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ENTREPRENEURS TO ORDER

Section: Britain

Tony Blair wants schools to teach *entrepreneurship*. The think-tank promoting this idea says that the government could do more to help people to set up their own businesses. But in some ways it ought to do less

THERE was a time when entrepreneurs were popular heroes in Britain. Samuel Smiles's book "Self-Help" published in 1859, was stuffed with uplifting portraits of self-made men. There was James Watt, who perfected the steam engine; Richard Arkwright, the founder of the first cotton mills; and Josiah Wedgewood, who built up the potteries industry and who "by his energy skill and genius, established the trade upon a new and solid foundation."

The fact that Smiles's book sold a quarter of a million copies (a huge number for the time) and was pored over by mutual-improvement schools all over the country, made names like Wedgewood and Arkwright famous all over Britain. By contrast Smiles's descendants would probably be hard-pressed to name any modern British entrepreneurs. Many would probably come up with Richard Branson-of airline and mega-store fame-and then get stuck. Is this because Britain is now producing fewer entrepreneurs? Or might it be because self-made men are no longer celebrated? Or might both things be true, and somehow connected?

It has long been a commonplace among some academics that British culture has developed an "anti-industrial" bias. From the flint-hearted Mr Gradgrind in Charles Dickens's "Hard Times" to the dodgy-dealing Arthur Daley in the television show "Minder", the portrayal of businessmen in British fiction has been mostly unflattering. Under Margaret Thatcher, however, the government made a determined effort to change attitudes-and may have got somewhere. Luke Johnson, a serial entrepreneur in his late thirties whose interests range from pizza parlours to dental laboratories says that: "You can now go to a dinner party and be unashamed to say that you run a shop."

Tony Blair is also keen on self-made men and women. This week he gave a reception in Downing Street to welcome the publication of the Institute for Public Policy Research's report, "The Entrepreneurial Society", giving his backing to one of its main recommendations-that *entrepreneurship* be taught in schools. The IPPR, a leftist think-tank, has conducted a detailed review of the evidence on whether Britain really does have an anti-enterprise culture, whether it matters if it does, and what might be done to turn Britain into a nation of businessmen.

There is indeed evidence that high levels of *entrepreneurship* create jobs and growth. The IPPR points out that in those parts of America where the "birth rate" of businesses rises, a period of economic growth tends to follow. It also highlights a 1993 study by Scottish Enterprise, a job-creation agency, which found that those parts of Britain (especially Scotland) with low business birth-rates also tended to generate few new jobs and had low economic growth. The tentative conclusion from all the research is that a high birth-rate for businesses is a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for a healthy economy.

The trouble is that it is surprisingly hard to measure the rate at which new businesses are being born. The previous, Conservative government often pointed to figures suggesting a healthy birth-rate: between 1979 and 1996 the number of "enterprises" grew from 2.5m to 3.7m. But much of this was due to rising numbers of self-employed people; an unknown proportion of these (eg,

some taxi drivers) are self-employed only in name, working exclusively as contractors for a single firm.

The IPPR considered several studies comparing the birth and survival rates of businesses in various countries. Alas, no clear picture emerges: Britain fares well by some measures and badly by others. As to whether modern British society still distrusts self-made men in the way that Dickens did, the evidence is again mixed. The IPPR notes a poll suggesting that twice as many Germans as Britons appreciate the importance of small firms. On the other hand an OECD opinion survey found that small-business owners have a higher status in Britain than in France, Germany or Japan, though nowhere is the self-made man more lauded than in America.

Still, while the public may be ambivalent about businessmen, the government is mustard keen to smooth the way for future Wedgewoods and Bransons. The problems that budding entrepreneurs face in raising start-up capital, in marketing their wares and in expanding without hitting a cash-flow crisis have been well illuminated by any number of surveys. The IPPR's report sets out, in admirable detail, many examples of schemes, from Britain and abroad, offering advice and financial aid to those setting up in business. The trouble is that there has not been much rigorous study of whether such schemes work and some new evidence, unavailable to the IPPR, is not particularly encouraging. After the 1993 study showing low levels of enterprise in Scotland, schemes were set up to offer grants and advice to new firms and to teach *entrepreneurship* in schools. An evaluation of these schemes published last month concluded that the trend of business formation in Scotland had not risen relative to the rest of Britain.

Given this cautionary tale, it is worth thinking hard about whether the overall benefits to the economy of aid and advice to entrepreneurs really justify their cost. The IPPR, alas, fails to do so such as when it proposes more than doubling the threshold of annual turnover at which firms must register for value-added tax, without calculating the cost of this to the government.

Even those of its proposals that seem cost-free at first sight may have unintended consequences. Take the idea of teaching entrepreneurship in schools. The problem is that teachers are also being urged to add classes on everything from parenting to personal finance. If schools do so, they will presumably have to ignore ministers' demands that they concentrate on the "basics" so that young people will enter the workforce more numerate and literate, and therefore more employable.

The case for teaching *entrepreneurship* might be strengthened if it was clear what qualities make for success in business and therefore what should be taught and which pupils might benefit from lessons. It is widely believed that entrepreneurs share certain character traits. Smiles listed courage, patience, perseverance, integrity, self-learning, self-discipline, self-respect and conscientiousness. But the belief in an entrepreneurial character was undermined in a study published in January, by Andrew Oswald of Warwick University and David Blanchflower of Dartmouth College in America, of 1,300 British entrepreneurs who were among the 11,400 people born in Britain in the first week of March 1958.

As they grew up, the 11,400 were monitored, tested and evaluated in many ways, including psychological tests. But when Messrs Oswald and Blanchflower searched the mass of data, they found that those who went on to become entrepreneurs were no more persistent, self-motivated or risk-taking than the rest. Almost the only common factor noted was that those who had received an inheritance or gift of money were more likely to set up in business.

Of course there may be many other factors, ones which are harder to measure, which drive some people to set up their own firms. One may be a certain level of middle-class comfort in childhood. People from poor backgrounds may look for secure jobs in big firms or government. The truly rich might not bother to go out and found a business. Both Richard Branson and Luke Johnson come from secure upper-middle-class backgrounds.

Like many successful entrepreneurs, Mr Johnson is highly sceptical of government schemes to give advice or financial aid to budding businessmen, believing firmly in the Smiles philosophy of self-help. He has also taken up an idea that Smiles strongly encouraged, founding a mutual-improvement society where entrepreneurs share ideas and make useful contacts-something that requires neither state intervention nor taxpayers' money.

Mr Johnson believes that the government has most helped entrepreneurs, in recent years, when it has got out of their way. He cites the cut in tax rates in the 1980s (making it more worthwhile to try to get rich), more flexible labour markets (encouraging entrepreneurs to take the risk of hiring people) and the growth of management buyouts (which have created a new class of managers-turned-tycoons). But what could send it all into reverse, he says, is the imposition of European-style restrictions on hiring and firing workers.

How unfortunate then that the government, despite its apparent admiration for self-made men, is introducing such potentially job-killing measures as a minimum wage, the European social chapter and (according to speculation this month) greater compensation in unfair-dismissal cases. The IPPR study, alas, ducks such issues. Whatever such measures do for those currently in work, they are likely to dampen the enthusiasm of entrepreneurs for taking the risk of hiring new staff as they seek to become the empire-builders of the future.

1. 本文的基本主張是什麼？其立論的前提為何？哪些來自總體資料？哪些來自個體資料？為何個體資料可以作為推論的基礎？（15%）
2. 依照本文資料，贊成和反對政府提供創業協助的理由各有哪些？請在此基礎上，分別從正方和反方立場對此問題作簡要申論（也就是要超越本文的論點）。（15%）
3. 您個人對此問題有何意見？為何贊成或反對？答案請盡量超越前面的看法（20%）
4. 一般認為創業家擁有某些人格特質，本文是否支持此種論點？假設您支持此一論點，請應用著名的五大人格特質模型（The Big Five personality traits）或其他人格特質模型，指出並說明那些人格特質可預測創業精神。（20%）
5. 組織生態學作為組織研究的新典範，有意識地截取生態學的觀點，其基本解釋模型是從發生的可能性條件來研究組織的形成與變遷。請從組織生態學的觀點，解釋英國創業家的興衰。（15%）
6. 英國政府要求學校提倡創業學習，您認為此種學習會有效果嗎？請根據創業的理論與實際，闡釋您的看法。（15%）

國立中山大學97學年度博士班招生考試試題

科目：傳播管理理論【企管系乙組】

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一、

媒體亂象一直為媒體改造學社、傳播專家、與觀眾所詬病，急呼媒體應擔當社會責任，執行公共利益，塑造公民社會。然，(1) 媒體腥羶色議題到底是老問題？還是因近年來競爭日益激烈下、媒體產業結構改變下的產物？(2) 十年前與現今媒體腥羶色亂象的差異在哪裡？(3) 這十年間的變化要如何觀察？

請你針對有線電視媒體，選擇一產業經濟學理論，詳述該理論內容、根據該理論提出假設，以及你如何調查腥羶色、根據以上三個問題之研究過程及分析步驟。

(50%)

二、媒介全球化(media globalization)是近年來影響媒介發展的重要力量，請說明：
(1) 促使媒介全球化生成的主要因素；(2) 以台灣為例，討論媒介全球化對於媒介產業結構與媒介內容的影響；(3) 舉出一個與媒介全球化相關的理論途徑(theoretical approach)，說明可以據此發展的問題意識。(50%)