, 'what worlds is entrepreneurship about?' And then it becomes obvious that entrepreneurship is about much more than we assume it to stand for. Again, many people are afraid that if we 'define' it too broad, it becomes everything, thus nothing. But maybe this is a consequence of people who are used to dissociate micro-practices from world politics. Entrepreneurship is terribly practical, as its 'object' is everything people create in the course of living, and provide it through organized activities. This implies that we connect organized activities with people's everyday living (and that we see entrepreneurship out of its economic scope). It takes a prosaic approach to establish such a 'definition' of entrepreneurship, one where living in detail and miniature is not taken for granted, but as the one level where we can see how people are creating worlds for themselves. In a way, our claim is that the way the world is made - seen on a scale of everyday living -, is an effect of entrepreneurial activity. Before making this claim conceptually, I will illustrate it on an experiential level and visit some exhibitions of everyday world making. I will also remember some classics of entrepreneurship and SME and show that we left out some major non-economic inclinations of these earlier writings.

Visiting exhibitions⁷

If people drive cars, to make an obvious example, that is an invention which has changed our ways of living, as in transporting ourselves. But the car not only reframed our concept of transport, as we discovered that we could also use it for eating, making loving and finally for sleeping. Cars became escape-spaces in certain societies, intolerant for certain sexual

⁷ This part is in an adapted way borrowed from an earlier lecture, see Steyaert, 1998.

practices. For instance, in Italy, there came protests when the police would guard a bit closer certain parking spots where especially young couples have their romantic initiations and moments. Such protest shows that we are not just talking 'driving cars' here, but other parts of human life. The mobile home cars required new concepts of 'what is a house' and 'what is a car for'. Indeed, I go as far as to say that in this example, changing our ways of travelling and making love, are entrepreneurially effected. If I open a bottle, the bottle-opener is a cultural practice that has come to exist at a certain time, and so it is for the bottle itself, because I should resist my being used to bottles. All my habits have once been invented and cannot be taken for granted, as one studies entrepreneurship. Making products and services are always ways of world-making.

Such a perspective of entrepreneurship one can easily acquire, walking through exhibitions. In February 1998, I was in Lisbon, where they had a Countdown towards the opening of the world exhibition. It was called the last 100 days before the world would again belong to Portugal, conquering all its visitors coming from across all oceans. There were 3 related exhibitions on this theme. One of these manifestations sketched our ways of living of the last 100 years, around 10 sites, from food habits to technology, from sexual practices to ways of dressing. It was a strange experience to walk an exhibition about your own life. There was a kind of familiarity: this was the only exhibition where you never have to go reading the titles to see what it is all about, except maybe to refresh your memory. You recognized easily Marilyn Monroe or James Dean on the pictures, or you remembered having seen this images of Neil Armstrong, the first man on the moon. I saw my first typewriter, the old Coca-Cola bottles that I used to drink from, the revival of condoms, the first computer bigger than most bathrooms nowadays, fascinating telephones that you had to put your finger in and make a circle, contrasted by the inevitable mobile, everywhere around as the Portuguese have one of the highest percentage of mobiles in the world. I had a similar experience in Stockholm, where the 98-cultural capital programme contained an exhibition called 'The Mirror of the Century'. In the garden of the Army museum, objects of the last hundred years had been collected: all kinds of inventions you either recognise because you have them in your kitchen or you have seen them in your grandmother's living room, or you either don't know because they are collector's items which are not part of the public memory. I saw the first women's bike in Sweden, after all not very far from the classic models we have today, but very different from a newly designed prototype that was already in the exhibition but will be on the

market from 1999. Yes, these days things are first in the museum and then in the shops. Also Björn Borg's tennis shoes were there with which he was winning so masterly in the late seventies. Where these shoes at that time may be extraordinary as they were specially made for him, I have to say *today* they looked so ordinary, in comparison with the range of sport shoes you can see these days on the streets. I think most youngsters would refuse to wear them. Yes, what was then the privilege of one person is now not good enough for everybody. Both exhibitions are in my view exhibitions about entrepreneurship, not only because they were full of inventions which were the effect of entrepreneurial and small business activities and which were brought successfully to the market, but also those that failed, that didn't survive that process, were there; they are entrepreneurial also because they portray the creative invention of everyday living practices, how we cook and clean, cure patients and educate children, how we transport ourselves and objects ... this is an endless entrepreneurial process.

Nothing is 'safe' for such a perspective of entrepreneurship. Many might still expect from the examples that inventing life is bound to utility-objects (like cars, bottle-openers or tennis shoes), but if a group of dancers or a choreographer come with a new dance performance where new practices of dancing come about, one can easily claim that artistic activities are a matter of entrepreneurship - artistic entrepreneurship in this case - where ways of dancing, which one easily can call habits, were counter-acted. At the royal ballet in Copenhagen, they had an evening programme which consisted of three parts, a ballet by Diaghilev, one by Béjart (his famous Bolero-version) and one choreography by a Swedish dancer, created in the thirties, sixties and eighties, respectively. As a spectator you could not only see the difference between classic, modern and postmodern dance, it was obvious that these artistic creations were connected with new conceptions of what dancing was, what the body is, what love is, what a man and a woman is, what a story is, what art is...

Remembering some classics of entrepreneurship

These prosaic illustrations might seem casual; they illustrate in my view convincingly that we have drawn a too narrow circle around entrepreneurial activities, discarding them from everyday creative life. Another way to make this 'point' is by rereading some classics where this narrow approach is *after all* not all *so* present. It seems that in a way we have remembered much broader views of entrepreneurship and smallness as only being about

economics. For instance, one could make here a comparative reading of such classics as Schumacher's 'Small is beautiful' or Drucker's 'Innovation and Entrepreneurship' to address the point that in entrepreneurship and SME's more is at stake than economics. Schumacher's attempt to conceive economics as if people mattered, remembered as a plea for smallness, is at the same time much more than that. As it departs from the motto that 'if economic ambitions are good servants, they are bad masters' and that 'a reasonable estimate of economic organisation must allow for the fact that (...) it must satisfy criteria which are not purely economic', its tone makes one expect a treatise that goes beyond economism. Indeed, the discussion on smallness transcends in many ways the current narrow discussions on e.g. the relation between SME's and job creation. Schumacher's treatise gives simultaneously a much broader and much more in depth view on the possibilities and limits of scale, as he connects his discussion to the availability of resources, trends in the third world, and alternative philosophies (such as Buddhism). The cultivation and expansion of needs, such a crucial denominator of economic theory, is called by Schumacher the antithesis of wisdom, and even of freedom and peace (p. 34). If wisdom is the way to go, then science and technology should orient themselves towards 'the organic, the gentle, the non-violent, the elegant and the beautiful' (p. 35) instead of consumption or profit. Rereading Schumacher today is in many ways finding a discussion which is *passé* in its details, but which is much more *ad rem* in its effects and intentions: discussing the scope of economics is not an economic discussion, it is a political one, deciding on the shape and outlook of society and how every single person will be able to take part in that. For Schumacher, ordinary (wo)men are at stake, and their potential creativity which he calls the most important factor for scientists and technologists to address in developing policies (see p. 35). Economic development is thus 'something much wider and deeper than economics, let alone econometrics. (...) It cannot be 'produced' by skilful grafting operations carried out by foreign technicians or an indigenous élite that has lost its contact with ordinary people. It can succeed only if it is carried forward as a broad, popular 'movement of reconstruction' with primary emphasis on the full utilisation of the drive, enthusiasm, intelligence and labour power of everyone' (p. 216-217).

Comparing Schumacher's attempt to Drucker's 'Innovation and Entrepreneurship' shows the potential of Schumacher's broad 'political' approach. While Drucker departs from the idea of 'an entrepreneurial economy', he sees at the end of his book an entrepreneurial society

emerging which ‘requires of executives in all institutions that they make innovation and entrepreneurship a normal, ongoing, everyday activity, a practice in their own work and in that of their organization’ (p. 255). But for Drucker, the broad entrepreneurial movement is there mainly for economic reasons. His aim is not to reframe economy in a broader everydayness but rather to economize everydayness. His logic is mainly managerial and economic; for instance, in how to encourage entrepreneurship in society, his measures are about reviewing tax policies and the role of government. It does not deliver a discussion of the societal construction of economy itself.⁸ Even if Drucker discusses the notion of an ‘entrepreneurial society’ as an economism, there is no reason not to pursue the possibilities of such a conception and to misremember his options.

Rather than to reread certain classics, one could reconsider certain key figures in the field of entrepreneurship. Such a figure, maybe the classic of classics, is Schumpeter.⁹ Indeed, in the work of Schumpeter, one can discern a broader view on entrepreneurship than a purely economic one. There is a case to be made that Schumpeter’s work is far from only economic.¹⁰ His thinking on economy and entrepreneurship was not without reflection about political systems (like socialism) and without a broader societal inclination. Also he comes close to the everyday view of entrepreneurship and the idea that innovation could manifest itself everywhere. A new thing needs not to be spectacular or of historic importance (also The Deerfoot sausage is a good example) : ‘To see the phenomenon even in the humblest state of the business world is quite essential though it may be difficult to find the humble entrepreneurs historically.’ (see Schumpeter in an article of 1946, p. 412).

My attempt was to indicate that entrepreneurship is much more than an economic phenomenon, it is a process that is part of everyday living. It can be illustrated when walking exhibitions as much as rereading certain classics. From these casual examples, I will now try to move into a more elaborate conceptualisation of entrepreneurship.

⁸ I will come back to this work and this claim.

⁹ My guess is that Schumpeter is more known as a classic figure than read as such. Few of his books have made it as a classic in literature.

¹⁰ See the contributions by Swedberg, on a broader view on Schumpeter (1991) and on entrepreneurship in general (forthcoming).

Disclosing worlds: entrepreneurship as a way of history-making¹¹

The idea of entrepreneurship as inventing everyday practices comes close to the view Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus (1997) elaborate in their work ‘Disclosing new worlds – Entrepreneurship, Democratic Action and Cultivation of Solidarity’. They call entrepreneurs history-makers and emphasize the historical dimension of entrepreneurship surpassing the current economic reductionism¹² into skills of cultural innovation. Entrepreneurship consists of historical change ‘by producing both a product that solicits people to change the style of their everyday activities and a company that instantiates the new way of life the product establishes’ (p. 34).

Beyond current accounts of entrepreneurship

Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus deconstruct three (business) accounts of entrepreneurship, since they do not focus on the history-making skills of entrepreneurs, even if people agree that their effect is ‘the production of radical social change’. What they here call history-making, equals with what I have called everyday world-making. The first group is those seeking a theory of entrepreneurship, like P. Drucker (see again ‘Innovation and Entrepreneurship’). Although entrepreneurship is about creating something new, entrepreneurs are merely people noticing changes already happening and exploiting them. It is like seeing the needs and then solving them. But one can easily obstruct this vision, since needs not always come first, and many times follow newly created services or products. The innovative entrepreneur, however, cannot predict the needs of people and then satisfy them. What entrepreneurs do, is to open a new space for human action. ‘The entrepreneur is the person who develops a cold weather activity that elderly people subsequently seek out and that changes the way the elderly see themselves, their bodies, and their lives’ (p. 37). They mainly criticize Drucker for his modernist view: ‘The problem with thinking that innovative entrepreneurship can be reduced to a number of fairly stable and regular procedures is that his view claims that interesting change can be represented by something stable as procedures. The procedures would give us a place to stand virtually outside of change’. (p. 38) They thus dismantle Drucker’s view as antihistorical, denying that we are always a part of the changing. Consequently, a theory (contributing to anti-historical modes) is not appropriate, but what is preferable is looking closely at what happens when change is being produced, based on developing sensibilities.

¹¹ This part stays close to the account of Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus, 1997.

A second approach is the empirical (or classificatory) approach. Here one describes many different cases of entrepreneurial success and failure, classifies different types according to the way their examples seem to cluster, and finally offers general rules of thumb that work a large percentage of the time but with clear exceptions. An example here is Vesper (see his *New Venture Strategies*). This approach becomes so descriptive that it ends in mere trivialities: an entrepreneur acts like an entrepreneur and there are many variations to that. Furthermore, the very interesting ones, - they like to call them the genuine ones - are many times excluded or condemned to be operating according to luck. No, 'the entrepreneurs worth thinking about are the ones who are sensitive to how the problem that they sense has its roots in our pervasive way of living, our lifestyle (...). The changes they bring about are changes of historical magnitude because they change the way we see and understand things in the relevant domain. (p. 41). This ability to sense that one is turned on an issue that will change the general way we handle things or people is a skill for making history. For them, genuine entrepreneurs are sensitive to the historical and not (only) to the pragmatical questions.

A third approach Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus discuss is represented by George Gilder (see *Recapturing the Spirit of Enterprise*) which is more aware that entrepreneurship is not business as usual. Entrepreneurship comes down to Christian values of giving, humility (and listening) and commitment. These values make other practices sensible, and can be seen as second-order practices. Here is thus a line of history-making set in a rough form. Still, a virtuous life-style as described by Gilder is not enough, one needs to examine the efforts to form a company to market products and services.

Entrepreneurship as a form of reconfiguration

For Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus, 'successful entrepreneurs bring about social change by modifying the style of particular subworlds or the style of the society in general' (p. 68). Why do they see entrepreneurship as a form of social change instead of economic production? In their alternative view, entrepreneurship is all about the idea of sticking to the anomaly one senses. It requires a 'maximizing of strangeness and sensibleness in the way she instantiates her innovation' (p. 50). They summarize the process as follows, (1) the entrepreneur innovates by holding on to some anomaly; (2) he brings the anomaly to bear on his tasks; (3) he is clear about the relation of the anomaly to the rest of what he does, and once he has a

¹² See also Robert C. Solomon, 1993, *Ethics and Excellence*.

sense of a world in which the anomaly is central, such as the world of work, he embodies, produces and markets his new understanding (4) to do this, he preserves and tests his new understanding (...) to see how it fits with wider experiences than his own; (5) he must take his new conception and embody it in a way that preserves its sensibleness and the strangeness of the change it produces, seeing to it that his new understanding retains for others the authority that is has for him and reconfiguring the way things happen in a particular domain; (6) finally, he focuses all dimensions of entrepreneurial activity into a style coordination with each other and brings them into tune with his embodied conception, so that the critical distinctions involved in appreciating the product become manifest in the company's way of life. (p. 50).

Apart from entrepreneurs, they claim two other types of paradigmatic history makers, namely the virtuous citizen and the culture figure. They use different ways of history making as entrepreneurs act through reconfiguration. Virtuous citizens, active in political decision-making act through cross-appropriation¹³ while culture figures use a form of articulation¹⁴. But in all three cases, it's about a change in style of a disclosive space after sensing something disharmonious. 'They hold on to this disharmony and live with intensity until it reveals how the common-sense way of acting ought to take care of things and how it fails.' (p. 162). It equally takes an ignoring of established formulations for dealing with life, and making a marginal practice central, adopting a neighboring practice, or focusing a dispersed practice.

They contain that it is entrepreneurs that embody marginal practices to make them central as a new product, service or business practice. In articulation, it requires that one recognizes the dispersed concern and brings it in focus; in cross-appropriation one tries to convince other sub-worlds to reorder their concerns. In the case of the entrepreneur, the attention of an entrepreneur to a marginal practice is at first absurd or outrageous. 'The entrepreneur's anomaly speaks, then, for a historical possibility that has not been recognized but that, when it is recognized through a new shared practice, will be recognized by most people in roughly the same way.' Entrepreneurs embody the marginal practices in both a comprehensible and strange way.

The whole point of sticking to anomalies is that one has a heightened sensitivity, as one understands better what to do than in the preanomaly situation. This happens when our

¹³ Articulation is seen as the most familiar kind of style change by bringing a style into sharper focus, making explicit what is implicit. When the implicit is vague or confused, it is a gathering from dispersion. If it has been lost, it is a kind of retrieval.

¹⁴ Cross-appropriation consists of practices going from one disclosive space to another where that practice could not have been generated.

inhibitions or external irritations do not affect us. It resembles the captivation while playing where there is no room for reflective thought as well. It is all about a greater sense of involvement; indeed, one joins and enjoys what one is doing. The danger is here that of institutes as 'there is a strong tendency to normalize the anomalous in our lives and consequently to let our entrepreneurial situations become the customary institutions that anyone could have'. (p. 68). Thus, entrepreneurs are transforming disclosive space and, by holding on to an anomaly and instituting the practices by which the anomaly comes into focus - contribute to reconfigure the practices of their society. They bring about social change by modifying the style of particular sub-worlds or the style of the society in general.

The point for policy-making then is not to overestimate the possibilities of theoretical rationalizations, and check policy changes against direct accounts (narratives) of skilful history making in relevant domains. One has to be aware of uprooted practices, which are no longer grounded in the practices that make sense of competition, and which one is not engaged with to form an identity. Many times, rationalizing blocks sensitivity to anomalies and thus covers up possibilities for entrepreneurship. 'Thus, insofar as business schools have cultivated a theoretical attitude, they may be doing more harm than good'. (p. 66).

The practices of everyday creativity: more conceptualizations (needed)

The above approach of entrepreneurship as cultural innovation requires that one studies it beyond the boundary of economics, business or single organizations. The focus is on how in individual lives one embarks on innovative projects, which make a societal difference. I would claim that the approach of Spinoza, Flores and Dreyfus is only a beginning and that the idea of a broad entrepreneurship as a cultural manifestation everywhere in society, can be taken much further. This demands that creating and creativity are given much more space in the theory of entrepreneurship, and that entrepreneurship scholars engage with theories of becoming (see Steyaert, 1997). The tone of such a conceptual search can be heard in the work of someone like de Certeau. With him, we can get more (convincingly) into the approach as exemplified above and conceive of entrepreneurship as a practice of everyday creativity. de Certeau is one of these writers who kept himself out of wearing a specific academic badge, effecting an in-between space for himself to be at once into theology, history, philosophy, literature, and sociology, to name a few, while his contribution to the field of cultural studies is considerable. His work has the emblem of creativity, plurality, and otherness as much as

singularity, everydayness and commonness. His ‘the practice of everyday life’ is dedicated to ‘ordinary man’ and how he is making a world. His attempt is a science of singularity, which establishes everyday pursuits to particular circumstances in local network. These pursuits concern ‘relational tactics (a struggle for life), artistic creations (an aesthetic), and autonomous initiatives (an ethic).’ (See his preface to the English translation, p. ix). Living is tied up with aesthetics and ethics as tactics, creations and initiatives. For de Certeau, ordinary people are the entrepreneurs. They are the users and consumers, not in the habitual, passive and docile way but in a creative, tactical way. The tactics of consumption are ‘the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong, [and] thus lend a political dimension to everyday practices’ (p. xvii). They are the marginal majority, more singular than any systemic, scientific model has been able to show, massive but not homogeneous. Following de Certeau (and others, such as Serres, Deleuze and Guattari...) would require entrepreneurship to establish itself a science that is anti-disciplinary instead of interdisciplinary as it often claims or mono-disciplinary – read an economism – as it has been claimed here. What we need ultimately, is a science of *anti-habitus*, one where we learn to think in terms of anomalies, of unprecedented historical forms. This means developing concepts, which tell about the process of creating worlds rather than reproducing them. It puts scholars of entrepreneurship in that scary but intriguing space of creativity and becoming.

Politics of entrepreneurship: stipulating its agenda

The foregoing discussion has been focused around three points. First, it was said that the discussion of how to develop policies about entrepreneurship and SME’s is mainly done from an economic interest. Second, it was illustrated that entrepreneurship is played out on the scene of everyday life. Third, this multi-sided view of entrepreneurship was conceptually traced in some current though not central writings of entrepreneurship literature. These discussion points can help us now to stipulate a political agenda of entrepreneurship. This requires that a) we engage with entrepreneurship as a societal phenomenon that is enacted on all scenes of human life, b) we consider entrepreneurship as a multi-sided process (rather than an economism), c) we situate entrepreneurship in one of the main societal challenges, that of democracy, d) we are able to translate this broader view on entrepreneurship and politics into the specific policies of entrepreneurship and SME’s.

Entrepreneurship in society: a multi-sited activity

Politics of entrepreneurship needs to address entrepreneurship on every scene in society, profit and non-profit, governmental and private, cultural, social and commercial. Such a point has been stressed recently by Giddens (2000): ‘Entrepreneurs have received short shrift from both the old left and the neoliberals. The left has seen entrepreneurs as selfishly profit-driven, concerned to extract as much surplus value as possible from the labour force. Neoliberal theory stresses the rationality of competitive markets, where decision-making is driven by market needs. Successful entrepreneurs, however, are innovators, because they spot possibilities that others miss, or take on risks that others decline, or both. A society that doesn’t encourage entrepreneurial culture won’t generate the economic energy that comes from the most creative ideas. Social and civic entrepreneurs are just as important as those working directly in a market context, since the same drive and creativity are needed in the public sector, and in civil society, as in the economic sphere’ (p. 75). Such a possibility of entrepreneurship in a broad sense – the creative stream and energy of a society – allows to widen research attention to so-called social entrepreneurs (see Leadbeater, 1997), but also to cultural, voluntary, civic, ecological entrepreneurs. Society is here then not a sociological unit of analysis, but an everyday scenery where all of us are potentially entrepreneurially inclined. Entrepreneurship can thus be found ‘everywhere’. A good example might be the so-called entrepreneurial city (see Hall and Hubbard, 1998). Such a city is then a ‘very different object’ for entrepreneurial scholars than the ‘traditional’ entrepreneurial *company*, it is the creative swarm where innovation can emerge everywhere. In the concluding chapter, Hall and Hubbard confirm such a vision where creativity in cities develops along its margins. From the country painters of Renaissance Florence, or the Jewish intellectuals of Vienna in 1900 to the garage technicians of Detroit, urban creativity has come from the outsiders (see Hall & Hubbard, p. 317). Entrepreneurship becomes then a study of alternative geographies of how cities, regions and everyday life becomes sited and spatialized.

Entrepreneurship in everyday life: a multi-sided process

In the above citation, Giddens speaks of ‘economic energy’ and distinguishes the public sector, civil society, and the economic sphere’. The broader view on entrepreneurship as developed in this paper, makes us question the idea that this is about an economic energy: this energy is multi-sided; if not, there is no entrepreneurial effect possible. On the other hand, we

wouldn't dare to claim that the public sector and civil society do not belong to the economic sphere. It is probably more realistic to first claim it in that economic sphere, and second to give it a broader scope. In the public sector and in civil society, there are entrepreneurial possibilities and realities, and they are everything but economic. The Giddens citation only illustrates further how dominant the economic view is. In the example of urban entrepreneurialism (see above), this 'new' discourse in city policies provokes the same concern, whether this is just a way to introduce cities to the competitive system of a market economy. Jessop (1998) distinguishes for instance between the bourgeois enterprise culture and the enterprise society: 'the focus would be on personal and community enabling and empowerment rather than private enterprise and private profit; and on the learning region than the entrepreneurial city. If enterprise involves new combinations, then perhaps it is time to emphasize innovation that maximizes human capacities rather than private profit' (p. 98). In all these cases, the possibilities of entrepreneurship as a concept are at stake and the stakes for entrepreneurial scholars are high, to indulge a multi-sided view on entrepreneurship, so that creative possibilities are not just economized, again in the public sector, again in civic society.¹⁵

Entrepreneurship and democracy

If life, and the way cities and regions are developed, as a daily creative formation is enacted through entrepreneurship, chances are created for and by people to make a difference towards their own situation. It becomes obvious then that entrepreneurship is a political and ethical activity. It is far less a private activity than an everyday tactic on the public scene. This brings us inevitably to the question how entrepreneurship can be situated in the workings of a democracy. This is an open question we bring to the political agenda of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship has indeed the red carpet in front of itself since the fall of communism, the social democrat political parties opening the door for entrepreneurship (see Giddens' third way), and the Internet economy. This changed situation, together with the rise of multicultural pluralism, and the rise of new extreme right and fascist tendencies puts a lot of pressure on democratic systems. It is clear, too, that having a democratic system is more than a matter of procedures. It means that there is also a democratic culture, where people enact democratic principles in everyday scenes. Dealing with issues of exclusion and diversity reduction can

¹⁵ Is it a point in case that the Hall and Hubbard-collection has no single entrepreneurship scholar involved?

directly be linked to entrepreneurial attitudes, as in the case of female (sic) or ethnic entrepreneurs who have created themselves a line of working and living and as such enacted a democratic action by creating a business. A multicultural society implies in many ways a process of multiplicity and innovation where entrepreneurship is an important tactic. At stake is here again how one conceives entrepreneurship, whether it is a dominant (and economic) form of capitalism or an open and multi-dimensional form of every day world-making. Both conceptions will imply different realities of democratic practices.

From politics back to policy

The above challenges for a political agenda of entrepreneurship are concentrated around the idea of everyday world creating. Entrepreneurship can then appear on all scenes of life, and deeply affect societal processes, not in the least its democratic culture. These are not simple questions, which need especially conceptual elaboration; it implies a back to basics and taking up the traditional and for many entrepreneurial scholars tiresome question, 'what is entrepreneurship'. For it is here, and nowhere else, that one can allow entrepreneurship to be entrepreneurial. These conceptual issues are then not about academic *finesses* but about who and what can be considered entrepreneurial. Such a conceptual discussion needs to start all over if it wants to leave its strong economic bias, and requires that entrepreneurship becomes (for once) as much interdisciplinary as undisciplined. It is the right question for politics of entrepreneurship that then becomes implemented in policies of countries, regions and cities. Is it not a vague sign that entrepreneurship has so far been part of the economic ministries, while it as much belongs on the work tables of the ministries of social, cultural, governmental, educational and societal affairs? Entrepreneurship can make a difference there where existing situations have stiffened, in all fields of a society.

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