1. Introduction: in the beginning was societal entrepreneurship

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SETTING THE STAGE

We imagine that human beings in historical times were enterprising, climbing the ladder of evolution, inventing ‘tools’ (such as language or the ability to make fire), creating new ways to organize and working out new means to improve living conditions for themselves as well as for society at large. Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneuring we thus view as being as old as human beings’ existence on earth, constituting practices that in many different ways have contributed to what is perceived today as progress. During the industrial era entrepreneurship as progress was associated with growth and material wealth-making. In present times enterprising people who are able to recreate societal structures that enforce sustainable development, environmentally, socially, ethically as well as financially, are much sought after.

Entrepreneurship as a societal phenomenon also has a long history, albeit often forgotten in the academic context. As early as the original 1911/12 German version of *Theory of Economic Development* (1934) Schumpeter put economic activity in a societal context, although the chapter that brought it up was ‘lost in translation’ in the English version. In modern times social issues were re-discovered when the aftermath of the oil crisis in the 1970s challenged the industrialized world. In Sweden the notion of ‘societal’ entrepreneurs was introduced to depict all the enthusiasts who took charge of organizing the needed local recovery processes in peripheral regions. When this research was published in English ‘societal’ was translated into ‘community’ (Johannisson and Nilsson 1989), re-establishing Gemeinschaft values and practices; compare Tönnies (1965). In this vein entrepreneurship scholars have stressed the importance of disconnecting entrepreneurship from the economic sphere (Hjorth 2003; Steyaert and Katz 2004), which has enhanced our ability to view entrepreneurship as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that occurs in society at large (see for example. Bill et al. 2010).
Referring to the writings of Gabriel Tarde, Johansson (2010) points out the importance of imitation in the crafting of new ventures. Chris Steyaert (see for example Steyaert 2004) associates entrepreneurship with prosaic and everyday ‘entrepreneuring’. Johannisson proposes that children in their play reveal human beings as naturally born entrepreneurs and that entrepreneurship is a generically collective activity (Johannisson 2011). These views position entrepreneurship as genuinely associated with human activity, located in societies that adopt Gemeinschaft practices characterized by strong relationships and mutual concern, contrasting the dominating Gesellschaft orientation of market actors who were focused on by Schumpeter. While Gesellschaft principles can be described as directing entrepreneurship in a top-down way, Gemeinschaft principles mobilize entrepreneuring from the bottom up. Understanding entrepreneurship as a mobilizing force is thus vital.

However, we still know little about how the mobilization of everyday societal entrepreneuring is enacted. We need to know more about how the fine-grained details of everyday life form in new patterns and how human beings invent ‘tools’ and organize in new ways to solve problems and create opportunities on the many arenas that contemporary societies offer. This means that we struggle in trying to achieve, understand and appreciate the kind of entrepreneurship that does not only comply with the whims of the market with its rather arbitrary ideological agenda, but changes our understanding of entrepreneurship and its role in creating new and better worlds.

When concern for the societal dimension of entrepreneurship was re-invented by the global academic and non-academic communities in parallel, it was generally addressed as ‘social’ entrepreneurship (see for example Fayolle and Matlay (2010)). In an anthology presenting different understandings of entrepreneurship in (Swedish) society Gawell et al. (2009) stated that just contrasting social and traditional (commercial) entrepreneurship may hide important aspects of entrepreneurship as a societal phenomenon. The images of social and commercial are often juxtaposed, underpinning the notion of their differences, which often results in discussions of ‘either or’, rather than ‘both and’. In the anthology An Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship this more nuanced view of social entrepreneurship is exposed by scholars who from different disciplines seek to voice social entrepreneurship, not only as juxtaposed to traditional entrepreneurship, but also from the perspective of history, sociology and cultural theory (Ziegler 2009). This addresses the struggles to create a sustainable modern society.

Likewise, in this book we take a point of departure in entrepreneurship as a struggle to create a sustainable society. Entrepreneurship is addressed...
in particular as a concern for all sectors in society, as truly ‘societal’; commercial as well as social. This leads to a ‘both and’ perspective that also embraces the non-profit/voluntary (NPVO) sector and pays attention to movements between sectors. Consequently, viewing the field through the glasses of societal entrepreneurship, we wish to contribute with a ‘both and’ language, which includes many further appearances of the entrepreneurial phenomenon. Common to all forms of societal entrepreneurship is that they (1) mobilize initiatives, (2) provide an innovative force, and (3) channel a value creation power (see Gawell et al. 2009). While the notion of an ‘innovative force that channels value creation’ is part of the traditional entrepreneurship discourse, that of mobilizing initiatives is of particular interest to societal entrepreneurship.

At an individual level mobilizing emphasizes how men and women in everyday life become enrolled in entrepreneurial practices without viewing themselves as entrepreneurs in the first place (Holmquist and Sundin 2002; Sundin, 2004; Berglund and Wigren 2011). Berglund and Johansson (2007) further this reasoning by paying attention to dominant entrepreneurship discourses as excluding, reinforcing the image of the entrepreneur as a gender-biased and ethnocentrically determined figure. Drawing upon the ideas of the critical pedagogue Paolo Freire (1970), known for his emancipatory pedagogy, Berglund and Johansson conclude that contemporary entrepreneurship discourse, often considered to maintain agency and support action, works in the opposite direction. The reason is that it excludes the many people who do not relate to themselves as societal entrepreneurs, which prevents entrepreneurship from manifesting itself throughout society. Consequently, critical thinking is required to free us in the Western world context from an oppressive discourse and replace it with a view that acknowledges each and everyone’s enterprising capacity in the contexts they are familiar with. Considering the bottom-up principle of mobilizing, it is of particular interest in relation to marginalized groups, to ideas that do not fit in with growth rhetoric, and to places that are not viewed as entrepreneurial, according to Gesellschaft principles.

The purpose of this anthology is thus to propose, and from different perspectives illuminate, the notion of ‘societal entrepreneurship’ as a concept that emphasizes the need for enterprising people in all sectors and corners of contemporary society. The view embraced is that societal entrepreneurship is a concept that spans from recognizing entrepreneuring in dull and mundane life to capturing global and pioneering movements and clarifying sweeping descriptions of how structures change. Our purpose also includes setting the agenda for entrepreneuring efforts that break with the practices that do not benefit the making of a sustainable society. Our
understanding of societal entrepreneurship signals that the shape it takes is sensitively dependent upon context. This means that the ambition with this book can only be achieved through a close dialogue between emerging themes and an empirical reality, based in Sweden. Simply stated: context matters (see Welter 2011).

Our approach means that we do not have the capacity to provide an exhaustive review of the extant literature on societal entrepreneurship with its varying perspectives on the phenomenon. We rather confine ourselves to a discourse that analytically and empirically clarifies the meaning and implications of the perspective that we propose. This is done by positioning entrepreneurship in societal contexts, penetrating its bright and also its dark sides, as well as discussing how it can be promoted. Accordingly, the upcoming chapters are organized into these themes. In the concluding chapter we return to the notion of positioning, penetrating and promoting with the ambition of weaving together the three different themes with the conceptual and methodological strands that are brought up in this introductory chapter.

Recognizing societal entrepreneurship as a contextual phenomenon, the Swedish setting that accommodates it is here briefly presented. Thereafter, entrepreneurship is further discussed and more specifically put in relation to the three sectors: the for-profit/private, the government/public and the non-profit/voluntary (NPVO) sector. These concepts are needed to position our approach. We then discuss conceptual and methodological implications of approaching societal entrepreneurship, before a more elaborate introduction to the themes of positioning, penetrating and promoting concludes our exposé of societal entrepreneurship.

THE SWEDISH CONTEXT

Societal entrepreneurship is not exclusive to Sweden, but for a number of reasons we believe that Sweden is an especially interesting setting for demonstrating the interplay between context and the forms societal entrepreneurship takes. Sweden itself is a dense national context that is, not only because of its limited population, tightly embedded in an international setting. Sweden is a welfare state that has not been at war for over two centuries. Besides, during the first three quarters of this period it had a very homogenous population that has contributed significantly to the making of a society that has invited all three sectors. Strong popular movements, such as the labour unions, the sports associations, the free churches and the temperance movement have built a pervasive non-profit sector. In some places such as Gnosjö, an industrial district and entrepreneurial
Swedish context, these movements have carried out many public-sector functions (see for example Wigren 2003).

Sweden’s relatively small domestic market has made the country very alert to global influences and open for social experiments, which makes Sweden a perfect testing ground for new ideas in general, and new technologies in particular. Entering Arlanda international airport in Stockholm, a range of famous Swedes on big posters welcome the visitor; from the well-known royal family, and the cultural icons Ingmar Bergman and Greta Garbo, to sports legends like Björn Borg (tennis), Annika Sörenstam (golf) and Ingemar Stenmark (downhill skiing). In the midst of them, a few entrepreneurs are visible. However, the business community is mainly associated with large industries and technological advancement, medical improvement and the support of research progress (the Nobel Prize). From an international viewpoint Sweden is also known for its neutrality as well as its efforts to be part of UN peace-making (Dag Hammarskjöld, Olof Palme and Jan Eliasson, the new UN Deputy Secretary General, to mention a few), and it has a long history with the Social Democratic party ruling the political agenda. This situation was however reversed in 2010 when the Conservative/Liberal alliance was re-elected for another period of four years. At present, the Social Democratic party faces severe internal and external problems and seems to go through some major challenges in remaking its politics for the future.

In the book *Is the Swede a Human Being?* Berggren and Trägårdh (2006) in a novel way capture Swedish culture as the context that embeds us. The ideas of solidarity and equal rights are reinterpreted. These ideas, the authors argue, are not only a leftover from the ruling Social Democratic party but are much more thoroughly grounded in Swedish culture. Understanding the complexity of ‘Swedishness’ and its historical roots, the authors end up with the thought-provoking claim that Swedes want – more than anything – to be left alone. But they also want to leave others alone. Instead of focusing on solidarity and equal rights, the mutual contract between individuals and the state is emphasized. This contract is labelled ‘state individualism’, with an advanced social welfare system guaranteeing each individual’s independence from family, charity and other communities.

Consequently, all twentieth century reforms, except for parental leave insurance, enforce the state individualism principle. High Swedish incomes and company taxes make the social welfare system possible. One reform with implications for (women’s) entrepreneurship is the childcare system. Ahl (2006: 607) maintains that, in comparison to the United States, Sweden offers a childcare system which creates opportunities for both men and women to work – and start companies – without the interruption of
starting a family, whereas in the US the context of combining childcare from a home-based business is seen as an opportunity for women. The point is that the system creates conditions, albeit often invisible and taken for granted, which shape the need, possibilities and potential for how (societal) entrepreneurship can be staged. Reflecting on this example, taxes can be seen as the necessary evil that Swedes need to pay for their coveted independence.

Each person is thus seen to have the power to direct her or his own life, which indicates that a radical form of individualism prevails in Sweden (see also Hofstede’s (1980) positioning of Sweden on his global map of work-related values). However, Swedes have not turned into the stereotypically depicted quiet, cold and independent individuals because they have been subjugated by a dominant state, but because it suits the historically constructed Swedish mentality, grounded in direct relations with power institution (the Kingdom) instead of a feudal structure which was more prominent in continental Europe (Berggren and Trägårdh 2006). The autonomy of the financially strong Swedish municipalities and the highly developed welfare system thus makes individual freedom possible. Yet, over the last few decades it has been threatened by the strong neo-liberal currents that promote a belief in individualism, de-regulation, privatizations and a free market. In our view, this awakens the need of societal entrepreneurship, not only as a research subject but as a movement that has grown important to Swedes. Here we will illustrate how people move in between sectors. The intermediaries in a municipality move in between local politicians, civil servants and small business owners (Chapter 5). The teachers involved in entrepreneurship education move in between educational systems, interacting with consultants who want to be part of changing the school and local organizations that are enthusiastic about the idea of introducing entrepreneurship into (public, private and non-profit) education; see Chapter 9. The social enterprise Macken (Chapter 3) can be seen as a hub in which the ‘movers’ from different sectors meet, working on current issues in the local community, only to move on in due course. These movements also cross national boundaries. The social entrepreneur building up a Fair Trade company moves in between customers well-initiated in the threat of consumerism, national fair-trade organizations and the Indian context; see Chapter 6.

Considering the continuous strong presence of the welfare system, with security being (still) best provided by the impersonal state, ‘social’ is in one sense left outside this equation. As will be illustrated here, however, ‘the social’ manifests itself in new ways among those who find a common interest in a topic or a will to change something, but also to prevent change from occurring. Social relations are thus necessary to ensure freedom.
From one perspective Sweden would do quite well in the process of the Western world where the family institution is severely threatened. Practices grown out of state individualism are more compatible with individualism as personal freedom than in nations where the contract is made between the individual and the family, as in the United States, or between the state and the family, as in Germany (Berggren and Trägårdh 2006). On the other hand, the emerging neo-liberal agenda does not always make cooperation easy. An example is given by Merle et al. (2003) in their study of the entrepreneurial transformation of the Swedish university system. In this case, ‘entrepreneurial’ was influenced by policy, emphasizing knowledge exploitation, pushing learning processes into the background. Their conclusion is that, when one aspect of a thing – in this case knowledge exploitation – is highlighted, the practices of knowledge exploration and creation that precede the desired output were hampered. In this case the role of policy was ambiguous in the sense that it created an entrepreneurial process only to make it limp. The role of entrepreneurship and innovation policy in supporting societal entrepreneurship may thus be ambiguous. Supporting one type of entrepreneurship does not mean supporting the processes that revitalize societal structures, which is discussed in this book in the case of intermediaries working in the public sector (see Chapter 5).

As indicated, Sweden is characterized by a financially very strong local and national public sector. In 2009, 29.5 per cent of the total working population, or 1,317,000 persons, were employed by the public sector, that is, local/regional municipalities and the state. The remaining employment is primarily cared for by the private sector (including independent businesspeople), leaving a minor share to the non-profit/voluntary (NPVO) sector. However, we here ascribe an important intermediating or catalytic function in society to that sector. In a recent report by Statistics Sweden the 2009 scope of and contributions by Swedish civil society, that is the NPVO sector, are reported in detail (Statistics Sweden 2011). The study adopts the United Nations’ International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (ICNPO), which means that only self-governed voluntary, yet formal, organizations with no owners expecting a return are considered. The study states Swedish civil society includes 50,000 economically active organizations with an overall turnover of well over 200 billion SEK (in 2009 the exchange rate for a euro varied between 11.4 and 10.2 SEK). Approximately 61,000 people were employed full time (or the equivalent) and, in addition, almost one million Swedes made contributions as organized volunteers. Swedish civil society consists overall of 25 million memberships in voluntary organizations – the Swedish population being about nine million – and jointly they deliver almost as much labour as their
employees (the equivalent of 53,000 full-time workers). While 6 million Swedes aged 16 or above are members of at least one organization and 3.9 million are union members, only 360,000 are actively involved, and even fewer are politically active. Voluntary work is especially common in the leisure and cultural area, and men are more active than women. The report reveals that the overall financial transfer from the public sector to the NPVO sector in return for its contributions in 2009 amounted to 36 billion SEK, about 45 per cent of which was provided by the state and the rest by the municipalities.

Reviewing changes in the Swedish NPVO sector/civil society at the turn of the millennium, Wijkström’s (2011) point of departure is the increasingly blurred boundaries between the three sectors. The ideology of the private sector as the domicile of managerialism has not only influenced the public sector, through NPM (New Public Management), but the NPVO sector as well. Another re-orientation with further implications for how societal entrepreneurship appears in the Swedish context is that a great many organizations in the NPVO sector have changed from being a voice for different interests and ideas to become involved in hands-on social work. Adopting the terminology suggested by Knutsen and Brower (2010), there is a move from expressive to instrumental accountability among the organizations constituting the sector. See also Segnestam Larsson 2011. There is also a change in the input of work by paid staff and unpaid work by organization members and volunteers. While work by paid staff (in terms of the equivalence of full-time workers) only increased by 10 per cent over the 1992–2002 period, and the unpaid work done by organization members did not change at all, the contributions by volunteers increased by 150 per cent. Wijkström’s conclusion is that not just social enterprises but also the majority of organizations belonging to the NPVO today appear as hybrid constructs.

FEATURING CROSS-SECTORAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

In order to understand the potential of entrepreneurship as a mobilizing social force the interplay between sectors has to be highlighted, as discussed by Sundin and Tillmar (2010) in Handbook of Research of Social Entrepreneurship. Already the notion of ‘community’ suggests that societal entrepreneurship calls for a holistic approach including all aspects of (a miniature) society. Putting the focus on how societies are organized, the activities and the governing of all its three sectors (the private, public
and NPVO ones) have then to be considered. Rather than associating entrepreneurship with an individual, however bold and energetic, with strategic social measures in corporations, with caring public institutions or with contributions by the NPVO sector, we here consider the very bridging between the three sectors as the core of what we address as ‘societal entrepreneurship’. Before presenting the characteristics of these sectors and their different logics and profiles in Swedish society, we need, however briefly, to comment upon how societal entrepreneurship relates to other notions of entrepreneurship, except the commercial aspect.

Modern society is characterized by a division of labour and responsibility between organizations and institutions. The latter contribute order, the ‘rules of the game’, while organizations use the regulated and protected space for structured goal-directed activities. Writings on ‘social entrepreneurship’ or commercial entrepreneurship usually take this division for granted. However, as will be elaborated below, societal entrepreneurship is closely related to institutions as an arena for entrepreneurship. Critically reviewing the notion of ‘institutional entrepreneurship’ Czarniawska (2009) identifies three groups of – individual or collective – institutional entrepreneurs: those who ignore or protest against the existing institutional order, those who institute a new practice hoping it will become institutionalized, and those who establish a formal organization with the intention to make it into an institution in its own right. As regards the first group we elsewhere address them as ‘extreme entrepreneurs’ (Johannisson and Wigren 2006), although we argue that protest does not have to mean that a new institution is established. As for the second group, Sundin and Tillmar (2008) provide examples of public employees in the Swedish context who change institutions by initiating new practices.

In most contemporary societies, in welfare states for certain, public human activities are clustered in three sectors: the for-profit/private, the public, and the non-profit/voluntary (NPVO) sectors (see also Tillmar 2009). The boundaries between the three sectors are continuously being renegotiated, and thus become blurred. Times of turbulence have challenged the public sector and invited a private-sector vocabulary and venturing initiatives. Both these sectors consider the NPVO sector as either a backup or as an arena where new ways to deal with economic or social challenges can be tested, only to be later appropriated by the other sectors, which then contribute with new values and practices.

Societal entrepreneurship as value-creation processes across sector borders implies dealing with several institutional settings which are widely apart in structural respects. In the organization literature, both on management and on institutions, the notion of ‘logic’ is often referred to as a key concept when it comes to featuring operating characteristics. Prahalad...
Societal entrepreneurship, a leading scholar in the (strategy) field, describes business logic as follows:

[the dominant logic of the company is, in essence, the DNA of the organisation. It reflects how managers are socialised. It manifests itself often, in an implicit theory of competition and value creation. It is embedded in standard operating procedures, shaping not only how the members of the organisation act but also how they think. Because it is the source of the company’s past success, it becomes the lens through which managers see all emerging opportunities (italics in original).]

Companies responding to new expectations from the surrounding community are shown in Schwartz’s (2009) study of how firms cope with environmental demands as primarily automorphic. This means that they repeat their earlier successful strategies and imitate their own history rather than imitating others. According to the Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism, institutional logic concerns ‘the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality’ (Thornton and Ocasio 1999: 804; see also Thornton and Ocasio 2008). Obviously, logic both in a business and in an institutional setting relates to sense-making as well as to action, to practice, although not as explicitly as an ideology.

Rather than trying to ‘translate’ either of the proposed logics, or an amalgamated version of them, into comprehensive definitions of different ‘sector logics’ we here bring forward some aspects of such logic that draw upon the organization literature and that we think comes out differently in each sector. The ambition is not to provide a conclusive model of sector logics but rather use the concept of sector logics diagnostically in a way that invites an understanding of the differences and similarities between the three sectors that have implications for the way societal entrepreneurship is enacted. Accordingly, in Table 1.1 an overview of the aspects is provided with brief comments.

The features of the institutional pillars providing each sector with a basic order constitute the point of departure. There are (of course) many different understandings of institutions, but considering our concern for the micro/meso levels, that is societal entrepreneurship as an intra- and inter-organizational phenomenon in a national – Swedish – context, the framework provided by Scott (2008) is appropriate. Accordingly, institutions ‘are comprised of regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life’ (ibid., p. 48). Certainly laws and regu-
Table 1.1  Aspects of sector logics

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relations frame the activities in all three sectors but are obviously especially relevant in the public sector, since all actions there must be formally sanctioned. In the private sector shared norms, for example industry standards, and values, such as codes of conduct, are important in order to reduce transaction costs and build mutually binding expectations between actors. The NPVO sector rests on a pillar that is deeply founded in cognitive structures which in turn are embedded in multiple cultural layers. This signals inertia but also stable and common beliefs and responsibility for society.

In the private sector the time perspective of actors, organizational or individual, is a short-term perspective. Today ideas travel fast and so do resources, not least the financial ones. Taking and keeping the lead in the market is fundamental, whether we have management or traditional images of entrepreneurship in mind. Schumpeter's as well as Kirzner's theorizing were both about exploiting the temporary monopolies that innovativeness and alertness create. The public sector, in contrast, defends long-term perspectives. Only then is it possible to carry out reforms since in the name of democracy they first have to be carefully investigated, then presented and processed in the political system and finally furnished with a competent administration in order to be properly implemented. Organizations in the NPVO sector may apply either a long- or a short-time perspective depending on whether the issue concerned calls for immediate action or for solutions that are sustainable over time. As several cases in this volume will report, what time perspective is practised by NPVO organizations is very much contingent upon what needs are left to care for when the two other sectors have organized what they are able and willing to deal with.
Since the private sector is driven by economic values, financial capital dominates resourcing. Firms that are in their formative years, as well as those which stay entrepreneurial, however, use to a larger extent the other forms of capital to resource their operations (Johannisson 2008). The public sector organizations are of course dependent on (financial) funding of costs, but in that sector the core form of capital, that which makes a difference and quality, is professional knowledge, that is human capital. The NPVO sector stands out with its focus on social capital, both individual and collective (Esser 2008). The former is important to individual social enterprises since the personal and professional networks that constitute the social capital form bridges to further resources. Collective social capital is constituted as an asset of the members in a community, whether we have a nation or a small location in mind.

Studying different interaction rationales Sjöstrand (1992) identifies six ‘institutions’ or interaction rationales. In Sjöstrand’s terminology, the private sector typically practises a calculative rationale, while the other two sectors develop, according to situation and context, a repertoire where two rationales dominate jointly. Public sector agents have thus on one hand to adhere to enacted norms in society in order to represent the citizens, and on the other they have to use the resources allocated so that instrumental efficiency is achieved. This is described as interaction combining a calculative and an ideational rationale. NPVO organizations are also guided by ideals with a deep concern for human values but in their practice, as carried out by individual members, genuine/personal relations strongly influence how they carry out their work, which is characterized by a combination of an ideational and a genuine rationale.

How people contribute to their organization, that is, to its efficiency and effectiveness or, alternatively, leave the organization, is reflected in their commitment to it when challenged. Hirschman (1977, 1982) (see also Stryjan 1987), provides a basic structuring of the construct: exit, voice, loyalty or involvement. The opposite of just leaving the organization (‘exit’) is deep commitment to its mission, which means creative and positive action on one’s own initiative (‘involvement’). Criticism may be negative but may also trigger creative change (‘voice’), while staying passive just preserves the status quo (‘loyalty’). In private sector organizations members either protest or criticize by taking their own action (‘voice’) or leave the organization (‘exit’) and maybe launch a hostile spinoff. In the public sector we expect employees to be loyal to the role of the sector and its contributions to creating welfare in general and their own place of work in particular. In NPVOs, where participation is either based on personal commitment or on associated voluntary engagement, involvement – literally indicating embodied and emotional movement – signifies
identification with the organization and its social cause; see for example Wijkström 2011.

All organizations need to control their members, their behaviour and contributions to the common interest in order to provide proper government. In the organization literature three modes of control – output, process and culture control – are usually recognized (see for example Ouchi 1980). We then expect that private sector organizations will primarily be judged by what they achieve on the market, that is, their output. In the public sector where the quality and instrumentality of single operations are very much dependent on how related activities are run, process control occupies first place. Culture control presumably dominates organizations in the NPVO sector, considering that people join and contribute because they share the value basis and mission of the organization concerned.

Coping with innovation is crucial in all organizational life, and all entrepreneurial contexts in particular. As underlined above, we consider (social) innovation to be a pillar for any kind of societal entrepreneurship. Featuring innovation as an element constituting one of the sector logics, we associate innovation in the private sector as mainly technology-driven. Technology in this context is not just a physical feature but may, as for example in the experience industry, also include social technology, for example managing people’s perceptions of reality. While such innovations in the private sector are often associated with radical change, innovations in the public sector often appear as reforms, as adjustments that are carefully negotiated among many stakeholders In the NPVO sector we consider innovation mainly as organizational ingenuity, finding (new) ways of making people recognize their unique capabilities and making them pattern into concerted action for the creation of social value.

What outlook organizations have is crucial, considering both that we are concerned with societal entrepreneurship and with the Swedish context where (physical) space is important. Here we then associate outlook with the dominant frame of reference, whose extension may vary in physical, social and mental spaces (Hernes 2003). As elaborated elsewhere (Johannisson and Lindholm Dahlstrand 2012), we associate a local outlook with a view where the three spaces coincide in the enacted environment. A global outlook, in contrast, only considers place (physical space) if it is instrumentally rational. This is also the outlook we ascribe to organizations in the private sector. In the public sector, in contrast, a local, here of course also including a regional, even a national, perspective rules. In our view, a unique feature of the NPVO sector is that its organizations and the members that inhabit them are involved in taking local action to do good both locally and globally, whether we have, for example, environmental protection or fair trade in mind.
To summarize and underline: the structuring of the contrasting features of sector logics in Table 1.1 should be looked upon rather as ‘ideal’ types in the Weberian sense than as empirically supported elements of (emerging) theoretical constructs. As such ‘ideal’ features we think that they can on one hand be used as an intellectual sounding board for the empirical accounts provided by the following chapters in this anthology, and on the other hand become substantiated by the illustrations that those reports provide.

CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Initiatives that we identify as societal entrepreneurship are constructed for special purposes and settings. This has theoretical and methodological implications and calls for a contextual approach (see Welter 2011). Here it means that only by considering the historical, temporal, institutional and spatial settings will it be possible to get further insight into the societal entrepreneurship phenomenon. This enlightenment includes how the contexts enable, or obstruct, the initiatives taken by societal entrepreneurs, who often do not even view themselves as entrepreneurs but as activists, dedicated enthusiasts or change-makers (Berglund and Wigren 2011). Recognizing that the understanding of entrepreneurship is dependent on the context also challenges dominating understandings of entrepreneurship and the way they may be studied.

Social sciences in general and inquiry into societal entrepreneurship in particular for a number of reasons invite a broad range of methodologies, or modes of approaching the empirical world. Being embedded in Geertzian webs of meaning rather than based on natural laws social ‘facts’ on one hand remain stable due to institutionalization, and on the other hand, when the web bursts because of accumulated tensions, may become obsolete overnight. On the societal level we experienced in 2011 such turmoil in the Arab world, while on the micro level we experience that coincidences become institutionalized as a fashion (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996). Here we see a bridge between social innovations and entrepreneurship involving both the creation of new worlds and societal entrepreneurship as interactive, organizational efforts with a highly transformative potential. Spinosa et al. (1997) illustrate the general bridge between entrepreneurship and world-making and Gawell (2006) forestalls with her concept ‘activist entrepreneurship’ those processes which, amplified by social media, make social ruptures such as the Arab revolutions possible. Such radical changes do not only unfold themselves
where they are most visible – close to war zones and revolutionary actions. More subtle changes, which may accumulate into social ruptures, also infiltrate into democratic, growth-oriented and individualized welfare societies.

Although chaos and complexity theories help us to make intelligible how microscopic and peripheral incidents may develop into a new institutional order and although contemporary ICTs help us to understand how such processes materialize, their embedding may both hinder and accelerate such changes. They do not just happen because of their ability to instantaneously mobilize attention, but because they rest on a force that has accumulated over a long time and is unleashed by some accidental incidence. The view of the entrepreneur as the most important ingredient in the process may thus be downplayed, favouring an understanding of context, situation, the unexpected, and timing. This implies that serendipity, that is, when somebody finds something that he or she was not expecting to find, and then acts on it, is vital to understanding entrepreneuring. Even if the role of the entrepreneur is downplayed, s/he can never be reduced to somebody insignificant. We now know that Fleming was not the first to discover that penicillin was a good bactericide. It had been known for decades, but nobody had really done anything with this knowledge until Fleming did.

Hence, when new ideas hit a prepared mind – or an emerging organization – mechanisms which are illustrated in the literature on ‘absorptive capacity’ (Cohen and Levinthal 1990) and on ‘serendipity’ (Dew 2009) explain how concerted entrepreneurial action may be triggered. Such non-linear development also characterizes the emergence of social forms of entrepreneurship itself, today apparently on everyone’s tongue and turning into a major perspective on societal change and renewal. This recognition has developed in parallel in the academic and professional/practical communities, presumably because of the increased awareness of the limits to linear economic growth and the need for the building of a sustainable society, sometimes also with a focus on ecological, sustainable or ethical entrepreneurship. Staying within the academic community, social entrepreneurship as a research field has become institutionalized very quickly, especially considering that even entrepreneurship in general has only recently become recognized as an academic field of research. Indicators of such institutionalization are for example discussed in a number of scientific journals, handbooks, publications, conferences, networks and education programmes. Another explanation of the forceful creation of the new special field of entrepreneurship studies is that the widening of traditional entrepreneurship studies have increased the dialogue with other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology and fields
Societal entrepreneurship of research such as development studies. Situating entrepreneurship in the midst of society, and at the core of social sciences, was highlighted by Swedberg (2000) over ten years ago, bringing together several disciplines to give a more holistic view of the entrepreneurship phenomenon.

In spite of its early institutionalization, social/societal entrepreneurship as a research field is still in its formative years. It is then reasonable that it can learn a great deal from the field’s close relatives as regards applied methodologies. The history of empirical entrepreneurship research, apart from a number of important historical inspirations, only goes back to the 1980s. Until the turn of the millennium this research on one hand concerned increasingly ambitious surveys testing or developing formal models, on the other reported ‘anecdotal evidence’. Over the last decade, inspired by European research, the latter qualitative insight has become upgraded as ‘narrative’ research. Learning from the arduous journey of general entrepreneurship studies we see no reason to repeat that detour via quantitative research when designing a research agenda for social/ societal entrepreneurship as a contextually sensitive phenomenon. As will be elaborated upon below, we rather consider narrative, ethnography and more advanced qualitative research as fundamental when inquiring into societal entrepreneurship.

Further biases in previous research into entrepreneurship that we want to avoid include emphasizing spectacular, heroic and dramatic achievements and their structural features. Here we rather argue as a point of departure that everyday collective practices and their emergence in their social/societal setting is the proper basic setting for research into (any kind of) entrepreneurship. This is in line with Steyaert and Hjorth’s (2006) proposition that entrepreneurship is about social change and Steyaert’s (2007) argument that entrepreneuring, that is the verb, rightly presents the phenomenon as processual (see also Johannisson 2011). Accordingly, we argue that entrepreneurship, as a social/societal phenomenon, is especially dependent on qualitative research in general and interactive research in particular. Before elaborating upon this we need however to comment further on the context or embedding of social phenomena such as (societal) entrepreneurship.

Broadening entrepreneurship from an economic to a social phenomenon obviously does not just mean including variables beyond the economic ones in modelling the phenomenon. Identifying ‘contingencies’ or ‘configurations’ (see Miller 1983) will not do justice to what we associate with embedding. It is rather about recognizing entrepreneurship as a practice that in a number of respects is tied and knitted into broader social structures. This position provides the basic argument for staying within
the national context of Sweden and take further contextualization of different empirical studies from there.

Spatial contextualization, especially, may even bring about ‘over-embeddedness’; see for example Grabher (1993). When one is embedded in a context, it is difficult to perceive the relevance of a place in terms of its traditions, location, people and the conditions that come with it. They become blind spots, making it difficult to see its values and how it can be enacted in novel ways. However, societal entrepreneurship is embedded in various contexts, involving processes that move beyond starting up and running a company, often including people who are in unexpected ways invited to co-produce social values. In the sense of constituting a multi-sector phenomenon, societal entrepreneurship thus implies moving between contexts, and it can therefore be seen as an ongoing process from embeddedness through dis-embeddedness to becoming re-embedded. This can be approached from multi-sited ethnography, which implies to empirically follow how cultural processes unfold (for example Marcus 1995); see also Chapter 8 on tracing the entrepreneurial approach in the preschool context.

The cultural phenomenon we are interested in unfolding we label societal entrepreneurship. The multi-sited ethnographic approach thus benefits the study of actors from different spatial contexts, with diverse institutional solutions and constraints, bringing in various historical imprints and the way they enact upon common ideas. This kind of research process requires being within the landscape that changes and calls for tacit knowing, which can be achieved from dwelling for a long time in the context. The motto is then not to study ‘the people’, but to inhabit different contexts, following the unfolding of change, being subsumed by the process itself, and relating to the actors involved as participants in the research process. Through this process the ‘embedded’ knowledge can be contrasted, creatively transformed, and moved from the margins to the centre; being re-valued.

While Welter (2011) stresses the need for qualitative research, especially by case studies, she seems to maintain a strong belief in the direct comparability of different cases. The view bridges over to the Eisenhardt (1989) ambition to generate theory based on comparative case research. We, however, think that the academic community, especially when inquiring into complex phenomena such as social/societal entrepreneurship, has to focus its efforts on identifying the uniqueness of the event. The findings of such a case study can rather be used for associations, or for the drawing of analogies (see Johannisson 2011), as well as for ‘creative imitation’ (see Johansson 2010). ‘Bisociation’ (Koestler 1964) rather stimulates a creative act that uses the different mental maps that researchers draw – because
of their contrasting private and professional/public embedding – to feed radically new interpretations. Among practitioners bisociation is of course broad as well, since we see societal entrepreneuring as an outcome of encounters between representatives from different sectors.

Thus, presenting different cases of societal entrepreneurship within the (same) national/spatial (Swedish) setting where cultural, social and institutional contexts are tightly intertwined makes it possible to disclose different aspects of the phenomenon with greater reflexivity. Ascribing holistic features to the context means that (qualitative) research can only add further understandings, or critically question existing images of societal entrepreneurship. As a social construct the context remains evasive, open for new interpretations and constructions. Accordingly, Richardson (1994) argues that qualitative research should be guided by the principle of ‘crystallization’ rather than triangulation. While the former keeps an open mind for alternative understandings, the latter use of different methods is guided by the belief that such an approach brings us closer to a definitive truth.

Referring to the title of this introductory chapter we also think that it is important to take the societal embedding as a point of departure for searching for new understandings of entrepreneurship. A society’s/nation’s (formal) institutions usually make the most distinct contribution to what is considered to constitute the unique features of a specific society. On the other hand we associate societal entrepreneurship with creative organizing that pays little respect to the boundaries between sectors. Having said this we want to underline that the focus on the three sectors and their formal institutions may restrict the intellectual potentiality of our research venture. Referring to Tönnies’ ideal types of generic organizing, Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft (see the introductory discussion), the former is dependent on formal structures to keep selfishness at bay, while the latter represents a structure based on mutual concerns and ongoing dialogues that do not need a formal structure to become and stay sustainable. Part of our mission is to find out how this works in practice.

While all chapters pay attention to the challenges that societal venturing experience at the interfaces between the different sectors, the methodological tactics used differ according to the various aspects on societal entrepreneurship brought up. Table 1.2 provides an overview. Since these issues vary from distant interpretations of political and institutional statements in discourse analysis to committed participation on the part of the researcher(s) themselves in the entrepreneurial processes, the methodologies adopted vary considerably. What is more, in some chapters – most obviously those by Andersson and Johansson (Chapter 5) and Berglund and Johansson (Chapter 7) the authors bravely combine widely different
Introduction: in the beginning was societal entrepreneurship

empirical accounts to make their case. Studying intermediaries as societal entrepreneurs Andersson and Johansson even have to cross the boundaries between national contexts in order to find the necessary arguments. Studying the curse of associating entrepreneuring with a (male) hero Berglund and Johansson rely both on a close-up interactive study and on published biographical material.

As already pointed out, social accounts are always partially a product of the researchers themselves. As regards research into societal entrepreneurship this is especially obvious, both because of the subject and because of the methods adopted. First, as societal entrepreneurship is about initiating and promoting new innovative ways of creating an economically, socially and ecologically sustainable world, it is a practice that concerns all of us as fellow global citizens. We will return to this in the concluding chapter. Secondly, since research, whether publicly or privately financed, is expected to help in meeting human needs, commitment is especially obvious in research on societal entrepreneurship. Thirdly, such research means getting involved with highly dedicated people providing an emotional context that attracts and seduces us as researchers. Accordingly, we consider all encounters between researchers and actors/interlocutors as taking place in an atmosphere characterized by mutual concern that moves us far beyond that of collecting information. This general embedding in responsibility and responsiveness to the everyday appearances of societal entrepreneurship is important to keep in mind considering that the field reports of several chapters in the book are based on focused dialogues or interviews, occasionally combined with secondary data.

In listening to the field – that of societal entrepreneurship – as well as to Scandinavian traditions in social research several chapters adopt action or interactive research. See for example Chapter 3 on the social enterprise Macken, the study of the fair trade company Oria (Chapter 6), or the longitudinal study on teachers by Holmgren (Chapter 9). While the action is especially concerned with making the research process open and available to those involved, see for example Reason and Bradbury 2001, interactive research is based on the belief that combining explicit/academic knowledge and tacit/personal knowledge creates a road to further insight, see for example Nielsen and Svensson 2006. Some further reasons for the use of interactive approaches in this book are listed below:

1. Considering that our understanding of entrepreneurship is associated with human interaction as reflected in everyday practices, only personal participation in these micro-practices will make it possible to identify where they originated and how they impacted the realization of the event. Some researchers, for example Johannisson (2011), argue
Table 1.2  Modes of inquiry for revealing societal entrepreneurship (SE) as a contextual multi-faceted phenomenon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter/Case</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Mode of inquiry</th>
<th>Revealed organizing features in societal entrepreneuring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positioning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Societal entrepreneurship in 4 municipalities</td>
<td>To empirically explore how sectoral intertwining interplays with societal entrepreneurship</td>
<td>30 interviews in 2 large and 2 small municipalities</td>
<td>Dimensions of sectoral intertwining in time and space contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Macken</td>
<td>Tracking the practices of societal entrepreneuring</td>
<td>In-depth interviewing, observant participation, shadowing, diary dialogue</td>
<td>Social bricolage spontaneously producing societal innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Penetrating</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ALW</td>
<td>Tracking entrepreneurship over time and sector borders</td>
<td>Retrospective studies of archival (secondary) data</td>
<td>The making of societal entrepreneurship into an institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intermediaries – Closer-to-Companies</td>
<td>Exploring societal promotion of small businesses organized as an intermediary</td>
<td>Organizational ethnography (participant observations, interviews, interactive workshops)</td>
<td>Enactment of societal entrepreneurship by means of intermediary activities with both dark and bright sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fair Trade</td>
<td>Featuring entrepreneurship across market and societal contexts</td>
<td>Ethnography, in-depth interviewing, shadowing, mentoring</td>
<td>Fair trading and standardization as contradictory practices in contrasting cultural and institutional (national) contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Moon House</strong></td>
<td><strong>8. Entrepreneurship in pre-schools</strong></td>
<td><strong>9. Implementing entrepreneurship throughout the school system</strong></td>
<td><strong>10. SIP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Enactive research at a scene where societal entrepreneurship unfolds</td>
<td>Tracking how entrepreneurial approach is framed in a context where play is highlighted</td>
<td>Following the translation of entrepreneurship education</td>
<td>Opportunizing social challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography (interviewing, participation, interactive participation, shadowing, mail dialogues)</td>
<td>Ethnography, in-depth interviewing, shadowing, participant observation, text analysis</td>
<td>Policy text analysis and case studies</td>
<td>Unintended enactive research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the dark side of entrepreneuring positions the entrepreneur in particular ways may hinder enterprising of the endeavour to proceed</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial approach in the pre-school context giving a deeper understanding of entrepreneuring</td>
<td>An understanding that the practice of entrepreneuring does not always co-exist with the discursive development</td>
<td>A constantly emerging societal venture offers inspiration, creativity and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that the researcher needs to enact an entrepreneurial process her-/himself in order to get close enough. It is also well known in social research that the critical features of a social system only appear when the system is changing, or forced to change.

2. Keeping the youth of the research field in mind as well as the phenomenon’s sensitivity to context, researchers and the interlocutors have to collaborate closely in a genuine dialoguing order to make sense out of shared experiences.

3. Expanding on the Scandinavian traditions as regards creating meeting places between academics and reflecting practitioners, the funding organization – The Swedish Knowledge Foundation – of the research presented in this book conditioned their financial support by expecting practitioners to be co-financed and actively contributing to the process of creating knowledge about, for and in societal entrepreneurship. This meant that several of the projects reported have evolved in close collaboration between researchers and the societal entrepreneurs concerned.

Some projects/chapters stand out with respect to their adoption of an interactive research approach. Schwartz, in her study of the micro-organizing of fair trade, has accompanied the entrepreneur in her everyday venturing in both the Swedish and the Indian contexts in order to catch the fine-tuned measures that make the dynamics of such a bridging socioeconomic activity (see Chapter 6). Equally, Berglund in her study of the Moon House took part in an entrepreneurial process that was initiated, which subsumed and enabled her to take part in entrepreneuring (Chapter 7). She did not create a ‘scene’ for experiencing entrepreneurship, as illustrated by Johannisson (2011), but took the opportunity to enter an already existing arena, which made her struggle to get disembedded in order to create knowledge about the process. Shadowing and everyday dialogue are not enough; the researcher also has to embody the entrepreneurial activity. Johannisson in his study of a social enterprise for a period embedded his explicit creation of accounts in a daily digital dialogue with the entrepreneur by dwelling in the enterprise itself and hanging around in its spatial and social context, which directly and indirectly supports the enterprise being studied (Chapter 3). Rosell, as one of the writers on the interface between academic and extramural education concerning (social) entrepreneurship, is personally involved as a contributor to further projects organized by the networked social enterprise. These examples pinpoint that the interactive approach implies not only commitment to the project concerned but also to the different contexts that embed it.
PROPOSING THREE THEMES

As stated in the introductory part of this chapter we, in this book, organize our responses to our challenge to make sense out of societal entrepreneurship by organizing the chapters into three themes: positioning, penetrating and promoting. Bringing in a new concept that captures a phenomenon differently means a responsibility to analytically and empirically position it in relation to other understandings of an entrepreneurship that move beyond commercial activity. Since the field of entrepreneurship is generally in great need of critical inquiry we think it is important to critically penetrate in whatever way entrepreneurship presents itself as societal. The third theme empirically takes a point of departure in the educational setting with the ambition of presenting ideas about how societal entrepreneurship can be promoted in the making of a better world. These three themes are further elaborated on and connected to chapters in the introductions to the parts of the book which contain the various themes, as well as in the concluding chapter. Here we thus only briefly introduce the themes.

Positioning societal entrepreneurship as evading all three sectors and challenging their different logics that carry each sector consequently discusses how societal entrepreneurship differs from commercial and institutional entrepreneurship and how societal entrepreneurship can make up for institutional (and market) failure. It is especially interesting and important to reflect upon how societal entrepreneurship differs over different spatial as well as temporal settings with respect to how it organizes innovation and renewal. Besides, ascribing entrepreneurial capabilities to all three sectors and its representatives, it is reasonable and equally important to empirically study how the sectors take turns and/or are intertwined in entrepreneurial processes.

Penetrating societal entrepreneurship calls for a critical examination of its dark and bright sides. This means paying attention to obvious dark sides, but perhaps even more importantly, acknowledging that everything – including entrepreneurship – has another story to tell than the popular media version about success, fame, creation, impact and growth. Consequently, it is easy to be seduced by the successful versions of entrepreneurship, rejecting its dark sides. The point made is that one comes with the other. This is recognized in a core concept that entrepreneurship scholars seem to agree upon, namely creative destruction, which lays the ground for the theory proposed by Schumpeter (1934). With a societal entrepreneurship perspective we also notice how values – ethical, environmental, and social – are at stake. They may be reinforced or set aside in the entrepreneurship that is conditioned in present times. In this vein a historical perspective informs us that the rules of the game change over
time and with them the scope of action for entrepreneurs to, at best, either contribute to society in a productive way, or reinforce the status quo in an unproductive or, even worse, in a destructive way (Baumol, 1990).

The third perspective on societal entrepreneurship applied in this anthology is promoting, which addresses how societal entrepreneurship could be endorsed. In this section three chapters delve into how entrepreneurship education has been framed and enacted; from a preschool context throughout the school system to the university level. Following how teachers at the different levels in the school system make sense of entrepreneurship, enact it and transform it to something completely different, unfolds societal entrepreneurship as a phenomenon that breaks with institutions, invites multi-sector cooperation and acknowledges history. The notion of promoting thus moves beyond education as a practice in the world of school. This perspective rather stresses the importance of processes that work against specialization and differentiation, separating sectors and actors from each other, making it difficult for common life spheres to emerge that cross boundaries and traditional subdivisions where each sector is occupied by its own rules, practices and language. Promoting societal entrepreneurship can instead be better described as a process where actors from different sectors act together, creating a common language and shared practices, laying the ground for a sphere that does not belong to one sector or the other, but is shared for all of those involved, irrespective of their sectorial residence.

NOTE

1. According to information especially provided by Statistics Sweden in March 2012.

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