



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

**Women In Social**  
Enterprises



## Participation and Re-presentation in 'Start-ups' as Epistemological Sites: A Feminist Space?

*Report to the University of Cambridge*



WISE

Pam Burnard, Garth Stahl, Satinder Gill and Lilia Giugni

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The publishers would like to extend thanks to everyone involved in this study. Contributor comments have been anonymised where necessary so that individuals and organisations may not be identified.

We would welcome conversations with academic institutions and other bodies interested in conducting further studies that will shed more light on women in social enterprises in the creative, cultural and business sectors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### DEFINING THE TERMS

#### WHAT IS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

Social entrepreneurship is the use of start-up companies to develop, fund and implement solutions to social, cultural and environmental issues (PBS Foundation).

#### WHAT IS AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM?

Entrepreneurship ecosystems are a conceptual framework designed to foster economic development via entrepreneurship, innovation and small business growth (Mazzarol, 2014).

### INTRODUCTION

The aims of this research are to:

- (i) gather women's perceptions of what it means to participate, lead or work with other women in social start-ups;
- (ii) identify what discourses on gender and crucial issues concerning gendered representations of power relations drive start-ups; and
- (iii) come to understand and theorise how women experience gender politics / dynamics / relations while working in social ventures.

Furthermore, our methodological aims include:

- (iv) bridging a theoretical framework between Bourdieu, gender theory and feminist new-materialisms; and
- (v) working across these theoretical approaches, in order to extend this scoping study to allow for the development of a larger study of women start-uppers and building social enterprises with support

The report is structured according to three main points of inquiry:

1. GENDER (Women): 1.1 What characterizes women's experiences of social enterprises? 1.2 How, if at all, do gendered conceptions of masculinity and femininity influence how women participate and represent social entrepreneurship? 1.3 To what extent are power dynamics informed by normative conceptions of gender?
2. SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: 2.1 To what extent are social enterprises epistemological sites? 2.2 To what extent are social enterprises constructed as feminist spaces? 2.3 What is distinctive about what propels these women to become social entrepreneurs and how do these women successfully navigate the field of social entrepreneurship?
3. THEORISING 3.1 In studying these women's experiences (participation and re-presentation), what is the contribution of gender theory? 3.2 How does a Bourdieusian notion of 'capital' help us understand women's experience as social entrepreneurs? 3.3 How might we challenge the

prevailing culture and norms in social enterprises and see things differently using concepts from feminist new materialism?

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The UK is viewed by many other countries as a pioneer of social enterprise and the associated practices of social investment and social value. Government statistics identify around 70,000 social enterprises in the UK, contributing £24 billion to the economy and employing nearly a million people (Social Enterprise UK, 2017). Typically, social entrepreneurship, as an activity, encompasses entrepreneurial practices that will go beyond the start-up phase.

Phillips, Lee, Ghobadian, O'Regan and James (2015) argue the 'growing disillusionment of for-profit business models has drawn attention to social entrepreneurship and social innovation to ease social issues'. As a growth market, social enterprise is continuing to do business differently. It shows considerable commercial resilience where it continues to outperform mainstream SMEs against a range of business metrics: turnover growth, innovation, business optimism, start-up rates, diversity in leadership and more. Over 70% of social enterprises made a profit or broke even in the last year (Social Enterprise UK, 2017). In the UK today only 17 percent of business owners and 5.5 percent of 'start-uppers' are women. The venture capital funds sponsoring British start-ups launched by at least one female founder are only 17 percent of the total (Herrington & Kew 2016). The gender balance changes significantly, though, when one examines social ventures. About 41 percent of British social ventures are started and led by women, whilst twice as many women found, or co-found, social start-ups rather than initiating small businesses (Social Enterprise UK, 2017). In terms of women entrepreneurship: 41% of social enterprises are led by women and over half of social enterprises (51%) have a majority of female workers (Social Enterprise UK, 2017). Furthermore, according to Social Enterprise UK (2017), 89% of social enterprise leadership teams have a female director, 34% have Black Asian Minority Ethnic representation and 36% have a director with a disability. It has been argued that increased levels of female entrepreneurship activity can often be associated with economic growth as well as stronger communities and business ecosystems (Terjesen, Bosma & Stam, 2015).

## KEY FINDINGS OF THE WISE RESEARCH PROJECT

### **Gender (Women):** Points of Inquiry 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

- The majority of women in this study have experienced forms of discrimination and gender bias. Directly influencing the power dynamics, they often discuss the visibility to the gender subtext of the discourse on social entrepreneurial leadership which seems to reinforce the male normativity prevailing in the sector.
- Feminist generated issues/values drive some but not all women in social enterprises. Perceptions and practices differ for different types of start-ups; it depends upon how the epistemological space proclaims and pushes production of a counter-story. Therefore, masculinity and femininities structure how these women navigate social entrepreneurship. Not all women think and position social enterprises (start-ups) as feminist spaces. Running a start-up (whether as a feminist or not) is not a 'one size fits all' performance where an agreed upon set of ideals, practices and ways of thinking must be enacted at all times and at all costs but rather seems to be enacted instead as a series of questions about 'what it is we are against, what it is we are for and what, how and why are we working together in the performance of start-ups?'



- Women exhibit entrepreneurial creativity based on their lived experience as social entrepreneurs who work responsively with the strengths of each other. Mentors, role models and networks empower these women.

**Social Enterprises:** Points of Inquiry 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

- Most women agree that founding social enterprises involves critical, creative and multiple response-abilities for promoting an ethics of societal change.
- Most women identify and stress the importance and decisive roles of creativity, social capital, networks and mentors in successfully navigating the field of social entrepreneurship and achieving their goals.
- Women express an allegiance to embody and project a dissonance with the status quo and a call to take response-ability for the embodied, ethical, material, affective and discursive dimensions that social enterprises offer up for societal change.

**Theorising:** Points of Inquiry 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

- Women value democratic and collaborative styles of working and perform entrepreneurial creative behaviour and long-term resilience.
- Embedded in the power dynamics is a range of gendered subtexts, one of which concerns the discourse on social entrepreneurial leadership as masculine. Such a subtext sees women's representation of the barriers and enablers expressed in the subjectivities of women and the crucial role that gender plays.
- In terms of social capital, experiences with mentors and networks function as a way of counter-acting, scrutinizing and stripping gendered practices/gendered notions.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

When supported, women social entrepreneurs are a formidable force of economic growth and responsive social change. There is a need for innovation-based policymaking to support the context-specific situationally performed and discursively constructed nature of social enterprise practices. Policy development must involve and recognize that:

- For women entering the sector to instil and maintain a normative change of the gendered culture, there is a need to introduce measures to bridge the gap between policies and strategies that mandate that everyone should be treated equally and eradicate gender-related norms.
- We require more gender-lens<sup>1</sup> investing that focuses on women-led businesses and women as social entrepreneurs, where attracting support networks, business incubators and accelerators are specific challenges which find institutional programme and organisational support, especially when the women are starting, building or scaling a business and may be lacking in financial and social capital.
- Many social enterprises that are led by women are leading the way for business and operate at a neighbourhood or local level with the most common objective being to improve a particular community. Therefore, we recommend that the policy-making process is understood and takes into account a renewed focus on gender-lens investing at individual and institutional levels. Thus, the issue of power and privilege can be scrutinized and gendered notions stripped away so that women can be recognized as competent, professional and transformative agents in the work locality.
- The vast majority of women working in social enterprises also employ from the local population, creating jobs and building longer-term resilience; local authorities and universities should engage and work with women in social enterprises to provide essential role support in affecting business survival, furthering innovation, supporting local business and reaching people that they do not otherwise. Therefore, we recommend a renewed focus on creating opportunity incentives for women to develop and build an entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial creativity at the individual level, finding essential support which can play out at institutional levels.
- Different types of engagement with inequalities at the workplace in practice show the fluidity and complexity of the interplay between women, entrepreneurial creativity and social enterprises. Therefore, we recommend that more reflexive / flexible / adaptive / innovative structures be developed and supported that provide more opportunities for the sustained development and support of social enterprise sectors led by women.

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<sup>1</sup> Gender-lens investing is the practice of investing for financial return while also considering the benefits to women, both through improving economic opportunities and through improving economic opportunities and social well-being for girls and women.

## SECTION A – INTRODUCTION

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### RESEARCH BACKGROUND, AIMS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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#### 1.1 POSITIONING THE RESEARCH

Start-ups contain no official definition but are generally defined in terms of age (younger than 10 years), innovation (in product or service) and aims to scale (intention to grow) (Steigertahl & Mauer, 2018, p. 7). Start-ups are characterized as being generally non-hierarchical and known for their flexibility/adaptability; furthermore, Kollmann & Kensbock (2016) note start-ups are characterized as creative and positive spaces where 90.6% of start-ups offer their employees opportunities to exchange ideas on an informal level. Typically, social entrepreneurship, as an activity, encompasses entrepreneurial practices that will go beyond the start-up phase. Investment in start-ups is integral to job creation both in countries and transnationally and their success or failure is often tied to the health of the markets and how they negotiate sector legislation and regulations.

According to a recent report by the European Commission, most start-ups engage in business-to-business (B2B) markets (82.1%) and generate their revenue entirely (46.5% or mainly (25.3%) through working with other businesses (Steigertahl & Mauer, 2018, p. 10). According to Haley, Blitterswijk & Febvre (2019), the most common funding roots for European entrepreneurs are: bootstrapping (self-financing), crowdfunding, angel investment, venture capital, initial coin offering, corporate acquisition, initial public offering and private placement. The biggest challenge for European start-ups is sales and/or customer acquisition, product development and growth (Kollmann & Kensbock, 2016, p. 7). In Europe, more than three out of four start-ups were founded by teams (Kollmann & Kensbock, 2016) indicating that start-ups, on a whole, are collective endeavors. Various forms of funding may play different roles depending on the stage the start-up is in. Not every funding root may be available depending on the start-up ecosystem. Furthermore, each approach has its strengths and limitations especially when it comes to scaling up. Haley *et al.*, (2019) has documented how start-ups can often change focus through the scaling up or internationalizing.

Start-up Genome and the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) have been documenting the start-up ecosystems since 2014 across 170 countries, with the aim to “crack the code of innovation that leads to higher rates of start-up success and ecosystem performance” (Start-up Genome 2018, p. 21). Their most recent report, *Global Start-up Ecosystem 2018*, focuses on the lifecycle of twelve key Start-up Sub-Sectors (e.g. Medtech, Gaming, Edtech) synthesizing data covering over 1 million companies, nearly 100 ecosystems, and 300 partners which makes it one of the largest start-up ecosystem study ever done. Start-up Genome asks why some start-ups grow quicker than others and identifies key factors regarding their acceleration. They contend start-ups that focus on and penetrate global markets from their earliest stage are able to grow revenues twice as fast. The importance of start-ups expanding globally – of internationalizing through partnerships – is a common trend as it allows them a larger base of ‘potential customers, a larger pool of people for recruiting, and often new capital markets to approach for further funding (Steigertahl & Mauer, 2018, p. 16). However, a variety of factors beyond a global focus or global expansion contribute to the success of a start-up. In the report, the *Global Start-up Ecosystem 2018* argues that the main factors which contribute significantly to how start-ups grow are: founder (mindset and ambition, DNA, start-up strategy, know-how); talent; funding (early stage capital investment, experience with venture capitalist firms); start-up experience (mainly in terms of scaling experience); global connectedness; local connectedness; global market reach; organizations; and economic impact.

### *Narrowing the focus*

Men and women do not just experience gendered motivations for participating in business organisations: pre-existing gender-based narratives also influence the division of labour and responsibilities in the ways they are recruited, access power or are promoted. Recent research from the field of social psychology shows, for example, that, in most industries, perceived gender biases in the evaluation of creativity negatively affect women's work experiences and their chances of success (Proudfoot, Kay & Koval, 2015; Haddon & Burnard, 2015). Gupta, Turban, Wasti and Sikdar (2009) document how socially constructed gender stereotypes in entrepreneurship substantially influence on men and women's entrepreneurial intentions. This has also been documented in the creative industries and music industries. A survey conducted in 2018 of the music sector by the Incorporated Society of Musicians documents that 80% of musicians have experienced gender discrimination with 75% not reporting this behaviour to an official authority. Furthermore, it can be argued that the negative working conditions are especially true in contexts that explicitly reward creative skills, such as the launch and growth of start-ups.

However, gender, as an axis of power imbalance and inequality, can work to generate leadership niches for women, where they no longer take subsidiary roles in male-dominated organisations but rather lead mixed teams or form single-sex or women-led groups. This development is increasingly reported in the field of British social enterprise. In the UK, only 17 percent of business owners, and 5.5 percent of 'start-uppers', are women. The venture capital funds sponsoring British start-ups launched by at least one female founder are only 17 percent of the total (Herrington & Kew 2016). The gender balance significantly changes, though, when one examines social ventures – or social enterprises. About 41 percent of British social ventures are started and led by women, whilst twice as many British women found, or co-found, social start-ups as initiate small businesses (Social Enterprise UK, 2017).

Yet, what remains obscure and empirically unsubstantiated is:

- (i) What are these women's experiences in social entrepreneurship and how and why women are specifically attracted to this sector;
- (ii) The ways in which they manage to navigate and innovate around normative conceptions of gender, perceived biases and discourses;
- (iii) How they produce and sustain the human capital career creativities through which start-ups manifest; and
- (iv) How they navigate and negotiate new work cultures.

Popular (mis?)conceptions often suggest that social enterprises offer a more convenient work-life balance, a stronger focus on traditionally feminised sectors (education or care), and even extra chances to 'do good'; all of which is supposedly more appealing to professional women (Eddleston & Powell, 2012). It could be said that relatively new business sectors may also have lower entry barriers (Porter, 2008), and are less likely to be a product of social relationships shaped by gendered power (Barad, 2007; Grosz, 2011; Berdahl, 2007; Braidotti, 2013). However, all of this remains unexplored and under-theorised, and no systematic analysis of the gendered practices embedded in social enterprises and their knowledge creation processes has ever been attempted. We intend to remedy this intellectual lacuna, as well as to provide policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders with empirically grounded insights into the gendered side of work, through this exploratory case study of Cambridge-based WISE.

## **1.2 RESEARCH AIMS**

Terjesen, Bosma and Stam (2015) write how public policies must support female entrepreneurship including efforts to provide entrepreneurial education and training, mentors and networks as well as child care (p. 230).

We see this scoping study of women social entrepreneurs (WISE) as positioned in the area of creative industries (Bennett & Hennekman, 2018; Friedman, O'Brien & Laurison, 2017), cultural industries (Allen, 2013), entrepreneurship research, social innovation (Phillips *et al.*, 2015; Tracey & Stott, 2017), women's studies and sociological work on workplace inequality.

Our theorisation will contribute across fields of gender, social entrepreneurship and career capital theory through 'reconfiguring women in social enterprises'.

The aims of this research are to:

- (i) gather women's perceptions of what it means to participate, lead or work with other women in social start-ups;
- (ii) identify what discourses on gender and crucial issues concerning gendered representations of power relations drive start-ups; and
- (iii) come to understand and theorise how women experience gender politics / dynamics / relations while working in social ventures.

Furthermore, our methodological aims include:

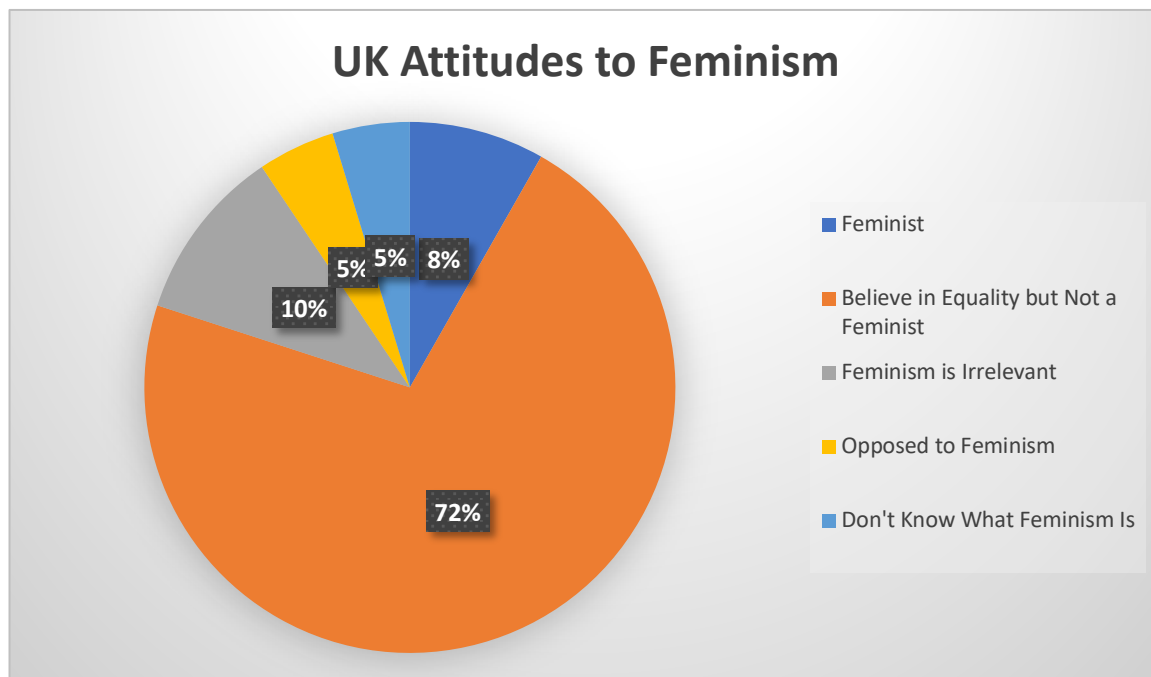
- (iv) bridging a theoretical framework between Bourdieu, gender theory and feminist new-materialisms; and
- (v) working across these theoretical approaches, to extend this scoping study to allow for the development of a larger study of women start-uppers and building social enterprises with support

Research in management has a substantial history of exploring the entrepreneurial creativity associated with start-ups (see, for example, Freeman & Engel, 2007; Carayannis & Harvard, 2017) and the academic and public discourse on social innovation has constantly emphasised that innovation is enhanced by diversity. Tracey and Stott (2017, p. 51) show how social innovation is a contested term but generally concerns the 'creation and implementation of new solutions to social problems, with the benefits of these solutions shared beyond the confines of the innovators.' However, scholarship in social enterprise and social innovation has often neglected gender-related insights (Moulaert, MacCallum, Mehmood & Hamdouch, 2013). By capturing women's participation and representation, and ways of navigating and negotiating within social enterprises our scoping study works to unpack, come to understand and theorise how women experience social entrepreneurship / entrepreneurial leadership.

### 1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMING: THINKING WITH THEORY

This scoping project concerns itself with women's participation and representation in social enterprises and their practices as innovative leaders. Pushing against, rather than adopting a post-structuralist feminist approach, we wish to do more than merely introduce the notions of feminism and feminist space into social entrepreneurship research for the purpose of stereotypically repeating the same old factors that are well documented about what deters women from entrepreneurship, and what we know already about patriarchal social values, traditional gender roles, documenting gender norms and mediating masculine endeavours.

In considering current attitudes to feminism in the UK, Henry's (2016) recent survey offers an overview.



**Figure 1.3: UK Attitudes to Feminism based on Henry (2016)**

This survey tells us little about the theoretical complexity when attempting to understand what, why and how feminism contributes to our understanding and defining of women in social enterprises nor about how better to define what characterizes women's entrepreneurial creativity.

This scoping study contributes to feminist theorizing by demonstrating how women's understanding of entrepreneurial leadership is shaped by and overcomes the cultural reproduction of gender and their entrepreneurial experiences within the normative expectations of their context. We also explore the contextual embeddedness or situatedness of women's quest as 'social' entrepreneurs. Thus, this scoping study makes some advances into entrepreneurship research, women's studies and sociology.

We now define each distinct area of our theoretical framework before explaining how combining these theoretical approaches (Bourdieu, gender theory and feminist new-materialisms) will introduce a new level of rigor regarding class, gender, agency, embodied circumstance and subject formation.

#### *1.3.1 Bourdieu's conceptual framework*

For scholars concerned with gender and entrepreneurship, extending Pierre Bourdieu's contribution to the sociologies of start-ups has yet to be fully realized, specifically in reference to diverse career narratives in the creative industries. Researchers of women's entrepreneurship have drawn little on Bourdieusian theory – specifically on distinction and judgement and his conceptualization of fields, habitus and capitals. A Bourdieusian conceptualisation allows scholars to move between culture, practice and the institutionalization of entrepreneurialism. We accept that in an attempt to do Bourdieu justice (Stahl, 2016), his rich tools of habitus, capital, and field have taken many shapes within his own writing and different disciplines (Stahl, Perkins & Burnard, 2017). Furthermore, Bourdieu's influence has the potential to foster important insights in gender inequality, with feminist scholarship emphasizing a greater understanding of the social reproduction at the interface between gender-biased masculinist traditions and working conditions in the creative industry/ies (Dromey & Haferkorn, 2018; Berdahl, 2007) and social entrepreneurship (see Orser, Elliott & Leck, 2011; Muntean, & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015).

In his oeuvre, Bourdieu (1979/1984; 1986) defines four forms of capital: economic (money and assets); social (affiliations and networks: familial, religious and cultural); symbolic (prestige, reputation); cultural (forms of knowledge; taste, language). Each capital is determined to have value by the field which contributes to both its currency, limits and so on. Bourdieu defines social capital as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutional relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, providing each of its members the backing of collectively owned capital. Therefore, the social position of an individual is influenced not simply by their economic capital but also by their “portfolio of economic, cultural, symbolic and other forms of capital” and also the individual’s ability to activate these capitals to their advantage within a given field (Hart, 2013, pp. 52-53). In his theoretical approach, distinction can become a key focus where agents pursue it in order to attempt to establish superiority. Therefore, for Bourdieu field is always profoundly hierarchised and characterised by continuous struggle. It is important to note that there are “dominant social agents and institutions having considerable power to determine what happens within it, there is still agency and change” (Reay, 2004, p. 73).

Recent scholarship has sought to use Bourdieu to explore gendered practices in the creative industries broadly (Allen, 2013; Friedman, O’Brien & Laurison, 2017). For example, focusing on choirboys, Hall (2015) uses the analytic tool of ‘musical habitus’ to identify and understand how the male, middle-class body becomes one in which specific musical aptitudes become entrenched through processes of socialization. Hall’s research highlights the ways in which individuals construct and negotiate social identities across diverse settings and practices of music education, and in the highly gendered collaborative nature of music making, to subvert / reaffirm: gendered norms (Bull, 2015; Stahl & Dale, 2013; Burnard, 2016; Burnard, 2018; the power of music to enable class re-mobility in recovering lost social capital (Hofvander Trulsson, 2016); the highly territorial cultural ‘structured spaces’ of music production and music education (Schmidt, 2016); and the highly gendered fields of creative labour (Bennett & Burnard, 2015; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011). In terms of our analysis of women entrepreneurship, we ask: What does working with Bourdieu’s conceptual toolkit offer in terms of understanding women’s creativities? Specifically, in reference to capital, in what ways do these women recognize and operationalise their capital?

Additionally, the habitus of the classical music performer, often belonging to an elite group bearing distinct and distinguished dispositions, is structured by the context of the conservatoire; for example, Rosie Perkins (2015) demonstrates how the *logic of practice* is manifested in the opportunities and constraints embedded within the capital underscoring the institutional habitus and learning culture of the conservatoire. Through this research we see, implicitly, the role of emotional and professional capitals and the way in which they work in tandem, influencing each other and opening up new ways of thinking critically about how we accumulate and use them in our professional lives (Burnard & Stahl, 2019). Therefore, we ask, what constitutes the habitus of the women social entrepreneur? Drawing upon a small number of embodied and material events and haptic moments from women’s entrepreneurial experiences within the normative expectations of their contexts, we offer a generative account of how women creatives recognize and operationalise their capitals. We ask which capitals are valuable to them and why? What are the ‘practices’ they use to generate capital?

### 1.3.2 Gender theory

There are many ways to theorize gender and we will focus on two: biological and social constructionist. To be clear, many scholars working today see these as overlapping and mutually informing rather than as separate entities. Biological determinism argues that gender difference is constituted within binarized understandings of gender, wherein males and females are ‘natural’ opposites. Biologically, male and female bodies, brains, sex hormones and genes are said to be diametrically opposite. The foundation of this argument is extended to account for differences in intellect, psychology and behaviour which are also argued to be biologically determined and ultimately considered the essence of masculinity and femininity. But there are those who believe gender is more socially positioned and discursively constituted within various sites: socially constructed and deeply contextual, there exist multiple patterns of masculinity and femininity constructed on a daily basis in different sites (schools, workplaces, etc.).



Girls and young women in contemporary contexts are “frequently represented as the new success story, the bearers of academic excellence, the overachievers at school, and the beneficiaries of feminism who can have it all” (McLeod & Yates, 2006, p. 106). How women navigate neoliberalism has contributed to a pervasive ‘successful girls’ discourse in western education (Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001). Furthermore, arguments have been made about positioning and performances of femininities in relation to achievement. Ringrose and Walkerdine (2008) argue that the ‘successful girls’ discourse positions girls as “model neoliberal citizens” (p.6) who balance “ideals of masculinity with femininity in post-feminist formations” (p. 6). They highlight these ideals as a masculine assertiveness tempered by (and only accepted because of) performances of feminine desirability and passivity, along with feminine traits of care and supportiveness. Renold and Allan (2006) similarly discuss the “interplay between embodying and performing normative ‘femininity’ and high achievement” (p. 458). Alongside a ‘supergirl’ femininity, they highlight performances of a ‘good girl’ femininity which is friendly, supportive, but unlikely to show pride or pleasure in their achievements where girls “hide, downplay, or deny rather than celebrate and improve upon their successes and feel the pressure to conform to normative cultural representations of (hetero)femininity” (Renold & Allan, 2006, p. 459). Here we see how there is an interplay in the gendered boundaries of the ‘super-girl’ and the ‘good girl’ identity (Renold & Allan, 2006).

### 1.3.3 Feminist new materialisms

A central aim of this project / investigation is to pursue new understandings of the ways that women participate in social enterprises, and how / whether / what matters about and materializes from the line of enquiry concerning whether start-ups are experienced as feminist spaces. New materialism, according to Hickey-Moody (2015, p. 169), calls for a research inquiry focused on practice and materiality, an approach where the ‘embodied, affective, relational understandings’ of the research process are central. Theoretically framing our investigation by feminist new materialism and deploying Barad’s (2007) concept of ‘spacetime-mattering’ creates possibilities to think differently about the nature of agency, relationality and change without taking these distinctions to be foundational or holding them in place. Barad’s (2007) theoretical work prompts a speculative reading of affective encounters with time and space as uninterrupted flows of ‘nows’ that matter in terms of material discursive constructions of social entrepreneurs and entrepreneurialism broadly. Feminist new materialism is also tied to counter-narratives – what are called countersentimental narratives (Berlant, 2008; Wanzo, 2009). For Berlant (2008), countersentimental narratives “are lacerated by ambivalence: they struggle with their own attachment to the promise of a sense of unconflictedness, intimacy, and collective belonging” (p. 55).

We aim to reconfigure entrenched ideas about women social entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship research by considering the possibilities that are generated when attention is turned to *everyday habits, ordinary routines and mundane situations that play out* in women’s social entrepreneurship contexts and that are integral to the ways in which we think. We ask: What does working with feminist new materialism and post-humanism make possible in social entrepreneurship studies of women?

Moving from a decade-long preoccupation to critique, problematise and deconstruct feminism to a place of embracing and enacting new materialist philosophy in some of our more recent work (Osgood & Burnard, 2019), we are confronted by a cacophony of ambivalences. There is little doubt that working with feminist new materialism presents certain ontological and epistemological shifts in the approaches that can be taken in terms of women’s participation in social enterprises, to think more expansively about our relational entanglements in social entrepreneurial contexts; it involves embracing *uncertainty* and not *knowing*. Yet, traces of post-structuralism remain and reawaken fears that de-centring the human might somehow risk obscuring humanist concerns such as social class inequalities, racism, male privilege and the persistence of patriarchal systems – which (can) shape experiences in start-up contexts and therefore concerns that we want to keep central to our work.



### 1.3.4 Bridging Bourdieu's conceptual framework and feminist new materialisms

In their work on charting new directions for 'feminisms', Gringeri, Wahab and Anderson-Nathe (2010) write how feminist research is centred on understanding power with an attention to privilege, oppression and social justice. Other matters which are of concern are ethics, reflexivity, praxis and difference – each which have methodological and ontological considerations. We ask: How does the concept of 'spatiotemporal assemblages of subjectivity' offer a complex lens to understand and evoke the affective surprises, challenges, and enablers of women in social enterprise:

[As] subjective mixtures: composites of space, time, feeling, relationality that fold in to make up subjects. Through such frames of reference, all social subjects are, by constitution, part of a number of transversal collective identities – boys are or become 'themselves' in relation to place, leisure, communities, families, biographies, employment, each of which constitutes a vector of *partial subjectivation*, a wedge in the composite formation of their subjectivity (Hickey-Moody & Kenway, 2014, p. 45).

Hickey-Moody and Kenway (2014) invite us to think about bringing together two lines of inquiry, one which explores and questions (normative) masculinity / femininity and the gendered identities and discourses that presently characterize start-up practice / participation. In this study we scrutinize and challenge the gendered notions / norms and ask what becomes possible to conceptualise as gendered that is produced through material-affective entanglements that unfold in everyday routines and practices in the social enterprise sector.

**Table 1.3.4: Forms of capital and their characteristics summarised**

Capital	Characteristics
Economic	Financial assets, income, money (Bourdieu, 1986)
Professional	A function of the 'interactive, multiplicative combination' of 'human capital, social capital, decisional capital' (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013, p. 39) which can be increased and decreased through sophisticated interventions
Emotional	Affective dimensions of dispositions involving emotional engagement and familial influences (Nowotny, 1981; Reay, 2000, 2004, 2015)
Community-building	Opportunity creation for peer learning, networked forms of obtaining work, and work that is undertaken with others and can be seen as a secondary form of social capital. (Bennett & Burnard, 2015)
Career-positioning	Developing knowledge, self and market (Bennett & Burnard, 2015). A secondary form of cultural capital.
Inspiration-forming	Involving role models, inspirational figures and supporters: significant others who have played a role in creative and business choices (Bennett & Burnard, 2015). A secondary form of social capital.
Bestowed gift-giving	Things which are 'given away' in forms such as mentorship, pro bono work and shared knowledge.
Social	Involving networks of human connections.
Cultural	Embodied through physical and psychological states; institutionalised through social and cultural recognition such as degrees or other marks of success; and objectified by means of external goods such as books or the media.
Symbolic	Prestige, reputation (Bourdieu, 1979/1984; Bourdieu, 1986).

(Burnard & Stahl 2019)

The second is by exploring conceptually and empirically the human capital through which start-ups manifest. Hence, we have undertaken an experimental approach to research that involves putting feminist new materialist philosophy into practice, along with a bi-partite conceptual framework.

We offer an account of the affordances that are made available by taking up Haraway's figure of the '*mutated modest witness*' and keeping in play one of the most significant concepts in feminist epistemology, that of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1997). We argue that rather than diminishing humanist concerns this framework offers the means to exercise heightened ethical responsibility; *a worldly responsibility* (Haraway, 2008), where the researcher must be attuned to so much more than only the human actors in any given scenario. This approach celebrates the conceptual elasticity that feminist new materialism offers in a quest to *not* find, nor seek, solutions but rather generate new ways to think about, and be in the world. But we also make use of Bourdieusian tools to explore how the logic of practice is manifested for these women, structured by the opportunities and constraints embedded with the capital underscoring of the start-up habitus and the role of capital.

By drawing on a number of women's entrepreneurial experiences within the normative expectations of their contexts, and starting from the logic of practice, capital and materiality, we offer a generative account of how women's understanding of entrepreneurial leadership is shaped by and overcomes the cultural reproduction of gender through the utility of Bourdieu's habitus and capital in the field of social enterprises.

#### 1.4 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

This chapter has asserted a research background regarding the three theories which will supply analytical rigor in the study (Bourdieu, gender theory and feminist new-materialisms). Researchers of WISE have drawn little on Bourdieusian theory – specifically on distinction and judgement and his conceptualization of fields, habitus and capitals. A Bourdieusian conceptualisation allows scholars to move between culture, practice and the institutionalization of social entrepreneurialism. Drawing on Bourdieu, we theorize agents participating in a hierarchical field where there is continual struggle and where they seek to position themselves advantageously. The women in this study both generate and operationalize capitals in their pursuit of change. In exploring gender inequality and gender understandings of the women, we focus on how they understand success and how such understandings are tied to a certain gender subtext of the discourse on social entrepreneurial leadership – which can, at times, reinforce the male normativity prevailing. This highlights how these women are often caught between notions of masculine assertiveness and performances of feminine passivity. Lastly, by drawing on feminist new materialism, we present certain onto-epistemological shifts in the approaches that can be taken in terms of women's participation in social enterprises. Drawing on this approach we stress the importance of 'situated knowledge,' which allows us to think more expansively about our relational entanglements in social entrepreneurial contexts as well as how they contend with gendered notions / norms produced through material-affective entanglements intertwined with everyday routines and practices.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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### PART I: WOMEN AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: FEMINIST RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES AND THEMES

This scoping study of women social entrepreneurs (WISE) requires a rigorous literature review which draws on areas of scholarship in various approaches to feminism, gender and social entrepreneurship and the construction / emergence / formation of entrepreneurial eco-systems that challenges the traditional understanding of women in social enterprises. This literature review brings together insights from:

- (i) the trans-disciplinary literature on **gender** and entrepreneurship,
- (ii) the emerging, mostly British, scholarship on **WISE** (still in its infancy) and ‘start-up’ (epistemological) **sites, practices, participation and re-presentation of women and (gendered or feminist) spaces**, and
- (iii) the theoretical framing that characterizes these notions and fosters high degrees of participation by individual women working in (and institutional engagement with) the social enterprise sector (where a small body of research explores the formation of women’s networks recognized as a means for women to gain access to this sector); also the theoretical framing in terms of institutional support for (non-)hegemonic practices that characterize incubator and accelerator spaces and the formation of entrepreneurial eco-systems.

Throughout this section, we identify: (1) the main themes emerging from previous works; (2) raise questions that we then address and (3) add our numerous contributions to existing debates.

As early as 1990, American sociologist Joan Acker described organisational structures as gendered, and designed for a ‘worker’ popularly and institutionally conceived as male (Acker, 1990). Since then, a rich, trans-disciplinary scholarship has investigated gender inequality at work across different sectors, from the lens of multiple theoretical perspectives. In particular, during the last two decades entrepreneurship and enterprises have also been described as highly gendered spaces. For example, it has been argued that women entrepreneurs are constantly designated as ‘other’ (Ahl, 2004; Marlow & Patton, 2005; Ahl & Marlow, 2012), and face specific disadvantages and barriers (Marlow, 2002; De Bruin, Brush & Welter, 2006; see also Beard, 2017). Some explain the growing interest of academics, and especially of feminist scholars, as the activism underpinning gender and entrepreneurship. In fact, business ownership is often regarded as a force for social change, and an empowering tool towards women’s liberation (Calás, Smircich & Bourne, 2009; Scott, Dolan, Johnstone-Louis, Sugden & Wu, 2012). Yet authors from within different feminist epistemologies differ in focus, analytical lens and even assessment of entrepreneurship as an activity and a material and symbolic space.

The first part of the literature review is structured around five overlapping areas:

- (i) Liberal feminist themes;
- (ii) the radical, post-structuralist and post-humanist critiques;
- (iii) current research trends;
- (iv) the boom of entrepreneurship studies and the call to unpack the gender dimension; and
- (v) social entrepreneurship: a gendered ecology.

This is followed by what we consider some pertinent questions regarding gaps in the literature.



## 2.1 LIBERAL FEMINIST THEMES

Broadly speaking ‘liberal feminists’, to begin with, are committed to remove all obstacles that prevent women entrepreneurs from accessing the same resources and opportunities offered to their male homologues. They tend to understand gender as the product of socialisation processes, and assume that all rational human beings, were they not raised differently, would behave and perform similarly (Greer & Greene, 2003; Calás, Smircich, & Bourne 2009). Building on this, they are mostly interested in gender differences in entrepreneurial performances (Alsos & Ljunggren, 1998; Chell & Baines, 2006; Robb & Watson, 2011), which they often minimise or explain as the result of unequal access to capital, technology or training (Azam Roomi, Harrison & Beaumont-Kerridge, 2009; Schmidt & Parker, 2003; Gatewood, Carter, Brush, Greene & Hart, 2003; Carter, Shaw, Lam & Wilson, 2007) or of engrained societal expectations and learned ideas about gender (Roper & Scott, 2009; Marlow & MacAdam, 2013). Scholars within this paradigm also concern themselves with women’s (and men’s) entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes towards entrepreneurial growth, profitability or internationalisation, illustrating how existing structural barriers as well as gender undermine the confidence and effectiveness of self-employed women (Alsos & Ljunggren, 1998). Another well-researched aspect concerns the way in which women entrepreneurs negotiate work-life balance while managing the pressures to conform to extremely high standards in both fields, and how this differs from men’s experiences (De Bruin, Brush & Welter, 2009; Datta & Gailey, 2012). Importantly, such conclusions have been drawn from large-N surveys, as well as from interview-based studies (see Eddleston & Powell, 2012).

## 2.2 THE RADICAL, POST-STRUCTURALIST AND POST-HUMANIST CRITIQUES

Despite being rather influential in the public sphere, liberal arguments have been harshly criticised by researchers identifying as radical, post-structural, and more recently post-humanist or ‘new materialism’ feminists.

As for radical and Marxist authors, they have not only taken issue with the literature’s focus on white, middle-class women entrepreneurs, but also with what they saw as an insufficiently vehement critique of existing patriarchal and capitalistic work patterns (Calás, *et al.*, 2009); see also (Mirchandani, 1999) and (Blackburn *et al.*, 2002). Criticisms from post-structuralist feminists, instead, address an even more fundamental level. In a widely-read article from 2006, for example, business administration expert Helene Ahl set herself the task of deconstructing the discourse surrounding entrepreneurship, which she viewed as built around the ‘male norm’. She suggested to stop looking at gender as an explanatory variable of entrepreneurial performances, and investigate instead how gender was constructed in the context of entrepreneurship. Only then, she argued, will we understand how entrepreneurship emerges and is reproduced as an intrinsically gendered space (Ahl, 2004; 2006). In a series of later contributions, Ahl and her co-authors systematically reviewed the existing scholarship on gender and entrepreneurship, describing it as operating under some implicit but problematic assumptions, such as an understanding of entrepreneurship as fundamentally good, an essentialist view of gender, and a view of public and private as two separate – and gendered – spheres (Scott *et al.*, 2012; Foss & Ahl, 2015) see also (Ahl, 2004).

On a similar note, Italian work sociologist Bruni, writing in the same years, applied a Foucauldian framework to the study of gender and entrepreneurship. Drawing on ethnographic data from her native country, she conceptualised gender and entrepreneurship as situated performances at the intersection between bodies, discourses and practices (Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2004a, 2005). In so doing, she unpacked the ways in which people construct themselves and each other into ‘men’ and ‘women’, as well as ‘entrepreneurs’ (labelled as ‘gendering of entrepreneurship’ and ‘enterprising of gender’).

While this has given rise – the authors claimed – to an androcentric ‘entrepreneur mentality’, there is still space for the negotiation of alternative, and less gendered, forms of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identities (Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2004b, 2005).

## 2.3 CURRENT RESEARCH TRENDS

As we saw, the influential post-structuralist and post-humanist critiques have in common with radical feminist theories a more neutral, if not necessarily negative, view of entrepreneurial activity. However, these critiques reject radical feminists' emphasis on women and men as inherently different, as well as their attempt to promote 'feminine' traits as a force for good or even an asset in the workplace (see Thomas & Buckle, 2003).

At the same time, these innovative approaches have also exerted a notable influence on recent mainstream, 'liberal' studies. In fact, whereas earlier 'liberal' analyses might have lacked sophistication in their conceptualisation of gender, most up-to-date contributions (without necessarily adopting a post-structuralist or post-humanist framework) acknowledge the role of processes of social and discursive construction and material practices. For instance, their focus has shifted from comparisons between men and women to how entrepreneurs of all genders construe each other (Tagg & Wilson, 2012), or to the differences and divisions between women business owners who perceive entrepreneurship as gender-neutral and those who reclaim the label of woman entrepreneur (Lewis, 2006). Other examples include attempts to unpack and 'un-gender' the definitions of performance and success (Slaughter, 2015); but see, more generally (Duckworth, 2016), and the influence of language structures (such as gender-differentiated pronouns) on the gender gap in entrepreneurial activity (Hechavarria, Terjesen, Stenholm, Brännback & Lång, 2018). A few recent works have even proposed looking at entrepreneurship through 'post-feminist' lenses, focusing no more on exclusionary practices but on the new feminine subjectivities that are currently emerging in the entrepreneurial arena (Lewis, 2011; 2014).

Last but not least, the final legacy of the post-structuralist and then post-humanist turn is probably the increasing use of in-depth qualitative methodologies in the field. Above all, case studies and discourse analysis have been seen as particularly suitable to unpack the relationship between gender and entrepreneurship (see, for example, (Scott *et al.*, 2012), arguing from a perspective that the authors call 'pragmatist feminism'). This also entailed a shift from generic studies of 'entrepreneurs', often with little details provided on industry or sector (see Foss & Ahl (2015) for a critique), to sector studies, and a stronger attention for context and space (see Hanson, 2009). The need to produce action-research informed studies, which might be of help to actual women entrepreneurs, has also been repeatedly emphasised (Scott *et al.*, 2012).

## 2.4 THE BOOM OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP STUDIES AND THE CALL TO UNPACK THE GENDER DIMENSION

Among the most recent, sector-specific studies of gender and entrepreneurship, one can count the emerging scholarship on gender and social entrepreneurs(hip). Generally meant as the process of creating a venture designed to address a social problem through trading (Tracey & Stott, 2017); see also Seelos and Mair (2005); and Dacin *et al.* (2011), who list 37 different definitions), social entrepreneurship has attracted a great deal of public attention during the last two decades, especially in English speaking countries. In fact, social entrepreneurial activities have been supported by numerous corporate, public and third sector programmes across the two sides of the Atlantic, and widely subsidised and praised by the New Democratic and New Labour governments of the late 1990s and early 2000s. This increasing interest has been mirrored, too, by a boom of academic studies, exploring, in particular, the motivations of actual and aspiring social entrepreneurs, as well as the role of networks, institutional systems and cross-sectoral partnerships in promoting social ventures (Philips *et al.*, 2015; Ahl & Marlow, 2012).

We have seen, in the last few years, experts calling for a more critical research agenda on the phenomenon, moving away from normative assumptions about its inherent goodness and novelty, and exploring its less palatable sides (Larsson & Brandsen, 2016). Specifically, it has been argued that the existing literature has largely neglected the gendered side of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship, and that the unique experiences and challenges of women social entrepreneurs should be the object of further research (Haugh, 2005; Moulaert *et al.* 2013; Ahl & Marlow, 2012). Somewhat expectedly, the scholars who responded to this call were mostly from the United Kingdom, where the gender dimension of social entrepreneurship is

particularly striking. Indeed, about 41 percent of British social ventures are started and led by women, and twice as many British women found, or co-found, social start-ups than initiate small businesses without a recognisable social purpose (Social Enterprise UK, 2017).

Regrettably, most extant studies have an essentially descriptive focus. They have thus simply confirmed that social entrepreneurship in the UK is proportionately more accessible to women relative to conventional entrepreneurship, without unveiling much on the reasons and underlying mechanisms behind this gap (Harding, 2004; Teasdale, McKay, Phillimore, & Teasdale, 2011). On the other hand, however, scholars have rightfully observed that British social entrepreneurs are commonly described in the media using the stereotypical traits of the 'white male hero' (stripped, for example, from caring and/or domestic responsibilities). It has also been suggested that this narrative is reinforced by the existing, not particularly gender-aware academic literature (Humbert, 2012; Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2016).

## 2.5 SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A GENDERED ECOLOGY?

Another evident lacuna in our understanding of the intersections between gender and social entrepreneurship concerns the characteristics and impact of (gendered) ecologies. In fact, entrepreneurial networks and more formal, bespoke structures such as start-up incubators and accelerators have been long regarded as crucial to entrepreneurial legitimacy and – ultimately – efficacy (see Patton, 2013). Students of social innovation and social entrepreneurship, in particular, have made of incubators and accelerators central research topics (Moulaert *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, this well-established body of research has been repeatedly critiqued, too, for remaining mostly gender-blind (Marlow & McAdam, 2015).

A few important exceptions exist in the field of conventional entrepreneurship studies. Several authors, for example, have helpfully shown how women entrepreneurs face considerable constraints with regards to participation in business associations, chambers, and incubation / acceleration programmes (Weiler & Bernaske, 2006; Patton, 2013; Berdahl, 2007), and thus tend to rely on more informal networks of acquaintances to access the knowledge, resources and opportunities they need (Doh & Zolnik, 2011; Bischof, 2017). However, post-structuralist and post-humanist theorists have criticised those studies for their essentialist outlook on gender, and for failing to unpack the complexities and power dynamics within different organisations and communities (Foss, 2010). With this in mind, it has also been suggested that organisations such as incubators and accelerators should be purposely investigated as gendered social arenas (Marlow & McAdam, 2015).

More relevant to our analysis, no specific studies of incubators, accelerators or other organisations supporting women social entrepreneurs, or examining the role that social capital and ecology play in the rise and success of female social entrepreneurship, have been carried out to date. We see this gap in current knowledge as particularly problematic, considering that women, already forced to perform specific forms of identity work in order to fit in within incubation or acceleration spaces, face an added layer of difficulty when they also need to build their legitimacy as social entrepreneurs.

## 2.6 WOMAN AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: SOCIOLOGICAL/GENDER STUDIES PERSPECTIVES AND THEMES

In psychology and neurosciences, the topic of gender differences in creativity processes is a hot and controversial one (heterogeneous findings, politicised debate, puzzling picture) (see Abraham (2016) for a review). However, there are very interesting recent scholarship analyses of gender biases and perceived creativity (Proudfoot *et al.*, 2015). It is shown that people (men and women alike) associate creativity with 'agentic' masculine qualities (boldness, risk taking, independence), and therefore believe that men are generally more creative than women. This affects assessments of work, as well as innovative thinking processes from managers and supervisors in most industries.



Feminist scholars have, and continue to shape the field of gender studies, most significantly in the context of social entrepreneurship. This has been primarily through a challenge to hegemonic discourses on gender differences framed by biological determinism. As previously mentioned, biological determinism argues that gender difference is constituted within binarized understandings of gender, wherein males and females are 'natural' opposites; this argument is extended to account for differences in intellect, psychology and behaviour, which are also argued to be biologically determined; and ultimately considered the essence of masculinity and femininity. To be a male social entrepreneur is to be tough, robust, rational, daring, fearless, original, tenacious and mathematically and spatially inclined. By contrast being a female social entrepreneur is claimed to be characterized by being reliant, submissive, sensitive, weak, emotional, and predisposed to particular roles and occupational roles.

Gender norms influence the division of labour and responsibilities, shaping the ways women, men and people of all genders are recruited, access power or are promoted. During the last decade, an ever-increasing number of women have turned to social entrepreneurship. While social enterprises seem to have generated leadership niches for women, gender-based discrimination, sexism and stereotyping are by no means absent in this field.

A few recent figures:

- Only 17% of US tech start-ups are founded by women (Teare, 2016)
- Only 17% of UK business owners are women (RBS Group, 2012)
- In the UK, 14% of angel investors are women (UK Business Angels Association, 2017)
- The percentage of women-founded venture-backed start-up companies has plateaued at approximately 17 percent since 2012 (Teare, 2016)
- Between 2009 to 2014, only 15.5% have at least one female founder. (Teare & Desmond, 2016)

Yet the picture changes when it comes to social enterprises:

- 40% of British social enterprises are led by women
- Twice as many British women run social enterprises as lead small businesses
- British women are much less likely than men to consider starting up their own business, although they are more likely than men to want to start a social enterprise or charity. [data from [socialenterprise.org.uk](http://socialenterprise.org.uk)]

What are the possible reasons for this phenomenon? Do social enterprises offer alternative work and governance culture, or a stronger focus on work-life-balance? Are they less of an old-boy club / present less high barriers? Is it because of the newness / fluidity of the sector? Is it because of the beliefs many women have been socialised into (but how about gendered stereotypes such as the idea that all women are inherently more caring / less competitive, etc.)?

Furthermore, we ask: Are women attracted to the creative opportunities that social entrepreneurship offers, combined with a less masculine / less penalising environment (see above on perceived creativity and gender bias)?

The previous part of the literature review has brought together inputs and themes from different bodies of research, in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of women social entrepreneurs and of social entrepreneurship as a gendered sphere. In so doing, it has identified many important, yet unanswered questions.

To start with, the scholarship on gender and social entrepreneurship (still in its infancy) offers no conclusive results concerning the ways in which women social entrepreneurs experience and adapt to their ecology while



(re)shaping it through their day-by-day practices. Building on this, our review shows that the field would greatly benefit from incorporating theoretical and methodological insights from the above-mentioned feminist works on 'mainstream' entrepreneurship. In fact, regarding gender differences as innate (as proposed by radical feminists) might bring us to look at social entrepreneurship as an inherently feminine phenomenon with a strong subversive potential, and one that should target women specifically. Were we to consider, instead, gender discrepancies as a product of socialisation and/or discursive construction, we may see women social entrepreneurs as benefitting from relatively lower structural barriers with respect to their homologues in more conventional fields (a view in harmony with liberal feminist principles). Alternatively, and building on more recent feminist approaches, we could regard the narratives that surround social enterprises, as a comparatively new sector, as less or 'differently' gendered.

Crucially, the impact of these ontological and epistemological nuances can be felt well beyond scholarly disputes. Firstly, one should acknowledge that different women social entrepreneurs see themselves, their work and their role and ambitions as women, entrepreneurs and socially minded individuals rather differently. They might not be familiar with the intricacies of academic feminism, but they all absorb, re-elaborate and make their own, specific societal perspectives on gender in the workplace, the differences between sexes, and the nature of social entrepreneurship vis-à-vis conventional business. As a consequence, their understanding of their key professional and personal needs, and the strategies they will put in place to fulfil them will also differ considerably. Secondly, and equally importantly, incubators, accelerators, and all other networks and organisations that constitute the ecology in which women social entrepreneurs and their ventures develop, will also implement different policies and offer different services according to which of these different views they (and their beneficiaries) uphold. This is why, regardless of one's ontological and epistemological position or political preference for specific streams of feminism, unpacking the different ways in which individuals and organisations make sense of the intersections between the 'gender' and the 'social' side of female social entrepreneurship is an all-important exercise.

At the same time, we strongly believe that investigating social entrepreneurship through a gender lens might also shed light on matters concerning conventional entrepreneurship and, more broadly, the gender side of work and organisations. Indeed, women social entrepreneurs and their ventures are regarded by many as success stories from which lessons should be drawn, both from a liberal viewpoint (social entrepreneurship is a relatively gender equal space) and from more radical perspectives (social enterprises are often conceptualised as alternative, more empowering economic models (Mair & Marti, 2006). Additionally, as we saw, women social entrepreneurs are simultaneously called to perform different, sometimes conflicting identities: not only 'female' and 'entrepreneurial', but also 'socially conscious'. Equally worthy of attention are the popular (mis-)conceptions according to which social enterprises offer a more convenient work-life balance, or – tellingly – extra chances to 'do good'. In other words, if we turn our attention to the discourses, performances and socio-material practices of social entrepreneurship (Bruni *et al.*, 2004a; Humbert, 2012), we can see how this field might both generate leadership niches for women, and push them to redefine and renegotiate different forms of professionalism and personhood. Insights gained from studying these processes – it is the core of our argument – could be usefully applied, too, to a variety of neighbouring fields.

## PART II: RESEARCH AIMS

This scoping study of WISE is positioned in the area of creative industries (Bennett & Hennekman, 2018; Friedman, O'Brien & Laurison, 2017), cultural industries (Allen, 2013), entrepreneurship research, women's studies and sociology. We also take to heart the call, launched in the field of management and organisational studies as well as in other neighbouring disciplines, to produce social science that matters and can be of use to research participants and other practitioners and stakeholders. Our study aims to contribute to:

- (i) the emerging but generally under-theorised literature on gender and social entrepreneurship;
- (ii) the scholarship on the role of incubators, accelerators and more generally entrepreneurial ecologies in supporting WISE; and
- (iii) more broadly, the fields of gender and organisations and gender and entrepreneurship.

### 2.7 INVESTIGATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEMS: IS IT A MAN'S WORLD AND/OR A FEMINIST SPACE?

Central to our analysis of WISE is understanding the ecosystem. There is a rapidly growing body of literature that examines the interactions between *entrepreneurial firms* and the *context* within which such enterprises operate. The definition of an ecosystem ranges from *interactions and interdependencies* in the value chain (Adner & Kapoor, 2010) to an emphasis on *actors, governance* and the general *enabling environment for entrepreneurial action* (Stam & Spigel, 2016). We ask: How does the work environment affect women entrepreneurs who lead on start-ups? What are the fundamental elements to be taken into consideration in the design phases of new start-ups?

Theorizing an ecosystem through a Bourdieusian field where there is struggle and hierarchy an agent's capitals (aggregate of the actual or potential resources) are determined as valuable or not. Some capitals have durability across various fields, but many are valuable in reference to a specific field where they are recognized. It is widely agreed that the creative capacity of start-ups may be conditioned by different variables within the work environment. Different studies argue that the socio-cultural landscape of start-ups that women inhabit and shape, and in turn become shaped by, represents a dynamic creative- regulatory ecological system that promotes and fosters a multiplicity of distributed creativities via diverse regulatory actions of strategizing, planning, action and reflections pertinent to the start-up (Terjesen, Bosma & Stam, 2015; Haddon & Burnard, 2015; Bischof, 2017). On a global scale, we see the construction of the ecosystems that are starting to characterise and challenge the notions of the 'real' in 'start-ups' (which are increasingly considered a vehicle for inventive, managerial and economic expression in the world of women (certainly, traditionally, less visible and successful than their male counterparts)).

Mazzarol (2014) describes *entrepreneurship ecosystems* as a conceptual framework designed to foster economic development via entrepreneurship, innovation and small business growth. Isenberg (2011) identifies six domains within the entrepreneurship ecosystem: a conducive culture, enabling policies and leadership, availability of appropriate finance, quality human capital, markets and a range of institutional supports. One wonders, however, why 'gender' is not included here. Hence, we ask: What characterizes women's experiences of social enterprises? In a study of gender-responsive trade in Asia-Pacific regions, Patrice Braun (2018) recognises that the ways in which gender is produced in WISE are complex, made up of diverse discourses, cultural practices and gendered accounts.

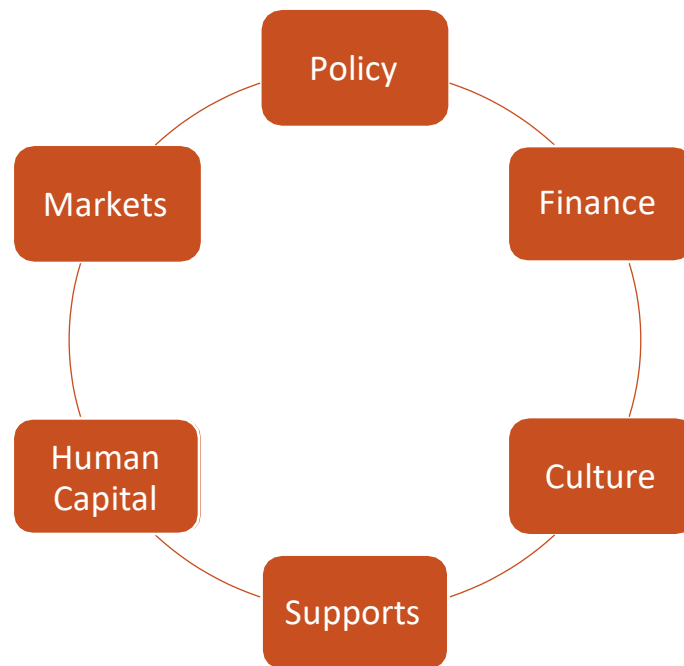


Figure 2.7 Entrepreneurship ecosystem domains (adapted from Isenberg (2011))

Every component represents a potential barrier but also enablers faced by women entrepreneurs, making this point a complement to the findings reported in Section B. According to Ahl (2006), without paying heed to gender, **entrepreneurship ecosystems** may well perpetuate systemic discrimination, leading to male-led enterprises being more likely to succeed than female-led enterprises.

## 2.8 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AS AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL SITE? A FEMINIST SPACE?

Drawing on key examples of key feminist philosophies, theories and research that has shaped understandings of women's entrepreneurship (WE), this study seeks to position itself as historically informed. It attends to important shifts over time. We work with ideas about gender and WISE generatively, in ways that recognize their indebtedness to the past. We identify the centrality of feminism and feminist thought to the field of WE and the continued relevance of gender to all debates about WISE. This entails an engagement with the affordances that feminist theory has created to conceptualise WISE in ways that challenge dominant conservative and regressive ideas, policies and practices (see Burnard, Ross, Dragovic, Powell, Minors, Mackinlay, 2017).

As previously stated, there are many types of feminist theories with the main one being Liberal Feminism Theory which holds that men and women are fundamentally equal. There are scholars such as Ahl (2006) who advocate moving beyond *liberal feminism theory*, suggesting that the internationalization of SME is far from gender-neutral. Women face additional barriers because of their gender and status, with firm size in part due to unequal access to resources required for enterprise growth (Braun, 2018). Another type of feminist theory was Social Feminism Theory which positions the need to understand and acknowledge women's experiences, skills, competencies and values (Orser *et al.*, 2011). Envisioning a double bottom line 'feminist entrepreneurship theory' the latter authors propose to not just explain gender differences but to 'do something about it'. Researchers further suggest that trade support is most effective when focused on solving the specific needs of enterprises (Gundlach & Sammartino, 2013).

## 2.9 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

In Europe, the average start-up founder is male (82.8%), has a university degree (84.8%) and is currently 38 years old (Steigertahl & Mauer, 2018, p. 2). The 2016 *Start-up Monitor*, asserts that only 14.8% of start-up founders are female with significant differences between countries with the UK having one of the highest percentages (Kollmann & Kensbock 2016, p. 39). Feminist research has investigated the entrepreneurship field drawing in multiple feminist perspectives to the study of entrepreneurship. Considering women as social entrepreneurs navigating an eco-system compels us to consider how 'the feminine' is embedded in within an entrepreneurial identity in current times (Orser, *et al.*, 2011; Ahl, 2006). What are the gender constraints imposed upon women by society, industry, venture capitalist firms? In start-up Genome's study, they found that start-up founders that were women were "more likely to say they want to 'change the world' with their start-ups, while men are more likely to say their main mission is to 'build high-quality products.'" (Muntean, & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015). Our study asks how may gender constrain the types and success of start-ups or the types of roles? What is the relationship between start-ups and reinforcing societal gender biases and stereotypes?

## INTRODUCING METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

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### 3.1 POINTS OF INQUIRY

The report is structured according to three main points of inquiry:

1. GENDER (Women): 1.1 What characterizes women's experiences of social enterprises? 1.2 How, if at all, do gendered conceptions of masculinity and femininity influence how women participate and represent social entrepreneurship? 1.3 To what extent are power dynamics informed by normative conceptions of gender?
2. SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: 2.1 To what extent are social enterprises epistemological sites? 2.2 To what extent are social enterprises constructed as feminist spaces? 2.3 What is distinctive about what propels these women to become social entrepreneurs and how do these women successfully navigate the field of social entrepreneurship?
3. THEORISING 3.1 In studying these women's experiences (participation and re-presentation), what is the contribution of gender theory? 3.2 How does a Bourdieusian notion of 'capital' help us understand women's experience as social entrepreneurs? 3.3 How might we challenge the prevailing culture and norms in social enterprises and see things differently using concepts from feminist new materialism?

### 3.2 METHODOLOGY

In exploring the perceptions and practices of 33 female social entrepreneurs we grouped the three interview stages by three separate groups for analytical purposes:

Stage 1 - Group 1 – Emerging Social Entrepreneurial Women

Stage 2 - Group 2 – Early Career Social Entrepreneurial Women

Stage 3 - Group 3 – Sustained and Successful Social Entrepreneurial Women

The study was based on in-depth semi-structured interviews. Additionally, there was the use of one two-hour workshop with a small sample from Group 1 interviewees where materials were given agency, where women intra-acted with the materials in the process of reflecting on certain questions. These questions focused on the challenges and enablers, norms and appropriateness of career aspirations, choices and chances along with the probing of assumptions concerning the gender neutrality of the entrepreneurship discourse. We were looking to further understanding of how social entrepreneurial women perform gender and entrepreneurship at the intersection with other emerging findings at this time in the project which was at the conclusion of Stage 1. Furthermore, the materials with which they worked prompted them to remember experiences functioning as material assemblages and meaning-making (see Appendix C).

### 3.3 RESEARCH PLAN

The study was carried out in 2018-2019 over three research stages:

- (i) Stage 1 – January-April 2018. We engaged in a literature review, set up our fieldwork and conducted preliminary interviews (n=10, Stage 1). The territory covered included interviewees' perceptions and practices, especially regarding the concept of space as product of gendered power relations and of women as innovative leaders;
- (ii) Stage 2 – May-December 2018, conducted three interviews (although 10 was our target); and

- (iii) Stage 3 – January-May 2019, we concluded with another 20 interviews of women with further data analysis (open coding, higher-level coding, ‘member checking’ with research participants) and wrote up our final research outputs.

### 3.4 RECRUITMENT AND SAMPLING: SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS/INTERVIEWEES

Participants were recruited through conventional networks and online social media sites used by women entrepreneurs. We purposively selected participants based on three criteria:

1. Location: Located/working in the UK
2. Ages: 20-35 years and 35-50 years and 50-55 years
3. Career backgrounds: sales and marketing, research and development or finance / accounting

Furthermore, in recruiting the participants, we considered some other factors: (i) having shared a working space with other women-led or women-only social start-up teams; or (ii) having shared university-based incubators and accelerators, with over 400 recently-founded start-ups and thousands of investors with a unique start-up culture; this include businesses from very different fields; or (iii) coming from a range of industries represented with respondent demographics of between 30-50 years old, with career backgrounds in either sales and marketing, research and development or finance / accounting.

**Table 3.4: Interviewee group descriptors**

Group	Descriptor	Number
1	Emerging social entrepreneurs with selected ventures; women seeking to raise capital for start-up and growth	10
2	Early career social entrepreneurs; over 12 months experience being supported by social ventures	3
3	Experienced women-owned start-ups sustained beyond 3 years; experienced with range of industries and business sectors represented and have had extensive experience and success and/or taught women entrepreneurs in HE contexts. Some are trainers/educators/supporters or work on a board of directors for award winning social enterprises	20

**Group 1** interviewees, who we call ‘Emerging’, were selected among women entrepreneurs supported by Social Ventures, an incubator for start-ups with a strong social mission. The incubator, which has a specific physical space, supports people of all genders, but has a strong emphasis on promoting equality and diversity.

**Group 2** interviewees, the ‘Early Career’, were selected among entrepreneurs supported by an incubation/acceleration programme. The programme is for women only and has a specific focus on promoting gender equality, but has no specific emphasis on social mission. The programme does not have a specific physical space. Entrepreneurs are selected from across the country, and – while they would occasionally meet – they do not share a co-working space. Moreover, the selected entrepreneurs all pursue a social/environmental mission.

**Group 3** interviewees, who we call the ‘Sustained and Successful’, were selected women entrepreneurs, some of whom were supported by an acceleration programme, while others were not. The programme does not have a special emphasis on gender equality or social entrepreneurship. However, all selected entrepreneurs pursued a broadly meant social or environmental mission. Several of the women in this group were SE educators involved in programme delivery.

This sampling helps explore questions regarding gender and (social) entrepreneurship, different ways to understand a social mission, the role of space, and the role of supporting institutions that do (or do not) specifically integrate gender concerns. In terms of their education, 100% were college educated or had a graduate degree, including doctoral level training. The study fulfils the principle of critical case sampling, but they also allow us to study women entrepreneurs (WE) in a working environment where they navigate, and, daily, intra-act (Barad, 2007) with feminist aspirations and the start-up community space.

### 3.5 DATA COLLECTION

The focus and scope of this research was to interview up to as many as 40 interviewees. We were able to nearly meet this target ( $n = 33$ ). This number offered a sufficient quantity to: (a) see patterns (b) develop generalisations across this population through three stages of grounded theoretical analysis. The design of the questions for the semi-structured interview schedule was based on the major topics arising from literature review and the original research questions:

1. Self-description as a start-up founder
2. Description of own motivation strategies/skills/entrepreneurship creativity
3. Strategies for handling challenges and conditions that act as enablers
4. Gendered practices/ behaviours/ masculinities

The semi-structured interviews were carried out across three stages. All interviews were audio-recorded. Only a few interviews were transcribed verbatim. After each interview, there was a brief 5-minute feedback sessions with each interviewee exploring one single questions: ‘How was it for you?’ This question enabled an ‘added value’ of being interviewed without the ‘tape rolling’ and inviting the interviewee to reflect back on the questions in terms of points of interest, dilemmas, problematic or insightful issues arising from this ‘discussion’. This question also enabled a highly efficient respondent validation process. This type of feedback on the interviewing process reveals how interviews feel and think about things they do and assume and more often, do not have time to think about.

The time and effort and expense of transcribing this number of interviews was a concern. We handled this by structuring the phenomenological interviews and workshop that brought out salient insights for this small scoping study. This meant we sought ways to carry out the work that was ethical and socially responsible in ways in which individuals at the cutting-edge of their profession as start-ups could provide insights for this scoping study without drawing too many resources into the transcription of 33 interviews.

In a future study, it would be beneficial to introduce handwritten ‘Reflective Diaries’ and/ or ‘Podcast-type digital logs’ to see their description of work and description of the self as social entrepreneur more closely across one working week (five days) during an assigned week. The fleshing out of individual accounts of perspective and practice is something that an in-depth interview (or series) can elaborate on to some extent but establishing a platform for exploring the complex multi-layered level of lived experience data is something we will consider in a future study.



### 3.6 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS GROUPS 1 TO 3

Table 3.6: Examples of phenomenological interview questions which helped to uncover the experiences and challenges women in social enterprises face over time and in the current time period

Stage	Questions related to gender	Questions related to practices, co-working spaces, work-life balance / practices	Questions related to entrepreneurship
1	How does your gender matter? Do you feel your experiences with investors, clients, access to capital and resources, have been somewhat affected by your gender (episodes of discrimination, sexism, unequal treatment, expectations of underperformance)?	Where do you work? What do you think of the idea of co-working spaces and incubators / accelerators, for women only, or of women only one-off training? How do you achieve a work- family balance?	What attracted you to this sector? What brought you to become a social entrepreneur?
2	What role does gender play in your current career identity? How do challenges and enablers play out in your current time-period / experience / and success as a SE?	How have you recognised your life and work balance? (Interestingly, no one talks of this when it comes to men.) What's your experience of this? What work-life balance / practices feature now that didn't a year ago in your current time-period / experience / and success as a SE?	What still attracts you to this sector a year on?
3.	Does gender still matter? What/ How / Why / When does gender matter?	What has changed in your balancing of work-life practice and performance profile due to individual circumstances and life-Stage and given the dynamic nature of SE? How / Why / What role does gender research play in your teaching of SEs?	What don't you take for granted that once were assumptions with women working as social entrepreneur? How do you navigate the post-start-up landscape? How / Why / When does research on women entrepreneurs play in your teaching, in theory and practice?

### 3.7 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Not all interviewers were transcribed verbatim. All interviews were audio-taped. In our analysis of the interview data, we focused on understanding how participants perceived and practiced being social entrepreneurs. For the purposes of this report we have used an inductive-deductive form of analysis drawing upon the theoretical framing and concepts (e.g. Bourdieu, theories of gender (women) and feminist / new materialisms). Working across these three theoretical approaches, which allow for constant comparison, also demonstrates a high degree of analytical rigor.

For focused analysis, the project drew on two complementary methodological approaches: in-depth interviews and a workshop. In the latter, where women infra-acted with the materials in the process of

reflecting on certain questions, the materials prompted them to remember experiences – material assemblages or making practices.

The coding system involved inductive and deductive coding with particular attention paid to the coding developed in interaction with the collected data over the three stages of data collection. After each data set was sorted and classified, we proceeded with primary coding and pre-determined category assignment (i.e. points of inquiry or nodes concerning (a) gender and women's experiences (b) social enterprises (c) theorising space and sites). The points of inquiry are the major topics which appeared as nodes throughout the data collection stages.

Since these points of inquiry/nodes became the main topics of the study this process provided the main organising principle. The criteria for organising these points of inquiry-as-nodes or pre-determined categories meant that the data led to several categories/clustered codes (see Table 3).

Data analysis was an ongoing process, occurring in parallel with data collection. The primary aim of the data analysis was the seek saturation of emergent themes before combining these to find themes which featured across all cases. The idea of saturation comes from grounded theory research, where sample size consistently grows with each new observation, comparisons could be made between previous analysis, considering similarities and differences (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Although this research did not take a grounded theory approach, we conducted an ongoing comparative analysis across stages.

### 3.8 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON LIMITATIONS

Working across Bourdieu, theories of gender (women) and feminist new materialism allows us to glimpse how women in social enterprises makes sense of their experiences of gender politics and gender relations. Furthermore, in investigating the role of 'ontology' (ways of being) and 'epistemology' (ways of knowing), we see how gendered narratives, identities and practices exist across social enterprises, and how can they can challenge hegemonic forms of thinking and practice. These women face many challenges as leaders, co-founders or members of women-led teams. Drawing on the theoretical framing allows us to see the relationship between an agent and a hierarchized field. We see how these women identify around issues of power and where they seek to problematize these crucial issues.

Although we believe that this study offers rich insights to the phenomena under study, it is limited in its scale. Due to the nature of the qualitative approach that we followed, the findings of the study are not generalisable. Although the use of phenomenological interviews helped us uncover the experiences of women in social enterprises, and the challenges they faced in the current time-period, these experiences may change due to individual circumstances and because of the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship.

## SECTION B: FINDINGS AND CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

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### PART I: INTRODUCTION

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*"Our measure of success is a male measure of success,  
it's about money and power"*

*(Terry, pg. 33)*

*"I have always been very socially aware, ... even when I was at school I used to be involved in social  
projects"*

*(Jill, pg. 37)*

*"It made it a very safe place to have a voice and to feel that there was room  
to be a woman in business"*

*(Terry, pg. 38)*

The Group 1 interview sample represents women between 25 and 55 years of age with mixed cultural and interdisciplinary backgrounds, some coming to the social enterprise sector from a corporate background whilst others have come to social enterprise from entrepreneurial experience with other firms or moved into social enterprise due to life changes.

**Table 4.1: Group 1: Emerging Entrepreneurial Women**

Participants	Children / marital status	Age	Nationality	Sector	Career background
Filipa	No child / Not married	25-30	Italian	SE Education and Training	Consultancy
Sally	No child / Not married	30-35	French	Recycling	Communication
Ellen	Children / Married	50-55	British	Industrial Sector / Service Sector	Entrepreneur (previously founded other start-ups)
Mary	No child / Not married	25-30	American	Ethical fashion retailer Retail Sector	Third sector; social entrepreneurship support
Jill	Children / Married	50-55	British	Retail Sector	Marketing
Terry	Children / Married	30-35	British	SE Educator	Writer; childhood services
Kristine	No child / Not married	25-30	British	Service Sector	Youth support services
Karen	Children / Married	40-45	British	Ethical accessories	Technology
Ann	No child / Not married	50-55	Lithuanian	Environmentally-friendly transport	Business development
Liz	Children / Married	30-35	Spanish	Ethical fashion	Marketing

#### 4.1 WHAT ARE THE WAYS OF KNOWING FOR WOMEN IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

In thinking critically of ways of knowing, we investigate identity development and identity practices for women working in social entrepreneurship. How are identities realized? How are they realized in relation of self and to others? How are these women influenced by a wider social justice agenda to enact change? What do they learn from their role models and mentors and how are they passing on their knowledge as role models and mentors?

The women in this group (of whom 50% are mums) tend to resist being defined as a social entrepreneur in gendered terms, and this seems to be because of a connotation that women become social entrepreneurs

because they are naturally 'nice'. Mary, one of the younger participants in the group, does not "like the idea of saying women are more nurturing and that's why they're into social entrepreneurship. I don't buy that as a reason". A couple of the other participants present theories that re-frame male and female approaches to being an entrepreneur in the SE environment. One such theory is that there is less social stigma for women to focus on social aspects, something that men have a harder time to be allowed to participate in and make a living from. This is proposed by Filipa, another of the younger participants, who is weary of the "women are nice narrative" categorisation (Renold & Allan, 2006):

It might be some sort of socialisation thing. ... as a woman you are allowed to be focusing on social aspects of things more than on the money side, or the success side or the career ladder..., I want to interpret it in a more liberated way, if this is true, women may have better choice as there is less social stigma or less issues with them giving something back with having a business.

She supports her theory with evidence from her experience in the Cambridge Social Venture group which had a similar number of male and female entrepreneurs:

One thing that I remember from those trainings, from people sharing their experiences ... quite often guys would be ... I felt a bit like the guys that were setting up a social venture um kind of had a very powerful personal story behind it, like my daughter has this health issue so I went into this ... it is not to say that women do not have it, but I kind of felt that men, maybe there has to be this strong personal need to go past traditional ideas of corporate success. Whilst maybe for women it might be because socialisation, you can support social process without the need to be personally strongly involved.

Another theory is that some women come to social entrepreneurship after some event in their lives, commonly after they have had a child, as in Jill's case, an older member of the group (50-55 years). Whilst speaking, she is echoing the constraints for men and the freedom for women in SE that Filipa speaks of:

I would say that, another thing that informs women doing it, we tend to have a career break if we have children that makes it easy to make that transition, whereas men feel they cannot break away from their traditional care ... to me it happened before I had children ... having that time to self-reflect helps them to realise.

Most of the women express a dissatisfaction with corporate values, which motivates them to either shift to the SE environment later in life or to move into it at a young age, and some of them reflect on what it is about the corporate values that is unappealing. Terry, one of the mid-age participants (30-35 years) in the group, speaks about the limitations of the business measure of success as being a male measure of success:

Our measure of success is a male measure of success, it's about money and power, you know the FC100 thing, no sane person wants to work at the head of one of those companies because you have to kill yourself to do it, a form of madness effectively and yet that's a measure we continually use to measure female success, whereas I think most women ... are not so financially driven and perhaps that's a luxury of not necessarily having always had to be historically the wage earner, is that there is room not to be driven by the financial side of it and to be able to consider doing something for meaning or for change or for a different value set of wanting things to be better for the next generation or whatever that is, is that somewhere there is room inside people's heads to consider using business for good and for change and not just making the most amount of money from exploiting people that they can.

Even in a situation where there is an even balance of men and women in a social entrepreneurship environment, as in the Cambridge Social Ventures group, the women experience a gender difference in how men and women present themselves: for example, men, even whilst they present personal stories as motivating their SE projects, perform and represent their interests with primarily corporate rather than social values:

Some of the male led ventures for some reason tended to be techie, more tech oriented, it feels like the sort of questions they had for the trainers were um quite corporate in a way, were a lot about .. and investors and things like. It's not that women ask different questions. I think, those trainings were very much, were safe spaces for sure, but different from what I usually experience in women only spaces. The incubator people, the centre, they were very conscious of talking about fuck ups, failures, and that very much helps everyone, maybe especially men, so of let go and share things, and sharing aspect is what makes it a safe space. I always felt it was a proper business environment, where yes, you do discuss things um that might be personal, but uh a lot was still business, and that has to do a little bit with the approach that the men showed in those situations. These are mostly feelings, I don't have evidence for it, but I more rarely remember women asking like so how do we pitch this to investors, whereas guys would be more geared towards that.

Terry's experience is mirrored in Jill's reflections on the differences between the approaches and foci of men and women in SE programmes:

From the different programmes that I have been on, different networking, the male social entrepreneurs that I know tend to be around environmentalism, there's quite a few that I know do things with solar panels, and wind power and those kinds of things. Umm.... Women tend to be doing more what we would say would be traditional charity things so they are trained in those kinds of things, certainly in the area I am in, ethical fashion, things around children, but in fashion and clothing it is completely 80, 90% women doing it.

Set against this picture, it is perhaps not surprising that a number of the women in the group prefer not to foreground their gender as an identifier, and to be seen as social entrepreneurs first. Mary, one of the younger participants, when asked about the label of 'female entrepreneur' says:

It doesn't bother me because I think promoting women in business is really important. Do I identify as a female entrepreneur? no, probably not, probably social entrepreneur would be the first terminology.

This resistance to foreground their gender may further lie in the deep gender bias they experience in their entrepreneurial practices, and women tend to rationalize this experience, and often accept it. For example, this female entrepreneur, Jill, has a great deal of experience of the business world:

#### EXAMPLE 4.1: GENDER BIAS AS A PERCEPTUAL MATTER

Evidence	Analysis
Jill: "Well it's interesting, the first half of <b>my</b> career was in a <b>very male dominated industry</b> telecommunications and tech, and I noticed it all the time, "I mean I <b>was very well aware</b> especially <b>when I was a new graduate and a maybe shy</b> , I felt completely differently about [being] a women, <b>but I haven't really felt that so much in this industry, it has not crossed my</b> mind actually, because there are so many really strong female role models and I um I think again <b>there's an expectation that I am someone who has got a lot of experience</b> so I don't think people tend to treat <b>me</b> you know treat <b>me</b> in any	<p>Expressing awareness of gender bias in telecommunications industry.</p> <p>Begins to rationalise her experience of gender bias – as being due to youth and personality ('shy').</p> <p>Expresses some awareness of it in the SE space, but says it has not crossed her mind.</p> <p>Shifts to a gender-neutral explanation for gendered experience – she is an experienced person in business.</p>

<p>negative way Um but <b>I can't say I have particularly noticed anything to do with being a female. But I am probably not the kind of person that does notice {laughter}</b> I am really not. <b>I always think that if you look for something negative, you find something negative. It's not a conscious thing</b> that, people might say to <b>me</b> after a conversation, did <b>you</b> notice how they spoke down to <b>you</b>? And <b>I'd say no, I didn't notice that at all {laughter} that probably says something about me.</b> But I think it's age, I am not a new graduate anymore, <b>I've</b> got 20 odd years of experience under my belt, <b>I don't think people treat me in any way disrespectfully."</b></p>	<p>Justifies her gender-neutral explanation – as being due to her personality – she does 'not notice' gender bias towards herself.</p> <p>Defence of not noticing gender bias – if you look for it you will find it. (explanation of why others perceive it).</p> <p>Masks her awareness of gender bias towards her (that others have noticed).</p> <p>Throughout, there is a prominent use of 'I' and 'me' – power narrative of her position.</p>
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Jill's narrative of how gender bias is a perceptual matter that one grows out of with age and experience, masks her awareness of its existence, revealed in the shifts in the movements in her narrative. She generalises gender bias, and in her masking of it, she accepts it or has come to terms with it. Or, perhaps she is not speaking to the interviewer but presenting herself to the interviewer. Recent research demonstrates that perceived gender biases in the evaluation of creativity negatively affect women's work experiences and their chances of success (see Section 1.1). Furthermore, Jill's experience compels us to reflect on Barad's (2007) concept of 'spacetime mattering' where, as social theorists, we engage in thinking differently about the nature of agency, relationality and change without taking these distinctions to be foundational (see 1.3.3). Barad's (2007) theoretical work prompts a speculative reading of affective encounters with time and space as uninterrupted flows of 'nows' that matter in terms of material discursive constructions related to her experience working as a social entrepreneur.

#### EXAMPLE 4.2: LIVED EXPERIENCE OF GENDER BIAS

This younger woman entrepreneur, Mary, has created a successful business in the social venture sphere with a male co-founder (who inspired her to take the plunge from being a facilitator of social ventures to becoming an entrepreneur herself), and reflects on how her experience of trying to engage with the tech space is of a gendered space. She addresses the problem of rationalizing away gendered experiences, and is aware of the tech space as being a gendered space:

there's a tendency to rationalise away experiences and say that they happened based on other reasons – it's not that I'm a girl, it's that I'm only 26; it's not that I'm a girl, because I'm really American, and you know, whatever the reason is. So I feel like it's really hard to view experiences only through a gendered lens. Um I'm happy to say that I don't think I have any overt experiences that [L: 'with discrimination'] no not with investors and finance, I don't think. [L: 'clients?'] not with clients either so I'm happy to say that with ethical fashion industry there's a lot of women in this industry and a lot of collaboration and support amongst almost everyone that I speak to, um but more with um we speak to a lot of agencies and developers and teams like that and in the tech space I do feel like that is a more male dominated industry.

Although Mary expresses a difficulty in 'viewing experiences' as gendered, her lived experience of gendered relations in her conversations in the tech space is clearly visible (see 2.1).



Evidence	Analysis
<p>Mary: “Umm...<b>we</b> speak to a lot of agencies and developers and teams like that and in <b>the tech space I do feel like that is a more male dominated industry</b>, and <b>especially for as a woman that’s not in tech, trying to have a conversation...</b>”</p> <p>Interviewer: “...you are taken less seriously”</p> <p>Mary: “Yeah, <b>there is foundational knowledge that I lack...in our experience we found that my male cofounder has much more success...</b>”</p> <p>Interviewer: “despite that fact that <b>he</b> is also not a tech person”</p> <p>Mary: “Exactly”</p> <p>Interviewer: “Ok”</p> <p>Mary: “...but uh and that so <b>he</b> is kind of slowly <b>over the past year has come to just be the main person that interacts with them...</b>” . ... “And it’s also interesting how <b>it’s a self-fulfilling prophecy /</b> because now, because <b>Lenny</b> had more success with the developers and because uh <b>his personality, he’s a really great learner, he has been able</b> to really dedicate a lot of time to delving into the technical side of the development so that <b>he can hold his own</b> a bit more ... further the fact that <b>as a woman I am further marginalised.</b>”</p>	<p>She shifts from a collective voice ‘we’ to a first person voice ‘I do feel ...’ to speak of the tech space as gender biased. Then refers to herself generically as ‘a woman’, positing that this is an experience that applies to all women.</p> <p>Interviewer shifts her back to first person position, ‘you are...’ and intervenes with a perceptual value, ‘taken less seriously’</p> <p>Entrepreneur now contextualises her gendered experience as involving her male cofounder. The discourse returns to the collective ‘our’ and ‘my’, i.e. they are both aware that there is gender bias in the tech space.</p> <p>Interviewer intervenes, referring to male co-founder as ‘he’, and contextualises the discrepancy of the experience of the male cofounder and the women entrepreneur. Neither are tech people.</p> <p>Entrepreneur refers to male cofounder as ‘he’, and describes a process over time of his relation with ‘them’, the tech developers.</p> <p>She then addresses her co-founder by name, Lenny, becoming specific about his qualities to explain away the gender bias.</p> <p>By virtue of being male, her co-founder has marginalised her more than she already is in the tech entrepreneurial space.</p>

One can observe the progression of her thoughts about the gender bias and how she is relating to it as her narrative unfolds, variously using I, we, my, he, them, and ending with “a woman I”. ‘Successful girls’ discourse, according to Ringrose and Walkerdine (2008, p. 6), positions girls as “model neoliberal citizens” (p. 6) who balance “ideals of masculinity with femininity in post-feminist formations” (see 1.3.2).

Both these detailed examples express different stances to an acceptance of power differences based on gender which is interesting when one considers liberal feminist and radical feminist approaches (see 2.1, 2.2). In Jill’s case, the business space has not changed but she has reconciled to it, and has justified her reconciling to it. In the second Mary has been pushed out of the tech space whilst being very aware that it is because of her gender. She expresses the complexity of gendered relations in the entrepreneurial space, whilst the older more experienced entrepreneur refuses to acknowledge that gender bias exists for her. In these affective encounters (Barad, 2007) with time and space as uninterrupted flows of ‘nows’ it is interesting to see how these women construct themselves in terms of countersentimental narratives (Berlant, 2008; Wanzo, 2009).

## 4.2 WHAT CHALLENGES DO SE WOMEN FACE AND HOW DO THEY FACE THESE? WHAT ARE THE ENABLING FACTORS?

In thinking critically about the challenges these women face we consider the role of threats and obstacles. Furthermore, we consider the enabling factors that allow women to be resilient and achieve their aspirations and goals.

### 4.2.1 Obstacles

Gender bias can be an obstacle for women in raising funds, for example with angel investors (Bischof, 2017). This can be seen with Anne (50-55 years), who at first denies that she has ever experienced gender bias with investors, and speaks of having great male mentors as if to give support to this, and then describes an experience where she thought a pitch had gone very well but where the angel investor afterwards asked about her co-founder Peter, saying that he is the business mind behind it. She re-iterates that most of the time she is treated the same as 'others':

With the current investors absolutely not...I have a lot of men who mentor me and they've all been absolutely amazing – have there been men who did not become our investors because where they said things I would know they would not have said if I were a dude ... ? I have had talks to angel investors where it went very well in my opinion, then at some point they met with cycling co-founder and said who is the man, Peter, he is the business behind it. He was very open in the moment. Most of the time I am treated the same as others. It's not that men have it easy, but then people say things outright to your face.

### 4.2.2 Enabling factors

The social venture incubator that the women in this group were supported by, was a positive experience for all of them and a critical enabler for their aspirations and goals. They all found it to be valuable in their development as social entrepreneurs and developing their businesses. One of the key experiences was the feeling of being 'respected' for their social enterprise ideas, as related by Jill (50-55 years):

I learned a huge amount from just things like the core ... I think one of the main keystones for me was respect, because I felt respected ... I had come in with this social venture that I had been running for a couple of years on my own, and um I am not saying I had not had help, I had had help, and but um a lot of people see it as a hobby, and there are these people saying, 'no that's a great idea and you can do this and do that, and there are all these options available for you, and you can get funding', so I think the biggest impact for me was taking myself seriously because they were taking me seriously.

The social enterprise environment enables women to align their values, with many of them driven by social justice agendas. For example, Jill came to SE later in her life from the corporate world, which, although she was not unhappy there, felt 'it did not sit comfortably':

I have always been very socially aware, ... even when I was at school I used to be involved in social projects and um even when I was working at BT I was always doing fund raising and I was doing my postgraduate part-time in um development management ... I don't think I knew I wanted to set up my own SE until I got a bit older, and then , it's a very strange thing to say, I was walking a path working in a corporate industry and enjoying it and stimulated by it but I still knew deep down it wasn't what I wanted to do and after a while I became more self-aware and realised that I had to make the jump. I suppose so I then left my corporate business and set up my first social enterprise. But I think I was informed by working for a large corporate because of skills and awareness but ... and some of it did not sit comfortably with me. So that what's made me think there must be a better way than making profit and making money and not asking the questions I personally needed to answer...

Anne, who is of a similar age to Jill, also comes from the business world and made a shift to SE because she wanted to work on something good:

I was doing my masters in migration studies and wanted to change the world for the better, open borders. In academia, regulatory work takes a while to have real world impact. I thought I would try out the business world, I went to work for a [...] company first and then realised I wanted to be my own boss. I wanted to work on something good – air quality – transport contributes the most to poor air quality – so having some sort of impact there ...

This alignment of values that SE affords can enable women to shape their working practices; for example, it allows Terry to “employ women in a way that allows them to have a balance with their children and flexibility in understanding priorities, um which also to apply to men but as its still dominantly women um who are the ones who still {laughter} go and have to sort those things out”.

We can see this also with Anne who speaks about the continuum of values running through the business:

we believe in gender equality – reason for being to address discrimination – we do not try to change the outer world – we internally, as team, when we get new team members – it’s nice to be in an environment where we do something that matters.

#### 4.3 WHAT IS THE ECOLOGY OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP? IS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP A FEMINIST SPACE?

Social entrepreneurship has been documented to be masculinist where the entrepreneur is ‘personified as masculine’ and where ‘gender role stereotypes were embedded within the construct of the entrepreneur through a masculine discourse’ (Orser *et al.*, 2011, p. 564; cf. Gupta *et al.*, 2009). In focusing a critical eye upon women’s experiences in social entrepreneurship, we ask to what extent is social entrepreneurship a feminist space. We investigate how women in the space of social enterprise are collaborating with each other as well as the forms of support. Are they shaping this space fundamentally in a way that is feminine and feminist i.e. not masculine? Or, as they contend with gendered norms, do they change their conduct, their ways of speaking? Do they adapt masculine language and shift its meaning, or do they adopt masculine business speak and adapt their behaviour to fit it (Hechavarria, *et al.*, 2018)?

Bourdieu defines social capital as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutional relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, providing each of its members the backing of collectively owned capital. For Terry, having the Cambridge Social Venture mentorship by the university led by women, was a huge support for womens’ voices:

It was massive, just the... I go on and on about the importance of mentorship in all areas, not necessarily gender, and to be under the umbrella of Cambridge University, with um something to do with business run by a woman um was huge ... having the social ventures thing be dominated by women made it a very safe and inclusive place to be able to talk, to feel free about having opinions, to not be intimidated, to not feel like your voice wasn’t going to matter in the room because there might be more intelligent more experienced people there. ... It made it a very safe place to have a voice and to feel that there was room to be a woman in business in the social venture sphere as well and women were successfully doing it and um that just that thing of a woman existing and just being there {laughter} that really mattered.

She explains how “bonding with other women entrepreneurs, knowing what people are going through, people trying to juggle lots of different things at once of, you know, just the support ... there was incredible female support there.” Barad’s (2007) concept of ‘spacetime mattering’ allows us to theorize safe spaces and relationality which are central to how WISE access their capitals. These are affective spaces of “collective

belonging” (Berlant, 2008, p. 55) where, as social entrepreneurs, they reflect on their specific approaches to entrepreneurialism.

Hechavarria, *et al.*, (2018, p. 800) write “[g]endered linguistic structures create and maintain structural differences throughout society, including labor market dynamics” where, drawing on linguistic relativity theory, it can be argued that individuals who “speak languages with gendered linguistic structures are more likely to accept traditional gender roles.” In Jill’s case, there is resistance to explicitly speak about being involved in women’s networks even whilst she is speaking about them, an underlying difficulty in acknowledging the salience of gender. What is significant, however, is that she is part of a network of WISE for her business:

I don’t tend to think whom am I talking to, are you a man or are you woman, but I do build up bonds better with women I think um in this space, I’ve got some, obviously, good male friends as well. For example, my main supplier is run by a woman, and actually, my second new supplier is now run by a woman as well.... I definitely would say that I am part of a network of women social entrepreneurs, um and I am consciously trying to build that up, not because they are women, but because we have a lot in common and it tends to be that they are women.

Terry is consciously shaping the space of SE, using it to address the gender imbalance in society and the way business is conducted, including how one treats one’s customers, and she is direct in speaking about this:

It is about having a clear message about what you stand for and what you believe in and seeing that through in all aspects of the business from the way you employ people, to making it possible to employ women in a way that allows them to have a balance with their children and flexibility in understanding priorities, um which also do apply to men but as its still dominantly women um who are the ones who still {laughter} go and have to sort those things out um I think it’s about making sure that the accessibility to the way that we treat everybody in terms of customer, that we have a very balanced approach to all of that, it’s about selecting books that promote the ideals that we believe in by making sure that 50% of the stock is written by women, that 50% of the stock wherever possible is main female characters that those characters are living their own lives and are in control of their own destiny, that we’re celebrating female history and promoting and valuing all of that in the way that we run our events um have panels you know every sort of element of what we are doing is should be a conscious thought in that decision making process.

The women entrepreneurs are concerned that there needs to be a gender balance and some propose that men need to be a part of that process. For example, the Cambridge Social Venture initiative included both men and women entrepreneurs and male mentors, and women commented on the importance of this gender mix as bring educational for men and women. Terry, for example, reflects on how this enables women to be supported to hold their own in the male business domain:

what I found so helpful is seeing women holding their own in those environments and not being intimidated and being able to operate and function and to being examples of how to do that because essentially when the entrepreneurs get out there they are going to have to function in a still male dominated environment largely and it’s that modelling of how lots of women can do it and manage to do it and manage to be in the teaching side of things and teaching men in a business arena is actually also massively important.... I don’t think it should be instead of, I found that more valuable than being in an all-female group where it’s a bit like actually I’ve got to go into the big wide world and deal with all of this, I would rather see women modelling how to hold their own in a male domain.

She also reflects on her daughter’s experience of a single sex school and on the fact that a gender balance has still not naturally occurred in the business world, and wonders if women only spaces are going to be useful short-term measures with a view to longer term ‘integrated’ spaces:



I wonder whether given that there's so much room to redress a balance um and that it hasn't happened naturally with integrated spaces whether it isn't um a useful space for um having women only accelerators with um finance people that are female and you know experts that are female in order to get a few more people out there in order to then integrate and in order for it to be more balanced further on, so maybe there needs to be at this stage more of that but with a long term view of redressing the balance and not needing it.

The SE environment does offer women the possibility to create new and different ways of doing business, i.e. to create new entrepreneurial ecosystems of entrepreneurial practices. This may be because, for these women, the SE space is not experienced as a distinctly masculine space dominated by images of "boards of directors of old white men." According to Mary:

there's not this established system already, there's an opportunity to create a new system within social entrepreneurship and maybe that's why women are drawn to it and are thriving because there are less barriers to fight and break down in this field. ... There are new relationships to forge and women are at the forefront of this rather than knocking on the door to be let in to a male lead industry.

Like Terry, Mary believes in the importance of **female networking**, and hopes that eventually:

we'll get to a point where we are not differentiating by gender but at this point female entrepreneur networking is really important or in finding strong women whom you look up to and again connect with in business and having mentors and stuff like that is really important so I fully embrace the network of female entrepreneurs and value that brings.

#### 4.4 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Within this group of women working in social entrepreneurship all are driven by social justice agendas and values, with a variety of strategies about how to imbue these agendas in their enterprises, with some more intensely comprehensive in their pursuit to create change at every level of their business, and others in specific areas of their business.

In terms of understanding their experience, our investigation seeks to go deeper in investigating the role of 'ontology' (ways of being) and 'epistemology' (ways of knowing), where we ask how does gender come to matter? How does gender manifest through routine tasks, everyday habits and language (see 1.3.3)? Given the experiences of gender bias that many of them have had, even whilst they find it difficult to acknowledge them as such, and whilst some may feel awkward to identify themselves as 'women in social entrepreneurship' preferring to be perceived and addressed as 'social entrepreneurs', there is an awareness that gender plays a part in the construction of their entrepreneurial networks and entrepreneurial practices (see Appendix A). All value the support of female mentors (even if they also have male mentors) and WISE networks, and all have found their experience with the Cambridge Social Venture – that is, institutional support and training – to be invaluable (see 2.6 for various theories on studies of woman and social enterprises).

It is clear that gender bias is deep rooted in the business world (see 2.5), with the women referring to it as a 'male domain', 'male dominated', etc. It is also clear that having groups such as the Cambridge Social Venture where women are in leading roles as mentors is considered to be important for both the women who come to these groups and in educating the men whom come to them as well. Although women only groups can be very helpful and perhaps essential as a short-term measure, there is a feeling that having mixed groups is important to give women the confidence to hold their own in business environments for example in dealing with partners in male dominated areas (tech, finance), and in pitching to investors.

*"Women have a very different approach to getting things done, or at least maybe I do, but I've seen it with other things. Men report and women rapport."*

*(Pippa, pg. 42)*

*"I think gender is, from the point you're out there, when you're very young you're being just Hammered with this bullshit that actually has been developed dysfunctionally over time.*

*I thankfully grew up not believing in that"*

*(Ariadne, pg. 44)*

*"Um I don't like to box myself like that because immediately you do that, then some people turn off from what you've got to say, if you can keep people open minded and get them to hear and understand and take it in, it doesn't matter what your label is."*

*(Pippa, pg. 45)*



In Part 2, we focus on our second WISE group. This interview sample represents women between 30 and 55 years of age, all British, and with mixed interdisciplinary backgrounds. Their journey into SE has come later in their lives, motivated by the desire to do something with more personal meaning. Given their previous work experience, we ask what is their identity as WISE and how is this being realised in social enterprise? What is their relation of self with other? In considering embodied circumstance and subject formation, what are their agendas with reference to social justice? What do they learn from their role models and mentors and how are they passing on their knowledge as role models and mentors? What role does their awareness of gender bias and politics play in how they conduct themselves?

**Table 5.1: Group 2: Early Career Social Entrepreneurial Women**

Entrepreneur	Age	Children	Nationality	Sector	Career background
Ariadne	Early 50ies	No	British	Environmentally-friendly transport options	Art & design
Donna	40ies	Yes	British	Renewable energy	Engineering
Pippa	30ies	Yes	British	Sustainable innovation design (new type of fibres)	No

## 5.1 WHAT ARE THE WAYS OF KNOWING FOR WOMEN IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

What is evident in this group is their perspective on the differences between how they approach creativity in their companies compared with how men go about it, and they reflect on the qualities that being women afford them to become entrepreneurs. They speak of the ‘linear’ business processes of men compared with the more diverse processes women might take to allow for emergence of alternative possibilities, and they express a discomfort with a reductionist ‘Silicon Valley’ culture of entrepreneurship. Yet even whilst acknowledging gender bias, there remains an awkwardness around how they would refer to themselves in gendered terms.

We question how some of their reasoning may stem from a ‘good girl’ femininity of their childhood which is theorized as friendly, supportive, but unlikely to show pride or pleasure in their achievements where it has been documented that girls “hide, downplay, or deny rather than celebrate and improve upon their successes and feel the pressure to conform to normative cultural representations of (hetero)femininity” (Renold & Allan, 2006, p. 459). The data compels us to think critically how there is an interplay in the gendered boundaries of the ‘super-girl’ and the ‘good girl’ identity (Renold & Allan, 2006) (see 1.3.2).

In this example, Pippa who is in her 30’s, is the younger of the three women, and who worked in sustainable innovation design, reflects on how women have a natural ability for rapport which she thinks helps foster creativity in companies, compared with men who tend to focus extensively on facts and figures. The differences in these approaches – which could be broadly described as masculine normative and feminine normative – highlight how there are certain forms of capital that carry a certain capital and are recognised as legitimate (see Orser *et al.*, 2011). According to Pippa:

Women have a very different approach to getting things done, or at least maybe I do, but I’ve seen it with other things. Men report and women rapport. For example I had big a meeting with a very important company and they brought two of their key people plus an advisor and I was on the other side at the desk with the same business advisor and a supplier, and I said to them, look I



know you're very busy so why don't we go and see the trailer or if you like I can do a short presentation and then we can see the trailer, and this guy looked at his colleague and he said, 'oh let's just tell you about us first', and he spent three quarters of an hour talking about themselves and what they've {laughter}, before we even started talking about the trailer, you know, and that was about half the time of the meeting, which is fine and it's great, but I've researched them as you do.

Bruni conceptualised gender and entrepreneurship as 'situated performances' at the intersection between bodies, discourses and practices (Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio 2004a; 2005). In analyzing the way in which people construct themselves and each other into 'men' and 'women', she considers a "gendering of entrepreneurship" and "enterprising of gender" (see 2.5). For Pippa, she sees her performance as gendered but this is in line with her perception of the differences between how men and women conduct business (e.g. report and rapport). As social enterprise is a gendered space (see 1.1), this raises issues concerning how one adapts to the gender norms as well as the perceived gender norms – these norms may be overt or more subtle. Drawing attention to the importance of interpersonal communication and how this can be gendered, Pippa goes on to elaborate that there exists a:

natural tendency of women to rapport, in other words to communicate very well um and be on a more human level sometimes whereas when men report it's about oh 'have you hit your sales targets of x, y, z,' and 'you're being thrown to so and so and you'll meet four people and I want you to see two of them about this'. It's all about factual things a lot of the time – it won't be in every industry, obviously in the arts and things it's different, etc.... but in a lot of business it's about reporting rather than knowing people on a more human level.

These three women describe how they have developed mindsets to become social entrepreneurs, and how the women around them in their lives have inspired them to do so. Ringrose and Walkerdine (2008) highlight these ideals as a masculine assertiveness tempered by (and only accepted because of) performances of feminine desirability and passivity, along with feminine traits of care and supportiveness (see 1.3.2). Childhood experiences have a profound effect in motivating women to become entrepreneurs, be it to show the world that one can succeed where one is told one cannot, or to be inspired by a female figure who has succeeded against the odds. Here, Donna is describing her journey to develop her self-determination:

I think the challenge comes internally and externally. So, I have been doing work on myself which is to overcome my own internal gender bias which is born about from a strong father who had set me up as a mother and wife from when I was twelve.... and that is really embedded in my psyche and has taken a lot of work; my mother thought it was unseemly for women to work and would not give up work and was a very powerful woman. But so she was conflicted with what society expected her to do and what she wanted to do, and she did what she wanted to do, but she didn't do it without any sort of peace I think is probably the case. Um, so I think internally I have to avoid being what I perceive to be a good woman, and how that might help me get along the course by listening to men or massaging their egos, and I find that in my psyche that is what I have to do. I have to do a lot of work to build my own identity as a woman and it's fine – there's an intellectual level that says of course it's fine, but in reality there are occasions when it is not easy to overcome that old story that lives inside of you. That's one part of it. I have to understand that I have my own power and I have to use it and I have to be prepared to do that. That's a really important part of it. Otherwise I am just pointing at the men and saying they are stopping me. There's an element of truth in that and an element of self-determination on my part not to let them.

For Donna she demonstrates a high degree of reflexivity concerning how she is working to overcome her "internal gender bias" which is "really embedded in my psyche". Such a process is part of an ongoing project to think past "pointing at the men and saying they are stopping me". Thus, she has an awareness of gender bias, even a lived experience, but understands that in order to progress she needs to find ways to not let this bias atrophy her own progress in the field as a social entrepreneur. Donna seems to embody a liberal feminism (see 2.1) with a commitment to removing all obstacles that prevent women entrepreneurs to access the same

resources and opportunities offered to their male colleagues. In contrast, the older of the women, Ariadne, who was working in environmentally-friendly transport options had a different childhood experience with strong mother as a role model, which has also shaped Ariadne herself:

I would have always been assumed to be a boyish woman, where did that assumption of me being boyish come from? Because I used to like getting dirty, because I used to like to do daring things, I loved risks, I was always breaking bones and falling out of trees and that made me boyish. But who's to say that's a boyish attitude? I think that could easily be a social construct. It is not based on any fundamental reality ... I think gender is, from the point you're out there, when you're very young you're being just hammered with this bullshit that actually has been developed dysfunctionally over time. I thankfully grew up not believing in that.

In becoming entrepreneurs, women can also be inspired by male mentors, and this is a subject that needs to be further addressed. It is more the exception than the norm within the SE sector, but more the norm in the corporate business world where the majority are men. This, arguably, structures the field in a certain way. In this example, Ariadne's experience comes from the art world, where perhaps gender itself is more varied in its conception. She describes how:

I had a very inspirational time going to meet a mentor whom I thought was really an incredible artist, and who also started up in the space industry. I had both male and female mentors, in this situation he was a male. Very inspiring, works with non-physical arts, but it is very scientific. It still amazes me, and some of the advice I received in that research project still inform what I do.

Ariadne also speaks of a female 'mentor' whom she has never met, showing how just being aware of women who have been successful can be inspirational, and in this case, she is inspired by the woman's story of resilience:

During my work for my MA, as a result of the thesis I was looking at system science, the early work of Rachel Carson, who is a mentor I never met, but her writing is amazing, and I watched a documentary about her career recently which I was very moved by.... She was a definite source of inspiration. How she took on the corporations and their absolute lack of ethics ... incredible story of endurance that women can have.

All three women entrepreneurs have a social justice agenda that drives them and their creativity to adapt the resources they have to hand. For example, Ariadne reflects on how "Women see more complex relationships as valuable commodities, as supportive allegiances longer term", and relates how if she comes across an obstacle, "I'll find another solution around it ... be adaptive". She puts her "strength of mind" down to her "very bold mother who inspired me". Describing how "you're out there challenging the status quo ..... being unpopular at times". And this unpopularity is revealed to be 'gendered', "I think it would be very difficult to find a project of this sort by a man. I think it's very feminine mindset".

One could ascribe a feminine mindset to Donna's project, driven by her profound anxiety as a mother and a human about the impact of climate change:

I feel like all the experiences I have had have led me to this place, where I have all of the skills I might need, and probably most important of all is to identify what I can't do and what I need help for. I'm also aware, as a human being and as a mother I am profoundly anxious about the impact of climate disruption on the world. That is a real bottom line driver for me. That gives me a strength and a determination to keep going with the project.

However, speaking explicitly about climate change as a sales pitch was not helpful as the industry was resisting it, hence she changed her strategy to speak more about the commercial benefits. This shows how she understands **the field** and knows how to position herself effectively within the field to secure her advantage (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). Furthermore, this is a dilemma for Donna:

Even now, I think, depressingly, I am slightly shy of talking about the wider agenda than the commercial one because I project onto people that they will perceive me as a lightweight.

Drawing on feminist new materialisms, Donna's words compel us to consider counter-narratives – what is called countersentimental narratives (Berlant, 2008; Wanzo, 2009). For Berlant (2008), countersentimental narratives “are lacerated by ambivalence: they struggle with their own attachment to the promise of a sense of unconflictedness, intimacy, and collective belonging” (p. 55). It is not clear if gender played a role in this shift but a complexity of gender bias is revealed when asked if she would consider herself a feminist:

I do think of myself as a feminist and um I do have, up until a few weeks ago, an all-female board, selected entirely for their merit and not just for their gender, but the world in which I am operating, shipping, is incredibly male, and I feel as if I may – so I am already kind of green, if I'm a feminist as well {laughter}, that would be too, I am already a little bit rich for them. Having said that, I have often been in a room as one or only two women, and so it does make an opportunity to stand out easier, 'cause you can be remembered as the woman as opposed to another white man in a suit. So I think that does give a bit of an advantage. Um so I don't know if I would use it as part of a corporation communications strategy. I don't think that it's good for the space I am working in, for it to be a top point of interests. I just happen to be an innovator that happens to be a woman. That's where I want it to be pitched, right?

In contrast to the younger Donna, the older more experienced Ariadne is bold in expressing her confidence of being a woman, and this may in part be due to experience and to her strong female role models and mentors: “Since I have lost my mother, there has always been this flow of inspirational women who understand me”.

I think you should be free to call yourself whatever you wanna be. I have enough obstacles in progressing a very serious technology project forward, that if I am called an entrepreneur or a woman entrepreneur, both are fine by me.

Women can feel that being perceived as feminist is unhelpful and detracts from their business, but they may not necessarily be averse to have attention drawn to their gender by being called a ‘female entrepreneur’, as in Pippa's example:

Um I don't like to box myself like that because immediately you do that, then some people turn off from what you've got to say, if you can keep people open minded and get them to hear and understand and take it in, it doesn't matter what your label is. If that's the only way they will listen to you, by your being a feminist, then they've got a problem ... I am not afraid of the label, I am not sure it's useful. At the end of the day you want to stop being people being prejudiced. ... The word feminist means so much in so many different ways to many people... I would like to have a new word like female entrepreneur – that you're not hating men, and not doing what every feminist has done in their lives.

## 5.2 WHAT CHALLENGES DO SE WOMEN FACE AND HOW DO THEY FACE THEM?

This section explores the threats and obstacles that constrain WISE in their aspirations, goals and practices. As we see, they come to understand themselves and how to position themselves over time. We question what the enabling factors of SE that allow women to be resilient in achieving their aspirations and goals are. Furthermore, we ask what are the affordances / positive constraints of SE for women? Capital, for Bourdieu, is always at stake, tied to an ongoing struggle. As these women carve out professional niches in social enterprise they use both their capitals and work to generate new capitals so that they are positioned advantageously in the field. In considering the relationship between capital and field, Bourdieu, in Wacquant and Bourdieu (1992) writes:

At each moment, it is the state of the relations of force between players that defines the structure of the field. We can picture each player as having in front of her a pile of tokens different colors,

each color corresponding to a given species of capital she holds, so that her relative force in the game, her position in the space of play, and also her strategic orientation toward the game.... (p. 99)

In how they encounter obstacles and enabling factors, we see a high degree of reflexivity concerning how they understand the gendered space of social enterprise. Such reflexivity allows them to carefully consider the moves they make, “more or less risky or cautious, subversive or conservative” which may depend, according to Bourdieu on “the total number of tokens and on the composition of the piles of tokens she retains, that is, on the volume and structure of her capital” (p. 99). This reflexive process is also tied to their perceptions around the alternative and less hierarchical forms of organization and participation based on entrepreneurial eco-systems, individuals, institutional support resources, women’s networks that have been recognized as a way of counter-acting, scrutinizing and stripping gendered practices / gendered notions, and social capitals (see Appendix A).

### 5.2.1 Obstacles

A common experience for these women is how they are perceived in the corporate business environment that is largely male, as not being qualified to have a voice. In this example, Pippa is describing her experience of being an invited speaker at a seminar:

I went to like a seminar and I was speaking and there were like 330 guys and me, and that was in the beginning I was just about to speak and this guy says ‘oh make us a cup of tea love, hah hah hah’, and I, oh the younger ones I would have told them to f off, and I’m too old and polite, but somebody else said ‘I don’t think those kinds of comments are necessary’. Um it sort of sums up the prejudice in the industry, and in some ways it takes away from, they never even heard what I had to say, they had already made their minds up, you know, that this was not my role to be at the front telling them things. And um I do find it difficult at times ....

Ringrose & Walkerdine (2008) highlight the performances of feminine desirability and passivity, along with feminine traits of care and supportiveness. Renold & Allan (2006) similarly discuss the “interplay between embodying and performing normative ‘femininity’ and high achievement” (p. 458). In their analysis, a ‘good girl’ femininity (see section 1.3.2) which is friendly, supportive, but unlikely to show pride or pleasure in their achievements is how girls “hide, downplay, or deny rather than celebrate and improve upon their successes and feel the pressure to conform to normative cultural representations of (hetero)femininity” (Renold & Allan, 2006, p. 459). Women entrepreneurs can develop their own strategies to handle gender biases, and this example shows the courage they find to face attitudes head on. For Donna:

... when I presented to a conference that was mostly 99% men ... nobody came and talked to me. I was like the pariah in the room. Eventually I just thought, whatever, I’ll just go and talk to them, so I got up to people and pinned them to the wall and made them speak to me. And um I don’t think they really knew how to cope with me at that stage. This is a decade ago.

The women we studied had a tendency to sometimes rationalise their gender bias experiences, perhaps as a way of coping with their condition. Consider the example above, Donna goes on to justify it, “they were ... perplexed”, although still referring to gender “police woman”, and “uncomfortable”:

Um .... They were a just a bit perplexed. The next stage was people apologised to me, ‘I am really sorry that we can’t do more for the environment’, as if I was some sort of police woman – well we all can but we need to think. That has changed, and that is partly because I have become more well known in the industry and so I have more connections so it does not feel as uncomfortable.

Women entrepreneurs also face more nuanced challenges coming from disciplinary domains, causing the women entrepreneurs to feel uncertain as to whether these experiences can simply be put down to gender or whether they are a feature of the practice of the discipline. In the following example, Ariadne is describing how women can be isolated in the industry in which she is working because of the hierarchical system and how their skills are evaluated, but then she describes herself and no longer presents such a clear picture:

There are some amazing women but generally it is the same story, I have seen some women being very isolated in the industry, because of the hierarchy and because of their skills not being celebrated enough. (...) In my case it wasn't just culture or gender, it was also because I was looking to do something creative with the science network that they believed was an engineering domain, and that I should keep my sticky fingers out of that.

Women also face a perplexing demand for their enterprises to be 'gender-neutral' or gender balanced, as many corporations have male only boards etc., and this can propagate from the make-up of their board members through to their sales pitch and their product. In this example, Donna discovers that having an all-female board may put off investors:

I was completing an application for some funding. And I put on the form that we had an all- woman board and that it was good for diversity and so on. And a project advisor said take it out because there are investors on the investor panel who would mark you down for that. So I kind of went, you are kidding me, I could not get my head round the idea, but was realistic, so I kind of laughed it off – the guy who was in between was really pissed off. He had daughters but he said it would harm the application if I did not take it out.

There is pressure on women wishing to be accepted in the business world: how to present themselves and in their behaviour and posturing, in a male dominated behavioural space. In considering how one's gender can lead to exclusionary practices, Ariadne is consciously aware of how her gender can lead her to be perceived as being on the margins: "I would definitely be considered an outsider ... you would be aware of the different hats that you're being given 'crazy female artist' 'over passionate'." And she described the pressure on women:

I see women who became – behave completely like men.... Ideally, I'd be like I was when I was a child, I'd be gender-neutral. Society makes it much easier for men to succeed ... to be ambitious is a virtuous trait ... if you're a woman there's language surrounding it, that you're a bitch, that you're bossy.

Donna sees both men and women carrying bias which contributes to relationships and how the field is structured. According to her perspective, "Attitudes towards skills etc, emotion, creativity – gendered. Everyone is biased, male and female. People having expectations, misperceptions". How gender is understood by WISE is critical to how we understand women's ways of knowing themselves and their careers. Based on the study, how gender and gender bias is understood, it would appear, informs how they conduct themselves as they navigate the field of social entrepreneurship. Drawing on feminist new materialism and post-humanism, gender norms are built and maintained through everyday habits, ordinary routines and mundane situations (see 1.3.3). Coole and Frost (2010), call attention to how the approach "privileges language, discourse, culture and values" over the material (p. 3). Hechavarria, *et al.*, (2018) writes how women can learn to re-define the language of men in order to speak and to be heard. We see how Donna shows an awareness around terms like 'bitch' and 'bossy' that contribute to a pathologization around female ambition. This could, to varying degrees, influence how she conducts herself.

### 5.2.2 Enabling factors

Despite these obstacles and hurdles, women are determined to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained and create successful social enterprises that manifest their social agendas. These social enterprises are more meaningful to them than either working for or creating traditional corporations and 'silicon valley' type entrepreneurship. Being a social enterprise does enable women to create projects that align with their values and beliefs (see Appendix A).

We see this in Donna's passion as a mother to do something about climate change, and who because of her childhood feels a deep interconnectedness with nature. Even though she feels shy to be explicit about her social agenda, she considers her social enterprise "is a better way for me to help the world" and "bring my

intuition into fruition". She is applying the skills she gained from working for other enterprises on large scale innovation projects to develop her own enterprise: "I have always been involved in big innovation projects - I was on the launch team back in the day when people didn't have a mobile phone - hands on experience with a start-up with potential for exponential growth and the interconnectedness of activities going on - understanding of how the engineering works, understanding how the finances work etc." A common narrative of many of the women in this study who come from a business environment, or from within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, is of their resilience is in taking the opportunity to learn about diverse fields of practice so that they can apply this knowledge to creating their social ventures (see section 2.5).

We see the alignment of values and work in Ariadne's deep ethical stance and questioning of the ethics of the corporate world – Ariadne, who in her 20s was "always motivated towards social issues, for example from working in gender violence, it was my part-time work during my art studies".

### 5.3 WHAT IS THE ECOLOGY OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP? IS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP A FEMINIST SPACE?

In critically considering women's experiences in social enterprise, we focus on where they feel supported. We investigate the ways in which women working in social enterprise can learn from practices of team-based creative industries, such as those of sound and digital arts creative workers, and manage to build a spectrum of collaborative relationships (e.g. social capital). It has been documented that a lack of competition is increasing entrepreneurship intention in a social entrepreneurship education context (Klapper & Farber, 2016). We are interested in how they draw on forms of support in order to challenge hegemonic thinking concerning normative conceptions of masculine and feminine (see Appendix A). Additionally, we question how they position themselves in reference to these tropes as they construct and negotiate social identities across diverse social enterprise settings.

All three women seek to mentor and support younger women who wish to become entrepreneurs, to encourage them and to help them handle the gendered biased environment and become confident in navigating it. They achieve this by accepting awards, travelling and giving talks to women's networks and groups, creating women's networks, and hiring women in their enterprises. One could make the case that they are shaping the ecology of the social enterprise space and the space shapes them too because of what and how it affords them to be.

All three women have used their SE awards to encourage women and provide a unique moment to foreground their gender. For example, ordinarily Pippa would hesitate to call draw attention to her gender, yet she is very happy with the label of woman entrepreneur on such an occasion:

I am very pleased to encourage other women to become entrepreneurs especially in the areas I work in which is engineering and transport and the environment, so I actively go and speak and talk to women at universities, I've done it at Cambridge and Leeds and Manchester um and at different exhibitions to say to them look you know women have got a lot to offer, give them that opportunity.

When she is asked to reflect on the concern women in general may have about presenting themselves as women entrepreneurs, Pippa replies:

Well that's interesting and I think that's because of this unconscious um prejudice that people have, and the more that people become used to the idea that women can be and are good at being entrepreneurs, then the less of an education programme you have when you go everywhere. Cause I find everywhere I go um it's almost you know oh are you the secretary, or are you that, it isn't assumed that you are the prominent, the entrepreneur, the leader.

Speaking in third person further reveals Pippa's concerns about gender bias in entrepreneurship. This was expressed in her story further above, of being rudely asked to make a cup of tea when she had been invited



to speak at a corporate seminar. This motivates her to encourage women to become entrepreneurs and give them the opportunity to do so. In considering embodied circumstance and subject formation, Donna describes, when she was younger:

I was appeasing the bad behaviour, I was assuming that's the way things were. Now, I've got my eyes open. Some women may be confused about standing up to the reality of things ... I think it's important to be present as a role model. The reason I went for this [] award is you can inspire young women.

Mentoring younger women is a strong factor for this group. Ariadne echoes Pippa and Donna as she speaks about her experience of Innovate UK through which she met a special family of sisters who are all engineers and whom she is now mentoring:

One of the things that was interesting to me about the Innovate UK women in innovation award was the opportunity to do that – and I met some awesome women through that. But also through my own work I've met a group of women in Liverpool who are pioneering an energy saving device, they are a family of three sisters, they are just fantastic, so I mentor them.

Women use various networking strategies with other women, either directly as partners and collaborators on projects, but also to create social spaces where they can support each other (see section 2.5). One such social network that Ariadne is part of is the systems sisterhood, which is about systems thinking. This raises the question of how can we think of the consequences for women in social enterprises, if we view, as argued by feminist new materialists, this space as one which is feminist and focused extensively on notions of collective belonging (Berlant, 2008, p. 55). This is a global network of women who are working in systems change and this tends to be applied in social spaces. Ariadne asserts: "it might be umm ... LGBT, it might be um libraries, and it is across the world, it's a global network and we support each other in helping to bring out our [strengths]." Furthermore, she goes on to say:

I am in a cohort of women who are in their sixties and beyond, part of what we are trying to do is to create responses to the young women in the network who want to see role models, want to learn from what we have done, what we have experiences of, what has worked, what has not worked. So it is about cross fertilising over the generations.

Women reflect on the social spaces that men create to combine their social and business worlds, and networks like the systems sisterhood is a feminist approach to such social spaces. Ariadne describes how:

We've got a WhatsApp group where women chit chat, 'has anybody applied for this grant? etc.' ... stuff you can pass back and forth... 'does anybody know a good licensing lawyer?' ... what you don't get as a lonely individual ... men go to the golf club and chit chat. Women have obligations at home ... when you're that spread, as many women entrepreneurs are ... [need for female support networks].

## 5.4 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The industrial, technological, and environmental sectors that these women are operating within, albeit from a social enterprise social agenda driven perspective, are still largely male gendered cultures. This is motivating these women SE entrepreneurs to educate and encourage younger women to enter the SE space and become successful. They find various strategies, using the platforms that the SE environment offers, such as the highly visible awards events, giving talks at universities and institutions, and creating alternative networks of systems support (see Appendix A).

In the data, the women engage with these environments with an awareness of gender and reflexive positioning of oneself around gender. Women are aware of gender bias as well as their own engrained societal expectations; furthermore, they appear to find strategies to cope with it. They do not often engage in liberal



feminist arguments concerning removing all obstacles (see 2.1). In this group, the women have all had experience of prejudice in the business world, and speak about it, and the experience has caused some of them to be reticent to draw attention to their gender, whilst in the case of one of them, the woman is outspoken about her gendered identity and has no difficulty in speaking about feminism. We see the key findings as:

- The importance of how conduct is gendered and can be a practice followed in the everyday. The differences in these approaches could be broadly described as masculine normative and feminine normative (see. 2.2 with Ahl's work on entrepreneurship built around the 'male norm').
- The women conduct themselves in relation to notions of feminine passivity / a feminine mindset and masculine assertiveness. We see behaviour and posturing within a male dominated behavioural space (see 2.6 for various theories on studies of woman and social enterprises).
- Some speak of a childhood experience with strong role model as well as a strong mentor.
- Women also face a perplexing demand for their enterprises to be 'gender-neutral' or gender balanced – perplexing, as many corporations have male only boards etc. (see. 2.2 with Bruni's work on how people construct themselves).

In investigating the role of 'ontology' (ways of being) and 'epistemology' (ways of knowing), what unites all the women, regardless of their background and personalities, is their drive to do something that is meaningful, that aligns with their values. All have a strong social agenda that serves as a source of continual motivation determined to create change. The evidence suggests that they are finding alternative ways to be an entrepreneur that are more inclusive and diverse, and foster creativity.

*"I always wanted to and knew that I would own my own business.*

*I always knew that I wanted to change the world."*

*(Bree, pg. 53)*

*"I try very hard not to be judgmental in anyway and to work collaboratively, democratically and develop mutually supportive relationships is key."*

*(Connie, pg. 54)*

*"I always try to have a presence in a number of networks. I have a lot of friends who recommend me on projects or just offer introductions to potential clients. Getting support from other entrepreneurs is a big issue."*

*(Dana, pg. 55)*

## 6.1 JOURNEYING TO BECOME EXPERIENCED SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS AND INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATORS: INTRODUCTION

In Part 3 we present the findings from the third group, the sustained and successful social entrepreneurial women. This interview sample represents women between 35- and 50-years of age with interdisciplinary backgrounds and those with experience in sales and marketing, including either sales and marketing or research and development or finance / accounting career backgrounds.

**Table 6.1: Group 3: Sustained and Successful Social Entrepreneurial Women**

Participants	Age	Nationality	Sector	Career backgrounds
Abi	35-40	Greek / UK	Graphic design	Research & development
Anna	45-50	EU	HE educator and programme developer	Finance / accounting
Bree	35-40	EU	Language and cultural preservation	Research & development
Connie	35-40	UK	Heterogenous	Sales & Marketing
Colleen	35-40	Israeli	Fuel cell manufacturing	Sales & Marketing
Dana	35-40	UK	Bio-technology	Research & development
Danette	35-40	Australia / UK	Healthcare	Research & development
Denise	35-40	USA/UK	Aerospace	Sales & Marketing
Cheryl	40-45	UK	Digital arts enterprises	Research & development; Sales & marketing
Charleen	40-45	UK	Service sector	Sales & marketing
Chaz	40-45	UK	Building installation	Sales & marketing
Ella	40-45	UK	SE educator and programme delivery	Finance / accounting
Elle	40-45	UK	IP protection	Finance / accounting
Elly	40-45	Germany / UK	Digital technology (Start-up award winner)	Research & development

Table 6.1 cont'd ...

Participants	Age	Nationality	Sector	Career backgrounds
Eleanor	45-50	UK	Consumer electronics	Research & development
Elissa	45-50	UK	Technology	Research & development
Franzi	45-50	UK	HE educator and well-established programme developer	Finance / accounting
Frankie	45-50	Italy / UK	HE educator and well-established programme developer	Finance / accounting
Flora	45-50	UK	HE educator and well-established programme developer	Finance / accounting
Felicity	35-40	UK	HE educator and programme developer	Finance / accounting

## 6.2 WOMEN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: MOTIVATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

Balancing work and family responsibility simultaneously is a challenge not met by current institutional barriers which make it difficult for women to balance work and family responsibilities. Recently, there has been an emphasis on exploring entrepreneurial activities in a dynamic and holistic manner (Jensen, 2014). Within the constrained regulatory environment, the UK's family policies and mindset does not make it easy for women in business. Despite being highly motivated, the transition to motherhood in a woman's life appears to be more stressful than following one's career. Women use home-based businesses as an optimum strategy to achieve work-life balance, which can, consequently, limit their economic growth and success. Working from home, while convenient, can reduce essential social capital, networks and access to mentors depending on the sector. To nuance this further, it can also diminish the durability of one's network and social capital. Recent research from Hatch surveying 100 female entrepreneurs (Bischof, 2017), demonstrated that for women just starting in social enterprises 54% found lacking a support network to be the hardest aspect of getting their business off the ground. Networks are incredibly vital and must be maintained; for some WISE investing in one's social capital is incredibly important to their continual success and further growth. However, in balancing their work-family responsibilities, only three out of 20 women indicated that they got help from their husbands in managing children, reflecting the gendered division of labour between paid and unpaid work where most of the responsibility of housework and family is on women (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). The responsibility of a change in preferences of employment versus business ownership is made clear here:

I quickly learned how important forms of flexible work are and how to overcome traditional inequalities, how to work long hours and the necessity of actively participating in social networking activities outside of working hours; I quickly learned.... (Abi)

I always wanted to and knew that I would own my own business. I always knew that I wanted to change the world. I knew I could put my ambition, skills and resources uniquely to work, to fuel a profile that would smash gender bias with the normative masculinity of the business world ... (Bree)

Additionally, women expressed gender and high risk being associated with social entrepreneurialism, where, for some, starting small meant learning quickly how to juggle between motherhood and business, feeling compelled not to take or afford time off, nor to gain sympathies but rather to be driven by a desire for independence and autonomy and to perform a career choice which meant having to develop business policies in the absence of institutional policies that facilitate women and help them to achieve a work-family balance. According to one participant, Connie:

Sometimes I do think that it could be that I am a woman and mother of two and that some people can be very critical of me and people like me. I know I still have much to learn about successful work practices and being successful but I have learned over the years about ensuring success is not simply an end in itself but as a means to change. I really do know what I'm talking about. I don't tolerate negative images of gender. Juggling the tensions in balancing my work and my family responsibilities is all part of the challenge that society throws us all; and about the importance of evaluating the impact of working with the expertise of who use our services and support my work. I see my own resilience in terms of something that is ongoing and continues to shape the conditions of my own existence which I say is an outcome of my inter-professional work. It gives me new confidence, key learning to act and shape my business practice. I think that the only strategy I have got is empathy ... I try very hard not to be judgmental in anyway and to work collaboratively, democratically and develop mutually supportive relationships is key. Cultural values and expertise are important and recognising the different expertise's that are in play here with this business and helping to mobilise the expertise of others, to create collaborative intentionality fluid, demands a capacity to recognise and work with the expertise that others have to offer in both interpreting and responding to complex problems, is also central. These are things I've learned over time and that I know I do really well and impress people with. I know when and I am very aware of the need to reach out, to create bridges to opponents and be sensitive to situation cues. It's all part of the business survival you have to learn very early on ...

Our data highlight ways that social capital and location shape women's entrepreneurial experiences and business motivations. Connie positions herself in contrast to notions of authoritarian leaderships where "I think that the only strategy I have got is empathy...I try very hard not to be judgmental in any way and to work collaboratively, democratically and develop mutually supportive relationships is key". Adopting a democratic style is focused on **feeling** and **relationality** – part of what Hickey-Moody and Kenway (2014, p. 45) discuss as part of the "subjective features that fold in to make up subjects" – which, it would appear, allows for a continual emphasis on both process and product. Furthermore, narratives suggest common barriers relate to differences in the ways gender is experienced across social locations. The context matters. The industry matters. The ecosystem matters.

### 6.3 ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM<sup>2</sup>

In their respective entrepreneurial ecosystems, most of these women highlighted the critical role of their mentors, models, networks, and informal and formal institutional training, in helping them to creative opportunities for their business. Analysis of the accounts revealed that experienced women entrepreneurs tap into their networks to create opportunities in four main ecologically connected contexts including human capital context, business context, financial context and social context. As we critically consider embodied circumstance and subject formation, one very experienced woman, Cheryl, with an award-winning start-up said:

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<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneurial ecosystems are 'defined as a set of interdependent actors and factors coordinated in such a way that they enable productive entrepreneurship within a particular territory...current work on ecosystems are underdeveloped (Stam & Spigel, 2016 p.3.)

... I kind of have a vision, a few visions, of things that I could help create that would make a difference or generally be useful for people [inspiration forming]. And I'm very aware that I can't do that alone, and I need to attract a team of people around me to achieve these things [social capital]. And that means that everything we do, as well as fulfilling and exploring the goals to create something that makes a difference for people [career positioning], as well as doing that we have to be very aware that we also hunt and gather to collect resources [economic capital], to sustain us on our journey [community building]. Even if I do know people myself, the value of knowing that person is not as much as them introducing me to another key person, because my friend knows me and trusts me so has no problem referring and recommending me to someone else.

Here we see attention given to the value of their respective entrepreneurial ecosystems, providing an advantage to women to overcome the challenges of acquiring social capital where Bourdieu defines 'social capital' as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network; this is the type of **capital integral to networking in the creative industries** (Burnard, Ilie & Cornelissen 2019). This is why social networks are important to industry recognition of creative individuals' work in creative production. Similar to Dawn, for Cheryl, the process of social entrepreneurialism is about the accrual of social capital to protect a sense of status and the ultimate goal of creating experience through collectively realized skills. She values her professional autonomy and her intentionality but is clear that her engagements with the professional community are essential to her work as a social entrepreneur.

### 6.3.1 Obstacles

Some women social entrepreneurs experience threats from contacts in the form of replicating the product / service they offer, backstabbing and negative impact on reputation. Threats to business reputation meant that some women felt more cautious and engaged more (pro-)actively in maintaining relationships with clients and networking with other contacts. The presence in a network, and hence in people's minds, was essential to remaining competitive in business, maintaining existing clients, overcoming intimidation from male networks, and gaining new opportunities. For Dana:

I always try to have a presence in a number of networks. I have a lot of friends who recommend me on projects or just offer introductions to potential clients. Getting support from other entrepreneurs is a big issue. It has helped me enormously. But there have been demotivating and really challenging expressions from some people, more often male-dominated networks – who tell me to 'Give it up! You'll go bankrupt. You're just wasting your time. You'll never survive the competition.'

The stereotypical image associated with women as entrepreneurs is changing. Networking dynamics, particularly for women participating in mixed networks or networks that were highly male dominated could, however, be problematic.

### 6.3.2 Enabling factors

Most of these women were university-educated and childless at the time they formed and launched their start-ups. Most of the women neither seemed to construct their barriers as gendered nor reflected gender-role attitudes. The discrimination they described appeared more about race and skin colour. Our sample originated in referrals from business support organisations, so our respondents ran small and often precarious enterprises. For most of our sample, with each new economic crisis, training, mentorship and loans were re-emphasised as strategies to boost women's business growth, resuscitate economies and reduce gender gaps. Many business support programmes included efforts to aid small start-ups that supplement or replace meagre wages, but also included incubating larger growth-orientated business. SE support focused mainly on training women in business skills, and offering financial support services. Dissatisfaction with employment and perceived business opportunities simultaneously pushed and pulled women into social entrepreneurship. As Colleen said:



I'm a person who needs her own rules, her own system even going into the risk. In the corporate world ... I had several ladders to climb .... The social entrepreneurial world allows for manifesting your individuality and for making change. I've never felt anything other than the potential of my start-up. I hoped it would be financially rewarding but more importantly I knew it would be appropriate for me. I started my own business as a student. I wanted to try new things. I knew this was my destiny; something chose me ... I knew it would be meaningful for me. I simply don't do gendered divisions of labour. I learned a long time ago to develop my assertiveness and bond and bridge with multiple networks who could create opportunities to grow my business. ...

WISE utilize their social capital to create opportunities for growing their business and for knowledge exchange, which in turn enables them to build their customer base and sustain their business. In terms of 'spacetime mattering' (Barad, 2007) we consider the relationship between agency, relationality and change without taking these distinctions to be foundational or holding them in place.

Formal networks of women contribute to their ecosystems which help them to form linkages with academic institutions which facilitate the flow of information between universities and the business, while also enabling women to establish a presence and gain recognition in the institution (see Appendix A).

## 6.4 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- For the women in this study the visibility to the gender subtext of the discourse on social entrepreneurial leadership seems to reinforce the male normativity prevailing in the sector (see 2.2 for Ahl and Bruni's work on subject positions). Some women in the study push back against male normativity with a strong feminist desire want to work responsively and collaboratively to strengthen each other but this is not always the case.
- Many of these women who participated in this project value being something other than 'subordinated roles' but rather, in line with a more ecosystem-service-oriented role as innovators and entrepreneurs, aspire to contribute to the transformation of society via their SEs.
- Women who have experience in growing successful social enterprises identify and stress the importance of investing in social capital (Bourdieu, 1979/1984, 1986) and personal and professional / informal / formal networks (see Appendix A).
- We see how social factors, such as different kinds of networks, may be leverage points for fostering an entrepreneurial disposition that can move them from their traditional subordinated role to adopting a position as transformative agents who position themselves as active managers, adapting their management style / business so that it reflects their own agenda.
- In terms of 'ontology' (ways of being) and 'epistemology' (ways of knowing), the common career narrative that was voiced by most women working in sustained successful social enterprises was that: (a) they understood themselves and their own professional values; and (b) they could articulate their own expertise and values-driven practices that were reconfigured in relation to situated entrepreneurial ecosystems (see 2.6 for various theories on studies of woman and social enterprises).
- How they negotiated practices / incubators / training programmes required confronting stereotypes, providing role models, fostering support networks, supporting particularly vulnerable women, mainstreaming women's concerns in social enterprises' business models and giving women more visibility. This is in line with recent research (see 2.3, with the focus on social problems).
- Carving new boundary spaces and positioning oneself in one's practices requires structured forms of support. There is significant evidence regarding the important role of mentors,



models, coaches and champions; being responsive to both professionals and clients and aware of the need to work relationally with each other and working responsively with the strengths of each other (see Appendix A).

- For these female social entrepreneurs, in terms of relationships, the values of social entrepreneurship seem to come first, and forms of leadership second as a means to advance the entrepreneur's business.

## CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

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Existing research has largely neglected the gendered side of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship. We are interested in how women view their own participation and representation as they navigate and negotiate the ecosystem of social enterprises. Thus, our scoping study works to understand and theorise how women experience social entrepreneurship with a particular focus on engrained societal expectations and learned ideas about gender (Roper & Scott, 2009). Teasdale *et al.*, (2011) shows how there are substantial gender differences in leadership, participation and employment in third sector and social enterprises where women are substantially underrepresented especially in social enterprise. Furthermore, within the world of social enterprise, growth and income are two areas where they typically lag behind (Greer & Greene, 2003, p. 18). We ask about how these women are actors, enacting ways of becoming and knowing / being. We theorize that social entrepreneurship is a socially intertwined practice involving both a material-discursive practice and a semantic space in which meaningful collective actions are carried out and contextually organized. The unique experiences and challenges of women social entrepreneurs should be the object of further research (Haugh, 2005; Moulaert, 2013). Muntean and Ozkazanc-Pan (2015) write how there is a need for ‘consciousness raising about the insidious but rampant cultural and societally embedded psychological and sociological barriers for women entrepreneurs’ (p. 36). Striving for gender equality and doing entrepreneurship is a societal rather than an economic phenomenon: social entrepreneurship is a socially intertwined practice involving both a material-discursive practice and a semantic space in which meaningful collective actions are carried out and contextually organised.

### 7.1 MAIN FINDINGS DISCUSSED ACCORDING TO POINTS OF INQUIRY:

**GENDER (Women):** 1.1 What characterizes women’s experiences of social enterprises? 1.2 How, if at all, do gendered conceptions of masculinity and femininity influence how women participate and represent social entrepreneurship? 1.3 To what extent are power dynamics informed by normative conceptions of gender?

Women depict social entrepreneurship in a range of diverse ways in terms of opportunity-seeking behaviour within a specific eco-system, where the main motivation is a passion for a kind of work often inscribed within a female register. As part of a professional culture, WISE express an allegiance to embody and project a dissonance with the status quo and a call to take response-ability for the embodied, ethical, material, affective and discursive dimensions of/for ‘changing society’. In surveying the data, there are certain forms of self-authoring which seem to substantiate a strong desire to be able to manage one’s work. It is important to WISE to lead on key business decisions where they describe themselves as largely free from external constraints. Running through the three findings chapters are many examples of them capitalizing on their agency – however, it is an agency that is collectively realized as social capital and is essential to everything they do (see Appendix A). The findings suggest that: (1) gender plays a crucial role although it is experienced differently despite start-up practices involving largely male gendered cultures; and (2) the career narrative is still largely based on male gendered cultures; constraints are often rationalized; gender presents challenges. Women counter this through enacted and performative posturing, involving certain behaviours and normative conceptions of gender.

**SOCIAL ENTERPRISES:** 2.1 To what extent are social enterprises epistemological sites? 2.2 To what extent are social enterprises constructed as feminist spaces? 2.3 What is distinctive about what propels these women to become social entrepreneurs and how do these women successfully navigate the field of social entrepreneurship?

The UK is viewed by many other countries as a pioneer of **social enterprise** and the associated practices of social investment and social value. Government statistics identify around 70,000 social enterprises in the UK, contributing £24 billion to the economy and employing nearly a million people (Social Enterprise, UK, 2017).

As a growth market, **social enterprise is continuing to do business differently**. Phillips *et al.*, (2015, p. 452) write of a 'social innovation system' in which a community of practitioners and institutions are associated to address social issues. Our findings indicate that women working in social enterprise require an assertiveness, certain leadership values, as well as networks and systems of sisterhood. There is a strong desire to work relationally with each other and to work responsively with the strengths of each other in order to 'change society'. Furthermore, the data / findings show how: material relations are situated, refusing to succumb to old ways of doing things and the related politics of social entrepreneurialism; an attentiveness to changing the present (not playing out the old) values of society; wanting to reconfigure societal responsibilities (response-abilities). Arguably, these reconfigurings show the influential nature of WISE – the women who are 'becoming' new types of leaders in a professional culture through pioneering a counter-narrative to masculinist conceptions of business through their practices (see Appendix A). Social enterprise is broadly propelled by values-driven practices; yet, interestingly, feminist generated issues / values drive some but not all women in this scoping study of social enterprises.

However, that being said, there is substantial evidence of women authoring and co-authoring the process of 'becoming' social entrepreneurs in a range of diverse ways as leaders, co-founders or jointly developing the business idea jointly with their partner(s), or as leaders of women-led teams. Drawing on Barad's (2007) 'spacetime-mattering' we see accounts of and encounters with relationality in and through time. This theory compels us to think about how women's experiences convey a way of thinking about social enterprise of as field, an eco-system, of potentials with few limits, where the importance of connectivity / relationships / networks is central. In conclusion, the findings suggest that social entrepreneurialism is an epistemological site – a way of knowing – involving social networks and opportunity creation in social, financial and business contexts.

**THEORISING** 3.1 *In studying these women's experiences (participation and re-presentation), what is the contribution of gender theory?* 3.2 *How does a Bourdieusian notion of 'capital' help us understand women's experience as social entrepreneurs?* 3.3 *How might we challenge the prevailing culture and norms in social enterprises and see things differently using concepts from feminist new materialism?*

Women in Social Enterprises (WISE), as they navigate hierarchized and male dominated fields, are navigating these ecosystems as professionals that draw on a "portfolio of economic, cultural, symbolic and other forms of capital" and also exhibit an adept ability to activate these capitals to their advantage within a given field (Hart, 2013, pp. 52-53). To accomplish their goals, they work relationally and responsively, accessing and operationalizing the strengths of each other. While this is perhaps true of social enterprise in general, for women entrepreneurs there seems to be a strong ethic of care. While they utilize their social capital and recognize and create opportunities in the social, business, financial and knowledge context, they position themselves and present certain subjectivities regarding overcoming challenges and succeeding by utilizing their social capital (see Appendix A). There is a powerful relationship between how WISE understand the field, their social capital, and how they use such capital to position themselves effectively within the field to secure advantage.

## 7.2 KEY FINDINGS OF WISE RESEARCH PROJECT

**Gender (Women):** Points of Inquiry 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

- The majority of women in this study have experienced forms of discrimination and gender bias. Directly influencing the power dynamics, they often discuss the visibility to the gender subtext of the discourse on social entrepreneurial leadership which seems to reinforce the male normativity prevailing in the sector.



- Feminist generated issues/values drive some but not all women in social enterprises. Perceptions and practices differ for different types of start-ups; it depends upon how the epistemological space proclaims and pushes production of a counter-story. Therefore, masculinity and femininities structure how these women navigate social entrepreneurship. Not all women think and position social enterprises (start-ups) as feminist spaces. Running a start-up (whether as a feminist or not) is not a 'one size fits all' performance where an agreed upon set of ideals, practices and ways of thinking must be enacted at all times and at all costs but rather seems to be enacted instead as a series of questions about 'what it is we are against, what it is we are for and what, how and why are we working together in the performance of start-ups?'
- Women exhibit entrepreneurial creativity based on experience lived as social entrepreneurs who work responsively with the strengths of each other. Mentors, role models and networks empower women.

#### **Social Enterprises:** Points of Inquiry 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

- Most women agree that founding social enterprises involves critical, creative and multiple response-abilities for promoting an ethics of societal change.
- Most women identify and stress the importance and decisive roles of creativity, social capital, networks and mentors in successfully navigating the field of social entrepreneurship and achieving their goals.
- Women express an allegiance to embody and project a dissonance with the status quo and a call to take response-ability for the embodied, ethical, material, affective and discursive dimensions that social enterprises offer up for societal change.

#### **Theorising:** Points of Inquiry 3.1, 3.2, 3.3

- Women value democratic and collaborative styles of working and perform entrepreneurial creative behaviour and long-term resilience.
- Embedded in the power dynamics is a range of gendered subtexts, one of which concerns the discourse on social entrepreneurial leadership as masculine. Such a subtext sees women's *re-presentation* of the barriers and enablers expressed in the subjectivities of women and the crucial role that gender plays.
- In terms of social capital, experiences with mentors and networks function as a way of counter-acting, scrutinizing and stripping gendered practices/gendered notions.

### **7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

When supported, women social entrepreneurs are a formidable force of economic growth and responsive social change. There is a need for innovation-based policymaking to support the context-specific situationally performed and discursively constructed nature of social enterprise practices. Policy development must involve and recognize:

- For women entering the sector to instil and maintain a normative change of the gendered culture, there is a need to introduce measures to bridge the gap between policies and strategies that mandate that everyone should be treated equally and eradicate gender-related norms.

- We require more gender-lens<sup>3</sup> investing that focuses on women-led businesses and women as social entrepreneurs, where attracting support networks, business incubators and accelerators are specific challenges which find institutional programme and organisational support, especially when the women are starting, building or scaling a business and may be lacking in financial and social capital.
- Many social enterprises that are led by women are leading the way for business and operate at a neighbourhood or local level with the most common objective being to improve a particular community. Therefore, we recommend that the policy-making process is understood and takes into account a renewed focus on gender-lens investing at individual and institutional levels. Thus, the issue of power and privilege can be scrutinized and gendered notions stripped away so that women can be recognized as competent, professional and transformative agents in the work locality.
- The vast majority of women working in social enterprises also employ from the local population, creating jobs and building longer-term resilience; local authorities and universities should engage and work with women in social enterprises to provide essential role support in affecting business survival, furthering innovation, supporting local business and reaching people that they do not otherwise. Therefore, we recommend a renewed focus on creating opportunity incentives for women to develop and build an entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial creativity at the individual level, finding essential support which can play out at institutional levels.
- Different types of engagement with inequalities at the workplace in practice show the fluidity and complexity of the interplay between women, entrepreneurial creativity and social enterprises. Therefore, we recommend that more reflexive / flexible / adaptive / innovative structures be developed and supported that provide more opportunities for the sustained development and support of social enterprise sectors led by women.

#### 7.4 ADVANCING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AS A RHIZOME

In considering scholarship on women entrepreneurs, Greer and Greene (2003, p. 6) write the research has only begun to 'deal with issues of relative power.' Gringeri *et al.*, (2010) write how the heart of feminist inquiry is understanding how power is constructed and maintained. To address this, our scoping study bridges a theoretical framework between Bourdieu, gender theory and feminist new-materialism. Integrating insights from, and contribute to, the fields of social innovation, education, social psychology, sociology, as well as gender and feminist studies, we are interested in how women participate and represent themselves in social entrepreneurship. This new theoretical framework extends previous research and allow for the development of a larger study of women as innovative leaders. In the making of a rhizome we offer an assemblage of the key themes that arise from this project. Learning and becoming women in social enterprises is a complex experience. Some of the most dominant views on being a woman in social enterprises is expressed by Barad (2007, p.184).

We are not outside observers of the world. Neither are we simply located at particular places in the world; rather we are part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity. The following rhizomatic themes arise from the WISE project. The 'rhizome' (see Figure 7.1) allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in data representation and interpretation. The rhizomatic map helps us to think through what matters here and to

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<sup>3</sup> Gender-lens investing is the practice of investing for financial return while also considering the benefits to women, both through improving economic opportunities and through improving economic opportunities and social well-being for girls and women (Yousafzai *et al.*, 2018).

ask what else matters in moving the field of SE research forward whilst facilitating expression of the women's participation and re-presentation.

In trying to assimilate and discuss the identity, participation and representation of women in social enterprise (WISE), the study offers a rhizomatic representation of the emerging gendered spaces, epistemological sites and ecologies in female entrepreneurship. We draw on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizomatic approach, a framework that appreciates multiple pathways towards building new considerations and acknowledges irreducible multiplicities of 'becomings'. For Deleuze and Guattari, "There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines" which "connect any point to any other point" (1987, p. 9, p. 21). The concept of connections is conveyed in the form of "assemblages" that compose "plateaus", which are described as "any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 24). Applying the rhizome, our study followed three main points of inquiry – social enterprise, gender and theorization – to examine the relations (and relationships) between each of them. Each line of inquiry was mapped for its varying connections, concepts and assemblages. Mapping multiplicities (of female-male voices, spaces, ideals, concepts and practices) along these lines revealed "unexpected, disparate and productive connections that create new ways of thinking, seeing, doing, or being" (Colebrook, 2009, p. 76). The rhizome enables going beyond traditional ways of reading data, as evidenced via the "nonrepresentational, transgressive" visual representation (St Pierre, 1997, p. 174). That is to say, the rhizome enables factors such as culture and feminism, socioeconomic or political histories, embodiment of one's practice, field, or the transgressions of gendering, to be comprehended through multiplicities of events of their occurrence or in individual instances of occurrence. The WISE rhizome presented by the study offers a comprehensive overview of feminist spaces in social enterprise, yet the field is largely uncharted and further ideas may evolve to be included with further transnational and interdisciplinary investigations.



Figure 7.4 A rhizomatic map of relations between the main points of enquiry and interconnected themes



## 7.5 WHAT ELSE MATTERS IN MOVING THE FIELD FORWARD

- How do WISE make sense of their experiences of gender politics and relations while working in social ventures that go beyond traditional patterns?
- What challenges do WISE face and experience that differentiate their roles as leaders, co-founders or members of women-led teams?
- How is gender understood and produced individually and institutionally in the context of WISE? Is there a conflict?
- What gendered narratives, identities and practices exist across social enterprises, and how can they be challenged?
- How do women identify and problematise the crucial issues concerning gendered representations of power relations that drive their field?
- How are these experiences affected by their ecology, and what kind of work do they perform to adapt to it and re-shape it according to their perceived needs?
- Why – or is it ‘how’ – are more women getting successfully involved in social enterprises and reaching the goal of gender equality than in other types of businesses or start up processes?
- How can we further theorize WISE / gender-related issues through different feminist theoretical lenses?
- In terms of gendering of social entrepreneurship ecosystems, are start-ups being more or less ‘feminized’?

## 7.6 NEXT STEPS

The proposed outputs include:

- (i) **Three journal articles** where we examine further women’s participation in social enterprises and social entrepreneurship, both theoretically and empirically with the purpose of enhancing engagement with theory and theorising (the uniqueness and revelatory potential of our scoping study, as well as the richness of the available material and the intersections with multiple areas of cutting-edge inter-disciplinary research, make these paper projects fitting for top-level journals such as *Entrepreneurship Theory Practice*, *Review of Educational Research*, *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, *Organization Science*, *Strategic Entrepreneurship*, *The Academy of Management Review*.
- (ii) **Policy recommendations** policy guidelines on how to favour gender equality in start-up projects and co-working spaces will be produced;
- (iii) **A forum** featuring invited research participants will be held following publication of this report so as to bring into the conversation national stakeholders’ perspectives to critique our project findings and inform the forthcoming related grant application. The forum will be preceded by extended conversations with experts in the field on our emerging findings.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF KEY LITERATURES, QUESTIONS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUDING DISCUSSION POINTS

Literature	Points of inquiry	Findings of WISE study	Discussion/Conclusion for gendered inequalities in the profession
<b>Gender (Women)</b>			
Dromey & Haferkorn (2018)	1.1 To what extent are social enterprises feminist spaces?	<p>*Masculinity and femininities structure how these women navigate social entrepreneurship.</p> <p>*Not all WISE think and position social enterprises (start-ups) as feminist spaces. Running a start-up (whether as a feminist or not) is not a 'one size fits all' performance</p> <p>*There is evidence of being responsive to both professionals and clients as well as an awareness of the need to work relationally with each other and to working responsively with the strengths of each other (see Example, 4.2; 4.3)</p>	<p>* WISE participation and re-presentation is embodied and enacted as an (onto-)epistemological space of performative possibility.</p> <p>*In terms of start-up, perceptions and practices differ for different types; it depends upon how the epistemological space proclaims and pushes production of a counter-story</p>
Minniti & Naude (2010); Renold & Allan (2006)	1.2 How, if at all, do gendered conceptions of masculinity and femininity influence how women participate and represent social entrepreneurship?	<p>*They often discuss the gender subtext of the discourse in social entrepreneurial leadership which seems to reinforce the male normativity prevailing in the sector.</p> <p>* Women's participation and re-presentation with/in social enterprises is embodied and enacted as an (onto-)epistemological space of performative possibility. (see 4.1)</p>	<p>*Despite or because of the gender subtext of social entrepreneurial leadership, WISE consistently exhibit enhanced ambition and motivation and work responsively and democratically. They push back against masculine business cultures.</p>

Proudfoot <i>et al.</i> , (2015); Dromey & Haferkorn (2018); Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan (2015); (Greer & Greene (2003); Butler (2003); Haraway (1997)	1.3 To what extent are power dynamics informed by normative conceptions of gender?	<p>*Gender is experienced differently across contexts but WISE still largely male gendered cultures; gender plays a critical role in navigating context; structural embeddedness (see 4.1)</p> <p>*The career narrative is still largely about confronting male gendered cultures.</p> <p>*There is evidence in the data of the women rationalizing constraints; however, WISE counter this through enacted and performative posturing, involves certain behaviours</p>	<p>*WISE express an allegiance to embody and project a dissonance with the status quo and a call to take response-ability for the embodied, ethical, material, affective and discursive dimensions of/for 'changing society'</p> <p>*Gender presents challenges. Gender Embeddedness: bridging social capital, gender constraints, relationships, networks while also enabling women to establish a presence and gain recognition</p> <p>*In considering the three data chapters, what does this mean for Barad's (2007) concept of 'spacetime mattering'?</p> <p>*It seems important to establish a space where they feel valuable</p>
<b>Social enterprises</b>			
Haraway (1997); Berlant (2008); Wanzo (2009)	2.1. To what extent are social enterprises onto/epistemological sites?	<p>*Ways of knowing/being/becoming</p> <p>*Women's social networks, social capitals, and values are important such as networks of systems support (e.g. systems sisterhood; building reputation; professional/emotional capitals performed)</p>	<p>*As Feminist generated issues/values drive some but not all women in social enterprises, perceptions and practices differ significantly. It depends upon how the epistemological space proclaims and pushes production of a counter-story</p> <p>*As an onto-epistemological site, these women question 'what it is we are against, what it is we are for and what, how and why are we working together' in the performance of start-ups?</p> <p>*Social Capital and mentorship is essential to their development (see 4.3, 5.1, 5.3)</p>
Barad (2007); Berlant (2008); Wanzo (2009)	2.2. To what extent are social enterprises constructed as feminist spaces?	<p>*The spaces requires an assertiveness, certain leadership values, systems sisterhood; networks; academic institutions (see 5.1 and 5.2.1)</p> <p>*Desire to work relationally with each other and to working responsively with the strengths of each other</p>	<p>*WISE consistently exhibit entrepreneurial mind-sets/habitus, enhanced ambition and motivation and work responsively with the strengths of each other.</p> <p>*These networks empower women and the networks are feminist in nature; however, outside of these collectives these women still contend with a male dominated world of social entrepreneurship for the most part.</p>

Philips <i>et al.</i> , (2015)	2.3 What is distinctive about what propels these women to become social entrepreneurs and how these women successfully navigate the field of social entrepreneurship?	<p>*Feminist generated issues/values drive some but not all women in social enterprises.</p> <p>*SE broadly is propelled by values-driven practices (see 5.3)</p> <p>*Women identify and stress the importance and decisive roles of creativity, social capital, networks and mentors in successfully navigating the field of social entrepreneurship.</p>	<p>*WISE call to take response-ability for the embodied, ethical, material, affective and discursive dimensions of/for 'changing society'</p> <p>*Embedded in gendered subtexts, frames women's re-presentation of the barriers and enablers expressed in the subjectivities of women and the crucial role that gender plays.</p>
<b>Theorising</b>			
Hart (2003); Greer & Greene (2003); Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio (2004a; 2005)	3.1 In studying these women's experiences (participation and re-presentation), what is the contribution of gender theory?	<p>*Women in Social Enterprises (WISE) are always 'in quest' (Green, 2001:159);</p> <p>*Important for WISE to work relationally, responsively, accessing and operationalizing the strengths of each other (5.3)</p> <p>*Gender and entrepreneurship as 'situated performances' at the intersection between bodies, discourses and practices.</p>	<p>*WISE call to take response-ability for the embodied, ethical, material, affective and discursive dimensions of/for 'changing society'</p> <p>*In terms of FNM, we see the interconnected role of 'ontology' (ways of being) and 'epistemology' (ways of knowing) which stems primarily from their social networks (their social capital). Gender equality should be a political goal at the institutional level – but at the individual level, we see women functioning as SE leaders – this is key to understanding of women's views and actions – now societal and community/structural issues – traditional patterns need to catch up</p>
Bourdieu (1979/1984; 1986)	3.2 How does a Bourdieusian notion of 'capital' help us understand women's experience as social entrepreneurs?	<p>*Evidence of how WISE understand the field and how to position themselves effectively within the field to secure advantage (see Example 4.1)</p> <p>*Social capital, the possession of a durable network of more or less institutional relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, provides each of its these women with the necessary capitals to navigate social entrepreneurship.</p>	<p>*The importance of acquiring and maintaining social capital – specifically in regards to female-led/centric networks which are relied upon for support (see 4.3)</p>

Bourdieu (1979/1984; 1986); Barad (2007); Renold & Allan (2006)	3.3 How might we challenge the prevailing culture and norms in social enterprises and see things differently using concepts from feminist new materialism?	<p>*Bourdieu, gender theory and FNM allow us to see dominant discourses but also agency against dominant discourse (see 5.1)</p> <p>*They allow us to access and theorize a hierarchical field and WISE subjectivities</p>	<p>Therefore, in thinking critically, how can we question these dominant discourses? In thinking about the relationship between agent and field, how do gendered narratives, identities and practices exist across social enterprises?</p> <p>How can all these normative practices be challenged?</p>
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## APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

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Please read this form carefully. If you are happy to participate in this study, please sign this form.

1. I consent to participate in this research study about women in social enterprises. I understand that the general purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences and perceptions of women working in social enterprises, and the gendered side of social entrepreneurship.
2. I understand that I will be asked to answer a few questions and that my answers will be recorded. The recording will be shown only to the study investigator or collaborators, and will be stored on an external hard-drive in a locked file cabinet, unless I explicitly consent to allow the investigators to use it for other research purposes (conference presentations, research outputs).
3. My decision to consent is entirely voluntary and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
4. I consent to the publication of the results of this study, so long as the participant information is anonymous, or in case I decide to give up my right to anonymity.
5. I have had the opportunity to ask the researcher any questions that I have about the study and my involvement in it, and understand my role in the project. I can contact the researcher at any time at l.giugni@jbs.cam.ac.uk.

I have read and understand the explanations and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

In addition, I understand that, after this interview, the investigators will conduct a focus group and host a one-day event for female social entrepreneurs. I am happy to be contacted in the near future and invited to participate in these events.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX C: WORKSHOP

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The aim of the workshop was to bring together a small group of women with newly launched start-ups. We invited participants to engage in three reflection activities:

1. Using no more than 3 Dixit Cards, create an assemblage of your identity as a SE
2. Reflection: characterizing your self-identify, qualities, predisposition
3. Using no more than 10 Lego pieces, construct a metaphorical representation of your SE
4. Reflection: characterizing your social enterprise/business
5. Using critical incident charting as a tool, map key milestones in growing your social enterprise
6. Reflection: charting the journeying in growth and development of your social enterprise/business

### INSIGHTS:

1. Social ventures offer systematic incorporation of early career women entrepreneurs who are supported in their mission in developing ideas, incubators, accelerators. Women are supported in the earlier/ideational phases, but often simply do not use the FBC as a space.
2. Their definition of 'social' enterprise is broad, because their system is grant-based and incorporates more commercial activities.
3. The language of masculinity and the performance of gender-neutrality is important.
4. Independence, being self-aware, resilient, risk-taking, knowing and understanding oneself and one's professional values and values-driven practices are important.

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEWEES/PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Age	Nationality	Sector	Career backgrounds
<b>Group 1: Emerging entrepreneurial women</b>				
Filipa	25-30	Italian	SE Education and Training	Consultancy
Sally	30-35	French	Recycling	Communication
Ellen	50-55	British	Industrial Sector/Service Sector	Entrepreneur (previously founded other start-ups)
Mary	25-30	American	Ethical fashion retailer/ Retail sector	Third sector; social entrepreneurship support
Jill	50-55	British	Retail Sector	Marketing
Terry	30-35	British	SE Educator	Writer; childhood services
Kristine	25-30	British	Service Sector	Youth support services
Karen	40-45	British	Ethical accessories	Tech
Ann	50-55	Lithuanian	Environmentally-friendly transport	Business development
Liz	30-35	Spanish	Ethical fashion	Marketing
<b>Group 2: Early career social entrepreneurial women</b>				
Ariadne	Early 50ies	No	British	Environmentally- friendly transport options
Donna	40ies	Yes	British	Renewable energy
Pippa	30ies	Yes	British	Sustainable innovation design (new type of fibres)



Group 3: Sustained and successful social entrepreneurial women				
Abi	35-40	Greek / UK	Graphic design	Research & development
Bree	35-40	EU	Tribilingual	Research & development
Connie	35-40	UK	Heterogenous	Sales & Marketing
Colleen	35-40	Israeli	Fuel cell manufacturing	Sales & Marketing
Dana	35-40	UK	Bio-technology	Research & development
Danette	35-40	Australia / UK	Healthcare	Research & development
Denise	35-40	USA / UK	Aerospace	Sales & Marketing
Cheryl	40-45	UK	Digital arts enterprises	Research & development; Sales & marketing
Charleen	40-45	UK	Service sector	Sales & marketing
Chaz	40-45	UK	Building installation	Sales & marketing
Elle	40-45	UK	SE educator and programme delivery	Finance / accounting
Ellen	40-45	UK	IP protection	Finance / accounting
Elly	40-45	Germany / UK	Digital technology (Start-up award winner)	Research & development
Elissa	45-50	UK	Technology	Research & development
Eleanor	45-50	UK	Consumer electronics	Research & development
Anna	45-50	EU	HE educator and programme developer	Finance / accounting
Franzi	45-50	UK	HE educator and well-established programme developer	Finance / accounting
Frankie	45-50	Italy / UK	HE educator and well-established programme developer	Finance / accounting
Flora	45-50	UK	HE educator and well-established programme developer	Finance / accounting
Felicity	35-40	UK	HE educator and programme developer	Finance / accounting