

Does Entrepreneurial Education Trigger More or Less Neoliberalism in Education?

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Abstract

Purpose – An emerging scholarly critique has claimed that entrepreneurial education triggers more neoliberalism in education, leading to increased inequality, neglect of civic values and an unjust blame of poor citizens for their misfortunes. The purpose here is to develop a deeper understanding of this potentially problematic relationship between entrepreneurial education and neoliberalism.

Design/methodology/approach – A Hegelian dialectic method is used consisting of three steps. First a thesis is articulated based on emerging literature, stating that entrepreneurial education triggers more neoliberalism in education. Then an antithesis is developed representing a logical opposite to the thesis. Finally the resulting tensions are embraced in a synthesis that triggers deeper understanding.

Findings – The synthesis indicates that entrepreneurial education based on a self-oriented search for own happiness leads to more neoliberalism in education, and entrepreneurial education based on an others-oriented search for a meaningful impact on others mitigates some of the already strong neoliberal tendencies in education.

Research limitations/implications – Due to an overlap between the two constructs happiness and meaningfulness, it is difficult to fully disentangle doing well from doing good. How these two opposites interact is a topic that requires more research.

Practical implications – A ‘students-as-givers’ kind of entrepreneurial education could represent a way to reach teachers currently skeptical of entrepreneurial education due to its perceived connection to capitalism. This could also make entrepreneurial education relevant to a wider student audience.

Originality/value – The article represents a rare attempt to reconcile critical and praising perspectives on entrepreneurial education.

1 Introduction

Neoliberalism is a political ideology that celebrates market mechanisms through privatization, competition through the exercise of ‘freedom of choice’ and a reliance on self-sufficient and self-optimizing individuals (Castree, 2010). In a neoliberal society, collective well-being is stated to be maximized when each individual egoistically focuses on own happiness through constant strategizing and making profit versus loss calculations for oneself (Rose, 1998). A disadvantage of neoliberalism is however that it can trigger a significant increase of gender, class and race inequality (Giroux, 2005). When all individuals in society are

expected and educated to be enterprising, it can trigger structural inequality by supporting strong people to become even stronger and inadvertently blaming weak people in society for their own failures (Gill, 2014).

Relating to the above, entrepreneurial education has been claimed to trigger more neoliberalism in education (Erkkilä, 2000, p.124; Komulainen et al., 2011; Berglund, 2013; Dahlstedt and Hertzberg, 2012). Emerging empirical research shows that there are teachers on all levels of education that see the policy pressure to infuse entrepreneurship into education as highly problematic (Korhonen et al., 2012; Johannisson, 2010; Rae, 2010). Such policy pressure is perceived by many teachers as a covert introduction of capitalist and egoistic values into the education system, clashing with traditional humanistic values in education such as equity, participation and the common good. Scholars exploring this topic have employed critical theory in attempts to challenge the currently prevailing paradigm stipulating that entrepreneurial education is something inherently good for all students. This article posits that the emerging critique is important for the field of entrepreneurial education, as it undermines the core reason for supplying entrepreneurial education to students; that of making people more entrepreneurial. There is thus a need for a deeper understanding of the problematic relationship between entrepreneurial education and neoliberalism to see if there is merit to the critique and if there are ways out of the resulting quandary.

The purpose of this paper is to develop such a deeper understanding by applying the Hegelian dialectic method. This method consists of three steps (Dybicz and Pyles, 2011; Popper, 1940). The first step is to articulate a thesis that represents a particular way of understanding an issue. The second step is to articulate an antithesis that represents the exact opposite way of understanding the same issue. The third step is to embrace the resulting tensions and contradictions in order to develop an elevated understanding of the issue in question. This final step has been labeled synthesis or sublation (Mueller, 1958; Palm, 2009). Hegel defined this last methodological step as an integration of extreme and contradictory positions into a unity of opposites, without eliminating or reducing either position (Palm, 2009). The dialectic method has its roots in Socrates 400 BC, and has been employed by many prominent scholars throughout history such as Descartes, Kant, Marx, Dewey and Gadamer (Easton, 2013; Dybicz and Pyles, 2011; Noddings, 2007). A contemporary research tradition leaning on the dialectic method is critical theory (Dybicz and Pyles, 2011). This article could thus be viewed as metacritique, i.e. a critical analysis of an emerging and important critical perspective to entrepreneurial education. Such metacritique rests on a dialectician's belief that 'in human affairs it is necessary to debate and argue issues in order to elicit facts' (Eilon, 1975, p.361).

The article is structured as follows. A background is given on neoliberalism and on entrepreneurial education. The thesis that entrepreneurial education triggers more neoliberalism in education is then articulated and exemplified from critical theory based literature. This is followed by generation of an antithesis representing the exact opposite; that entrepreneurial education triggers less neoliberalism in education. Then a synthesis (or sublation in Hegelian terms) is attempted, serving to integrate the two opposing positions into a unity that could help teachers manage the relationship between entrepreneurial education and neoliberalism in a more constructive way. Finally some implications are summarized.

2 Background on neoliberalism and entrepreneurial education

2.1 Neoliberalism

The key idea of neoliberalism is to let governments pass legislation that lets individuals, groups and organizations self-organize and freely determine the best way forward for themselves, and at the same time by power of micro level market-like optimizations through such free choice maximize the total well-being in society (Rose, 1998). Castree (2010) has outlined seven principal characteristics of neoliberalism; privatization, marketization, state deregulation, market-friendly regulation, use of market proxies in

government sectors, encouragement of NGOs to assume social responsibility and the creation of self-sufficient individuals. At its best, neoliberalism combines freedom of choice for the individual with optimal use of expertise to result in a higher level of wealth, health, well-being and efficiency in society than other policies could offer (Robinson, 2010; Rose, 1998). At its worst, it leads to governments handing over the power of nations to profit-maximizing multinational corporations, leading to commercial values overruling human needs, neglect of the common good and indoctrination of anti-democratic values (Down, 2009; Giroux, 2005). Being a pejorative term itself, neoliberalism has been stated to be the root of a multitude of evils in society, such as plundering of society for profit, looting of public lands, facilitating pollution of the environment, turning schools into shopping malls and reducing education to mere preparation for standardized tests (Giroux, 2005).

Neoliberalism is often associated with an emphasis on enterprising individuals taking autonomous responsibility for their life, exercising their freedom to choose whichever path in life that optimizes their own happiness and self-esteem (Rose, 1998). The social domain is rephrased as an economic domain where economic individuals ('homo oeconomicus') make constant cost-benefit calculations (Lemke, 2001) and rely on a plethora of 'technologies of the self' (Foucault, 1988, p.18), i.e. therapeutic systems that help people attain increased happiness, wisdom or perfection. What constitutes happiness is further defined by self-help experts articulating appropriate life-styles for citizens, leading to a hedonistic and individualistic 'cult of the self' (Rose, 1998). While compelling to many lay people, the resulting flip side of neoliberalism is that when the state withdraws from taking care of its population, each citizen needs to assume responsibility for the consequences of her choices and non-choices. This includes success but also potential failure and inequality, leading to a 'no excuses' culture of blaming unsuccessful citizens for their own failure (Petersen and O'Flynn, 2007). This has been labeled the 'price-tag' of neoliberalism (Lemke, 2001).

The education sector has been widely impacted by neoliberal ideology. Neoliberal policy initiatives have been launched in many countries, aiming at governing schools and universities through market-like mechanisms based on free choice, league tables, inspections and high-stakes testing (Ball, 2013). This has in many cases forced teachers to focus on what is easily measured and valued by the various measurement systems in place (Ball, 2003; Jeffrey and Woods, 1998; Hursh, 2007). Empirical research has indicated that such policy pressure triggers a narrowing of the curriculum and a culture of teaching to the test (Cuban, 2007).

2.2 *Entrepreneurial education*

There are two main approaches to infusing entrepreneurship into education; entrepreneurship education and enterprise education. Entrepreneurship education is often defined as education that aims to develop competencies necessary to set up a new business venture (QAA, 2012). This aligns with a definition of entrepreneurship as being about creating new independent or corporate ventures (Gartner, 1989; 1990). Enterprise education is often defined as education aiming to develop competencies necessary to generate and realize ideas (QAA, 2012). This aligns with a definition of entrepreneurship as being about discovery and exploitation of new opportunities (Shane, 2003). Entrepreneurship education is thus based on a narrow definition of entrepreneurship viewed as starting a company and becoming an entrepreneur (or intrapreneur), and enterprise education is based on a wider definition of entrepreneurship viewed as being a creative, proactive, self-reliant and opportunity oriented person in general (Mahieu, 2006; Heinonen, 2007; Matlay, 2005).

In order to avoid the conceptual confusion that two such different approaches could result in, the term '*entrepreneurial education*' has been proposed as a unifying term for entrepreneurship education and enterprise education (Erkkilä, 2000; Kyrö, 2006). In order to streamline language, this unifying term will be used throughout the article instead of the more common but arguably also more confusing term

‘enterprise and entrepreneurship education’. In an attempt to define what is inherently ‘entrepreneurial’ in entrepreneurial education, a unifying corresponding definition of entrepreneurship has recently been proposed (Lackéus et al., 2016), viewing entrepreneurship as new value creation (Bruyat and Julien, 2001). The new value could be created either through starting a new independent or corporate venture (cf. entrepreneurship education), through acting on ideas and opportunities to create new value for others (cf. enterprise education), or through a combination.

Entrepreneurial education has been positioned as the answer to a multitude of societal challenges, such as the need to create economic growth (Kuratko, 2005), develop key competencies (Hytti and O’Gorman, 2004), increase student engagement in schools (Moberg, 2014) and increase citizens’ ability to address societal challenges (Volkman et al., 2009; Rae, 2010). On an individual level, entrepreneurial education has been stated to allow for fostering self-reliant and opportunity-seeking individuals with an enterprising attitude to work and life (Mwasalwiba, 2010). This aligns well with what is needed and asked for in a neoliberal society, as observed in Finland (Komulainen et al., 2011), Sweden (Leffler, 2009), UK (Deuchar, 2007; Erkkilä, 2000) and Australia (Down, 2009).

Entrepreneurial education is a challenging and marginal endeavor when it comes to practice (Eurydice, 2016; Pittaway and Edwards, 2012). Most initiatives are elective and separated from the core curriculum. Common challenges to wider adoption are lack of definitional clarity, impeding organizational structures, lack of resources, assessment difficulties and fear of capitalism (Johannisson, 2010; Surlemont, 2007; Fayolle, 2013; Mwasalwiba, 2010). This article primarily addresses the challenge around teachers’ fear of capitalism.

3 Thesis: Entrepreneurial education triggers more neoliberalism in education

The thesis that entrepreneurial education triggers more neoliberalism in education was formed through a careful review of literature, outlined primarily in sections 1, 2.2, 3.1 and 3.2 of this article. When policymakers ask schools and universities to infuse entrepreneurship into education, it reinforces capitalist values and activates the price-tag of neoliberalism. This then leads to increased gender, race and class inequality in society, a neglect of democratic and civic values and a unjust blame of poor and weak citizens for their misfortunes.

3.1 Literature articulating the thesis

Komulainen et al. (2011) have pictured the policy pressure for entrepreneurial education as an attempt to restructure the educational system in line with neoliberal values. Based on empirical data illustrating how secondary teacher perceive entrepreneurs as self-reliant and risk-taking male heroes, they picture emphasis on entrepreneurial education as a means to preserve and strengthen outdated but widespread views on what entrepreneurship is. Thus, when policy-makers ask of teachers to develop students’ entrepreneurial competencies, they at the same time spur a reproduction of the male hero myth of entrepreneurship (cf. Ogbor, 2000; Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson, 2007), leading to increased gender, class and race inequality.

Related to this, Berglund (2013) claims the enterprising self to be at the core of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial education. She outlines this particular ideal of an individual as someone seeking to maximize own power, happiness and quality of life. Berglund uses the UK mobilization towards enterprise education and other European examples to illustrate a trend towards educating rational choice focused individuals optimizing their own employability, flexibility and self-responsibility, and states that this is well in line with the problematic goals and consequences of neoliberalism.

3.2 Empirical examples illustrating the thesis

To illustrate that the thesis can be widely confirmed by empirical evidence, examples from three different levels of education are given here. On university level much emphasis in entrepreneurial education is on business plan competitions and on the wealth creation capability of entrepreneurs (Hytti and O’Gorman, 2004; Neck et al., 2014). A common format is guest speakers sharing their entrepreneurial war stories to students in an attempt to inspire them. This is particularly evident in the IT industry with powerful and wealthy male entrepreneurial heroes such as Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. This has fueled a hero myth of entrepreneurship (Ogbor, 2000) and implicitly anchored university-based entrepreneurial education in self-enriching and at times irresponsible optimization for oneself (Rae, 2010). Recent research also indicates that business plan competitions in entrepreneurial education can reproduce social inequality by discouraging students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Heilbrunn and Almor, 2014; Brentnall et al., 2016).

On secondary education level a widespread entrepreneurial education activity is Young Enterprise, which lets students establish mini-companies (Dwerryhouse, 2001). Some desired outcomes are employability, higher salaries and increased rate of alumni starting a business later in life (Chatzichristou et al., 2015; Elert et al., 2014). The goal is to create self-reliant individuals through a focus on business ideas and an emphasis on making money for the own mini-company. This links the Young Enterprise approach to neoliberal values and an emphasis on optimizing the self, and has shown to suppress civic understanding and democratic values among students in a recent study in Sweden (Lindster Norberg et al., 2015). Another illustrative example of neoliberalism at work in secondary education has been provided by Petersen and O’Flynn (2007), outlining the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme that gives students awards based on their achievements related to volunteering, expeditions, skills development and physical recreation. While the award scheme is designed to promote youth community service, it is instead perceived by the students as a path to enhancing one’s own productivity, self-reliance, independence and employability. This indeed helps some students to grow, but at the same time also leaves others in feelings of guilt and self-dissatisfaction.

On primary education the applied ‘technologies of the self’ are more differentiated, but the aim is similar in terms of producing enterprising, resourceful and active students (Bragg, 2007). A common approach is to raise students’ awareness of markets and small businesses through simple simulations (Erkkilä, 2000). Young Enterprise has aspired to play a role also in primary education, and offers teaching materials that lets primary school students from the age of 8 play with fake money, learn about banks, taxes and enterprises and set up mini-companies (Young, 2014; Wennberg and Elert, 2012).

To summarize, there is an emerging body of scholarly work that empirically studies and discusses the thesis articulated here, evidencing and analyzing the potentially problematic link between entrepreneurial education and neoliberalism.

4 Developing a logical and determinate antithesis to the thesis

It is linguistically easy to articulate an antithesis to the above thesis by simply substituting ‘more’ with ‘less’. The meaning of such an antithesis is however more difficult to make sense of. If Hegel’s dialectic method is to arrive at a scientifically relevant result, it is important that the antithesis is logically deducible (Maybee, 2016). The antithesis cannot be picked arbitrarily, but instead needs to represent the logical and determinate negation of the thesis. For this reason it is necessary here to make an in-depth exploration of what it signifies for entrepreneurial education to trigger less neoliberalism. While potentially viewed as a detour, such an exploration is according to Hegel (1807/1977) what renders the final synthesis scientific.

The development of the antithesis will here be conducted through a stepwise literature supported logical analysis, summarized in Table 1. The starting point opted for here is a fundamental assumption underpinning neoliberalism, namely that of ‘homo oeconomicus’ (Lemke, 2001, p.200). This is the concept of a rational and self-interested ‘economic man’ constantly opting for those alternatives that optimize own happiness in life (Rose, 1998). Based on this, a dialectical step is first taken by drawing on particularly dialectical well-being literature that contrasts self-oriented happiness with others-oriented meaningfulness. This dialectic is then substantiated by three different strands of related literature; more general well-being theory, motivation theory and logotherapy theory. Two final steps drawing on entrepreneurship then lead up to a logical and determinate ending point; contrasting the neoliberalism grounded view of students-as-takers with its antithesis consisting of a view of students-as-givers.

4.1 A dialectical step from self-oriented happiness to others-oriented meaningfulness

The neoliberal starting point of economic man optimizing happiness for himself will here be used as a starting point to develop an antithesis to the neoliberal version of what makes life worth living. Scholarly attempts to increase our understanding of what constitutes a good life is usually labeled well-being research or positive psychology. Well-being research has potential to impact a wide array of dimensions in society, since many change efforts in society are aimed at improving the daily life of people and can gain clarity by having a clear view of what is aimed for (Ryan and Deci, 2001). A common construct used is ‘quality of life’, stated to consist of objective human needs and subjective well-being (Costanza et al., 2007). Some basic objective human needs are food, water, rest, shelter, reproduction, security, affection and freedom. Subjective well-being has been defined by Seligman (2012) as consisting of five measurable elements; positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and achievement.

Two recent articles in the scholarly field of well-being have employed a dialectic method to explore an antithesis to self-oriented happiness; that of others-oriented meaningfulness. Baumeister et al. (2013) empirically linked happiness to being a taker by selfishly focusing on satisfying one’s own natural needs and wants here and now, whereas meaningfulness was linked to being a giver by culturally expressing one’s identity through involvement in difficult undertakings in order to make significant contributions to society. Metz (2009) showed how happiness and meaningfulness are indeed two distinct constructs by exploring how it is possible to lead a happy but meaningless life, as well as an unhappy but meaningful life. Whereas happiness is about pleasant experiences for oneself through means of our five senses, meaningfulness is about the creative actions we take and the benefits they generate for others (Frankl, 1985; Feldman and Snyder, 2005; Metz, 2009). A classic example is the parenthood paradox (Baumeister, 1991), where a decrease in perceived happiness among parents due to stress and increased burden is accompanied by an increase in perceived meaningfulness due to a greater purpose in life (Rizzo et al., 2013). In order to truly pursue meaningfulness with others, people often need to sacrifice happiness for themselves, at least to some extent short-term but perhaps also significantly long-term (Wong, 2014). Some claim that humans’ inclination to opt for such a meaning-seeking sacrifice, exemplified by people such as Mahatma Gandhi, Raoul Wallenberg, Mother Teresa and others (Batson et al., 2008), is what ultimately makes us human (Frankl, 1985; Baumeister et al., 2013).

The above articulated differences between self-oriented happiness and others-oriented meaningfulness are shown in Table 1 as a first analytical step in the dialectic method employed here. Neoliberalism is linked to self-oriented happiness through its emphasis on the egoistic ‘homo oeconomicus’. A logical antithesis to neoliberalism according to well-being literature is then to lead an others-oriented life through altruistic acts of creativity, triggering high levels of meaningfulness by making an impact on others.

Table 1. A starting point, six intermediary steps and an ending point resulting from a Hegelian dialectic analysis of entrepreneurial education

Starting point	A dialectical step	Three substantiating steps	Two steps in entrepreneurship	Ending point			
Neoliberalism based on the rational and self-interested economic man (homo oeconomicus) ¹	Dialectical well-being literature	Well-being theory	Motivation theory	Logotherapy theory	Entrepreneurial education	Entrepreneurial education	Students-as-takers
	Experiences for the five senses ²	Positive emotion ⁵	Psychoanalytic couch based hedonistic self-focus ⁶	Will to pleasure ⁷	Money making challenges ¹⁰	Money making challenges ¹⁰	Students-as-takers
	Self-oriented happiness ³	Achievement ⁵	Expectancy-value theories of goal prediction / control ⁶	Will to power ⁷	Business competitions ¹¹	Business competitions ¹¹	Students-as-takers
	Acts of creativity ²	Engagement / flow ⁵	Conscious focus on future-oriented functional action ⁶		Co-create in a team ⁹	Create artifacts that oneself and others enjoy ¹²	Students-as-givers
	Making an impact on others ⁴	Relationships ⁵	Coordinated and interdependent teamwork ⁶	Will to meaning ⁷	Make a difference to the world ⁸	Act on a social problem ¹³	Students-as-givers
	Others-oriented meaningfulness ³	Meaningfulness ⁵	Mental / social processes of coherent understanding ⁶		Entrepreneurship as meaningful activity ⁸	Create new value for others ¹⁴	Students-as-givers

1: Lemke (2001), 2: Feldman and Snyder (2005), 3: Baumeister et al. (2012), 4: Metz (2009), 5: Seligman (2012), 6: Fiske (2008), 7: Frankl (1985), 8: Morris et al. (2012), 9: Tiessen (1997), 10: Young (2014) 11: Neck et al. (2014) 12: Dweerryhouse (2001) 13: Rodriguez-Falcon and Yoxall (2010) 14: Laekéus et al. (2016)

4.2 *Three substantiating steps: Well-being theory, motivation theory and logotherapy theory*

In order to add substance to the two logical opposites outlined above, three more areas of theory are briefly discussed below and added to Table 1. The purpose of such a substantiation is to facilitate subsequent steps in the logical analysis by adding more perspectives on what it means to focus on self-oriented happiness and on others-oriented meaningfulness.

Seligman's (2012) definition of subjective well-being has more detail to offer for the analysis conducted here. Positive emotion is interpreted as a mood induced by a pleasant life. Engagement is interpreted as being in 'flow', being completely absorbed by a task and losing track of time. Relationships is interpreted as meaningful experiences shared with other people, often in close and long-term relationships. Meaning is interpreted as belonging to and serving something that is bigger than the self, often despite negative impact on the four other elements. Achievement is interpreted as achieving one's goals solely for their own sake, isolated from any eventual resulting impact on the four other elements, i.e. winning just for the sake of winning. Two of these elements can be viewed as primarily self-oriented; positive emotion and achievement. Two elements can further be viewed as more or less others-oriented; relationships and meaningfulness. The remaining element of engagement can arguably take either side of the dialectic developed here, depending on which kind of activity one is engaged in. These five elements thus add depth to the analysis of what it means to behave self-oriented and others-oriented, see Table 1.

Another scholarly field that has explored motives for people's behavior is motivation research. According to Fiske (2008), motives differ depending on whether we study patients on the psychoanalytic couch, examine our own consciousness, watch students in the classroom, use the computer as a metaphor for cognitive understanding or study group members in a collective. On the psychoanalytic couch people appear hedonistically self-focused on maximizing pleasure and avoiding pain. When studying people's conscious experiences they appear optimistic, future-oriented, trust-based and focused on functional potential to get things done. In the classroom the clear-cut incentives in a constructed learning environment make for behavioristic motives based on students' expectance to achieve a goal and the perceived value for themselves if successfully achieved. When using the computer as a metaphor for researching human cognition, focus has been on how people process information in order to reach a coherent understanding. When studying groups the motives for belonging to a collective seem endless, ranging from surviving, reproducing and conforming to collectively acting, understanding and sympathizing. Two of the five main foci in motivation research are relatively easy to categorize as self-oriented; patients on the psychoanalytic couch and students in the classroom. The remaining three could be either self- or others-oriented, depending on which kind of activity one is engaged in. They all arguably add depth to the analysis conducted here, see Table 1.

Given the strong emphasis on meaningfulness in the others-oriented aspects outlined so far in Table 1, it is relevant here to also include Frankl's (1985) logotherapy theory developed from his Holocaust experience in three different Nazi concentration camps from 1942 to 1945. Frankl emphasized the centrality of humans' strive for meaning, stating that it is the primary driving force of humans. He contrasted it to Freud's will to pleasure and Nietzsche's will to power (Frankl, 1985, p.99), warning against the potentially detrimental impact on people's well-being of striving solely for power or pleasure in life. These three aspects of Frankl's logotherapy theory are added to Table 1 as a further substantiation.

4.3 *Two steps in entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial education*

Relating the above facets of human motives to the field of entrepreneurship, Morris et al. (2012) have summarized some key motives for people to engage in entrepreneurship, see Table 1. They include survival, income generation, wealth build-up, independence, achieving a dream, improving a community and

changing the world. An important source of motivation during the entrepreneurial process is stated to be the experience of being in flow, sensing meaningfulness and enjoying peak performance. Some entrepreneurs engage for reasons connected to neoliberalism, such as wealth creation, but such reasons are often not the main entrepreneurial motive. Morris et al. (2012, p.208) further state that research on entrepreneurship as a way to reach meaningfulness and a higher purpose in life represents 'a departure from the traditional emphasis on entrepreneurship as a vehicle for wealth generation, job creation, economic development, and innovation'.

Entrepreneurial education has seen a strong focus on teaching wealth creation skills on all levels of education. It has been done in the form of business plan writing, mini-company creation, competitions and money making challenges (Young, 2014; Neck et al., 2014). Less common but far from unseen is entrepreneurial education where students learn by creating real-life artifacts for others to enjoy (Dwerryhouse, 2001), by acting on social problems (Rodriguez-Falcon and Yoxall, 2010) and by creating value for others in general (Lackéus et al., 2016). These different approaches are added to Table 1.

4.4 Ending point: students-as-takers versus students-as-givers

Careful analysis of a wide literature base has resulted in the articulation of a logical and determinate opposite to the neoliberal self-oriented economic man searching for own pleasure, power, freedom and wealth. Table 1 shows that this opposite position is defined by an others-oriented creative and engaged team player striving for meaning in life by trying to make a difference to the world. Relating this to education, these two logical opposites are here termed 'students-as-takers' and 'students-as-givers' respectively. Neoliberal policy is thus enacted in education through an emphasis on students-as-takers. The opposite would then be to emphasize students-as-givers. This ending point now makes it possible to articulate an antithesis.

5 Antithesis: Entrepreneurial education triggers less neoliberalism in education

The antithesis logically deduced here implies that when policymakers take decisions that require schools and universities to infuse entrepreneurship into education firmly based on a students-as-givers perspective, defined as others-oriented creative team players striving for meaning and impact, this can suppress an emphasis on capitalist values and counter the price-tag of neoliberalism. This in turn can lead to decreased gender, race and class inequality in society and a stronger emphasis on democratic and civic values. While certainly not being the most common perspective to entrepreneurial education in current practice, there are examples to be found in literature exemplifying this antithesis. Examples will be given from three different settings, illustrating that the antithesis is widely represented on all levels of education in many different forms. These examples also represent a Popperian falsification of the thesis analyzed here (cf. Flyvbjerg, 2006), showing that there are indeed empirical examples where entrepreneurial education clearly does not trigger more neoliberalism in education.

5.1 Empirical examples illustrating the antithesis

At University of Sheffield in UK, an enterprise education module was in 2007 refocused from a students-as-takers to a students-as-givers focus (Rodriguez-Falcon and Yoxall, 2010). Instead of the usual assignment to write a business plan based on university research, engineering students were in 2007 asked to learn by making life easier for the 7-year-old boy Kieran who suffered from severe cerebral palsy. Students met Kieron and his family, and were asked to come up with technical solutions that could alleviate their everyday challenges. This triggered huge emotional commitment in the entire class, and led to significant increases in student learning, satisfaction and employability compared to the previously applied students-as-takers approach. In the years that followed, a number of different assignments based on a

student-as-giver perspective were developed, all leading to similarly strong impact on student engagement and learning. The module was also broadly featured in regional and national media.

On secondary education level Surlemont (2007) outlines some illustrative examples of entrepreneurial education taking a student-as-giver perspective. Older students gave a course to younger students on waste problems in society, applying novel pedagogical approaches that impressed their teachers. They displayed high levels of creativity, engagement and motivation, invested heavily in the process and acquired a higher level of subject matter knowledge than a control group of students. Noteworthy here is the complete absence of business ideas and wealth creation issues. Instead focus was on students helping other students to achieve new insights, resulting in high perceived meaningfulness and high levels of student engagement and learning.

In a study of Scottish primary school teachers applying entrepreneurial education for a period of three years, Deuchar (2007) explored the use of self-oriented versus others-oriented discourses around motives for entrepreneurial education. He concluded that teachers' reflections around the purpose of entrepreneurial education represented both perspectives. Some reflected around the need to equip students with skills to market themselves. Others reflected around the potential to instill civic values and work in teams towards a common goal. Many expressed a dual goal of entrepreneurial education as covering both individual rights and collective responsibilities, aiming at uniting conflicting values such as ambition versus compassion and determination versus respect. Teachers stated that some students were in need to learn more about taking collective responsibility, whereas other students were perhaps a bit too self-denying.

6 Synthesis: A students-as-givers focus as a way out of a quandary

The analysis conducted here shows that entrepreneurial education can indeed be interpreted as policy pressure making students more self-oriented by instilling a strive for own pleasure, power, freedom and wealth. Money-making challenges and business competitions can help many students learn how to optimize their future prospects by becoming more proactive, action-oriented and self-opportunistic. But the likely disadvantage of a policy pressure of this kind is that it activates the neoliberal price-tag. Critics have thus identified a major and discomfoting limitation of entrepreneurial education when it is based on a students-as-takers perspective. The field of entrepreneurial education could thereby here be deemed 'guilty as charged'. Considering the current popular image of self-made heroic entrepreneurs (Ogbor, 2000), it is not surprising that entrepreneurial education and neoliberalism have ended up being so tightly linked to each other. A neoliberal focus of entrepreneurial education is also readily available in national and international policy documents (see for example European Commission, 2012; Volkmann et al., 2009).

This article contributes by unveiling a novel way out of this quandary for the field of entrepreneurial education. By putting emphasis on students-as-givers, entrepreneurial education could reap similar or even stronger benefits for student learning and engagement while at the same time avoiding and also countering the neoliberal price-tag of inequality, anti-democracy and blaming of the poor for their misfortunes. Three examples from practice illustrate the possibility and also the desirability of such a revised focus of entrepreneurial education. Letting students use their knowledge and skills to be creative with others releases high levels of perceived meaningfulness, engagement, motivation and deep learning. Fundamentally it is about learning through an entrepreneurial process of creating something of value to others (cf. Lackeus et al., 2016). The high engagement levels among students-as-givers are not caused by the traditional achievement-based will to pleasure or power, but are instead triggered by meaningful activities that make a difference to others. Allowing students to become fully engaged and take part in an action-based team effort to help people outside their own class or school could rather be viewed as the logical opposite to neoliberalism.

6.1 *Does entrepreneurial education lead to more or less neoliberalism in education?*

The question of whether entrepreneurial education leads to more or less neoliberalism in education can now be modified. The question is rather which kind of entrepreneurial education that leads to even more neoliberalism in education, and which kind of entrepreneurial education that can mitigate an already strong focus on neoliberalism in education today. It has been argued that education systems around the world are already deeply impacted by neoliberal policy (Apple, 2001; Ball, 2013). Students are encouraged to strive for personal achievement in accordance with a construed set of rules representing a well-established gamification of education. The current educational system of artificial achievements for oneself is arguably well aligned with neoliberalism and with a will to power and pleasure, see Table 1. While it is easy to measure artificial achievements in a seemingly equal way, the long-term implications are increased inequality in society due to certain student groups being more disposed than others to flourish in an achievement-oriented power and pleasure based culture (Boekaerts, 2010). What is less evident in today's educational landscape is Frankl's (1985) will to meaning.

Entrepreneurial education with a students-as-givers focus can here be seen as an equalizer in two levels; first for students struggling with today's neoliberal achievement culture now instead getting a chance to learn in a different way, secondly for the receiver of value who can be selected based on equalizing impact. Teachers could ask students to learn by helping people not being served by today's neoliberal marketized society. A student-as-giver focus of entrepreneurial education is thus rather an antidote to a society immersed by capitalist and neoliberal values, and could arguably relieve the current situation where many teachers are suspicious towards entrepreneurial education due to its implicit capitalist connotations (Johannisson, 2010; Berglund and Holmgren, 2013). Entrepreneurial education could instead be perceived as a way to infuse humanistic values into an education system plagued by the impact of neoliberal values (cf. Robinson, 2010). This however requires fighting the currently prevailing hero myth of entrepreneurship, replacing it with a view of entrepreneurship as meaningful and creative acts for the benefit of others. The need to emphasize such a view of entrepreneurship represents a key implication of this study for teachers, for managers of educational institutions and for policymakers.

6.2 *Disentangling doing well from doing good*

A limitation with the argumentation developed above is that it is difficult to separate happiness from meaningfulness, or in entrepreneurial terms, to separate doing well by making money for oneself from doing good for others. It has been argued that social entrepreneurship requires a focus both on creating societal value for others and making money in order to be sustainable (Tracey and Phillips, 2007). Baumeister et al. (2013) also acknowledge that there is an overlap between the two constructs happiness and meaningfulness. Nevertheless, the focus here has been on the dialectic opposites of making money versus helping others and the implications of such opposites for entrepreneurial education. Also, most students do not have to make money while they learn, since they largely rely on parents or the state for their objective human needs such as food and shelter while they get educated. This means that money and organization creation does not have to be involved when working with entrepreneurial education. This opens up for new forms of 'educational entrepreneurship' more tailored to the needs and contexts of educational settings where learning outcomes are more important than the value created, and where value could be created in a one-off manner not requiring entrepreneurial processes to be economically viable. If student-as-giver forms of entrepreneurial education are allowed to thrive in a future educational system, life as a student could even be a deeply meaningful and purposeful time in life, and a time when young people get full support in their search for meaning in life.

Another way to resolve the conflict between self-oriented and others-oriented kinds of entrepreneurial education is to see it as two sides of the same coin, i.e. as a Hegelian unity of opposites. This represents sublation in Hegel's terms, where two extreme opposites interact in complex ways to create something

greater than would have been possible with only one extreme (Palm, 2009). According to this interpretation, what is needed is perhaps a better balance between self-oriented and others-oriented entrepreneurial education, instead of substituting a self-oriented kind with an others-oriented kind. Focusing on others' needs does not need to preclude money, venture creation, resource acquisition or even profit. It is perhaps rather a choice for the teacher of where to put the emphasis. If the self-benefit is fully taken out of entrepreneurial education, new kinds of problems might surface instead. More research is arguably needed that explores the complex interplay between the two kinds of entrepreneurial education articulated here.

7 Conclusions

This article set out to contribute with a deepened understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurial education and neoliberalism. One kind of entrepreneurial education was found to be in line with neoliberal values, and was defined as a 'students-as-takers' focus, inculcating competencies that improve students' future happiness, power, freedom and salary, albeit with side effects such as increased inequality and weakened democracy. Another kind of entrepreneurial education was found to be in line with collectivist values and was termed a 'students-as-givers' focus, allowing for a competence-building search for meaningful acts of creation for the benefit of others. This kind was analytically developed from well-being, motivation and entrepreneurship literature by employing a Hegelian dialectic method. Empirical examples of the two opposing kinds of entrepreneurial education were given from primary, secondary and tertiary education levels, illustrating how very differently entrepreneurial education can be designed in order to result in more, or indeed less, focus on neoliberal values in education.

The analysis has shown that entrepreneurial education can be perceived as a close companion to neoliberalism if it is designed in line with the stereotypic image of entrepreneurs as self-made lone male heroes building wealth for themselves by winning in fierce competition for scarce resources. The current educational climate of 'achieve now, become happy later' is reinforced by such a kind of entrepreneurial education. The analysis has also shown that a do-good kind of entrepreneurial education can be perceived as an antidote to the currently strong neoliberal values in education. By giving students assignments to learn by using their knowledge to do good for people outside the classroom, teachers can enjoy highly engaged and creative 'students-as-givers' that acquire both entrepreneurial competencies and declarative knowledge more in-depth than they would in a 'student-as-taker' culture.

The widespread but problematic ideal of the neoliberal homo oeconomicus emphasizing the 'choices we make' for ourselves could thus be countered by entrepreneurial education allowing students to learn from the 'actions we take' for the benefit of others. Articulating such a difference could be important for advancing the field of entrepreneurial education. While it is challenging both in theory and practice to disentangle doing well from doing good, a stronger emphasis on others-oriented students-as-givers based entrepreneurial education could constitute a key to the hearts of skeptical school and university teachers and their students. It could also represent a way to make entrepreneurial education relevant to a wider audience than today, since a students-as-givers kind of entrepreneurial education could reach more teachers and students, and also result in a stronger impact on student learning and engagement. It could also represent a more viable way to responsabilize citizens than the neoliberal way of encouraging them to selfishly mind their own business.

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