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Responding to your call we forward the abstract of our paper which may fit well under the theme of “Innovation in Cooperative Education” alternatively “Cooperatives, social and solidarity economy, and entrepreneurship training”.

**‘Democratic Entrepreneurship’ –**

**The missing link between ‘state democracy’ and social economy?**

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**Abstract**

The two acknowledged tendencies of on the one hand democratic fatigue in Western societies (Son, 2020) and on the other hand, a need for sustainable (counter-)answers to the prevailing growth-paradigm (Buch-Hansen and Carstensen, 2021) emphasize a need to do something else than ‘business as usual’ and which also taps into and is attractive to the young generation’s urge to ‘make a change’. Social economy and social entrepreneurship are often seen as responses to some of these issues (Andersen, 2019), but social enterprises are not necessarily democratic, and they are still based on certain economic logics, which are not transforming the relationship between economy and labor. Hence, a more radical answer could be to create an infrastructure, which foster a new generation of ‘democratic entrepreneurs’ with an actual knowledge of the variety of more ‘people centred’ economic framing, thus making the public educational system a key actor towards a more sustainable world. The notion of ‘democratic entrepreneurship’ is founded on the understanding that entrepreneurship education is key in becoming an active citizen (Baker & Powell, 2019) and that democratic entrepreneurship is a specific approach to entrepreneurship which encompasses both democratic organizing of work *and* labor (Ellerman, 2009).

Based on a case study from Denmark that focuses on the potential of the public educational system in fostering knowledge on democratic enterprises and practical entrepreneurship competences, thus implying programs linking entrepreneurship teaching with democratic organization, cooperative economy and democratizing work (Jakobsen, 2000) the paper explores the interplay between entrepreneurship education and ideals of democratic formation (Audretsch & Moog, 2020). Empirical key findings are the existence of lots of formal participative democratic

training throughout the Danish educational system and that education in entrepreneurship and innovation actually **is** a legal demand from primary school system to universities – but the link between these two practices is not obvious, so the inherent democratic potential that this broader understanding of the democratic effects of entrepreneurship training promises are not yet unleashed. The key argument of the paper is that innovation potential relative to support structures for democratic entrepreneurship is in the hands of public sector via cross-sectorial collaboration with key actors in the education system, i.e. unions, trade organizations, student hubs and educational institutions as well as cooperative sectors. Another aspect to be dealt with are the implications of juxtaposing participatory training with entrepreneurship education in a democratic organizational set-up.

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