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PIRITTA PARKKARI

DOING ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROMOTION

A Critical, Practice Theoretical Study
of Entrepreneurship

PIRITTA PARKKARI

**Doing Entrepreneurship Promotion:
A Critical, Practice Theoretical Study of
Entrepreneurship**

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Abstract

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Entrepreneurship is a hot topic in the 2010s, with measures taken to encourage people to consider it as an option and to produce people with entrepreneurial mindsets. But what happens within organizations that promote entrepreneurship? Even though there seems to be a non-negotiable mandate to promote entrepreneurship, this study calls for critical scrutiny of how entrepreneurship promotion is being done. This study brings attention to practical accomplishment of entrepreneurship promotion, because promoting entrepreneurship has effects on what kind of entrepreneurship is seen as desirable and on the cultural images of entrepreneurship.

This study contributes to entrepreneurship research through bringing together the practice theoretical and critical approaches to entrepreneurship. The practice approach sees practices as consequential for social reality and it brings attention to how entrepreneurship gains meanings in and through routinized ways of doing and talking. This approach can be used to address *how* entrepreneurship is constructed. The critical approach, on the other hand, questions dominant images and conceptualizations of entrepreneurship. It can be used to address *what or who* should be studied and to critically address *what* is constructed in and through the studied practices.

This study urges to go beyond people labelled as entrepreneurs and onto ethnographically studying organizations that promote entrepreneurship. It reports the results of a three-year ethnographic study of Finnish student- and other volunteer-led Entrepreneurship Society organizations that promote entrepreneurship. It analyses the practices enacted within these organizations and what is constructed in and through these practices.

This study discusses how promoting entrepreneurship serves to both reproduce and challenge images of entrepreneurship. Start-up entrepreneurship was constructed as the desired kind of entrepreneurship to be promoted within the

studied organizations. As this happened, the stereotypical heroic and individualized images of entrepreneurship and team-based understandings of entrepreneurship were both constructed. Promoting entrepreneurship became understood as the pursuit of creating new companies and jobs, but also the pursuit of bringing people together and enhancing the entrepreneurial atmosphere.

This study also discusses how promoting entrepreneurship contributes to cultural image of entrepreneurship as desirable. Whilst within the studied organization the mandate to promote entrepreneurship came from the needs of regional development, the informal network of Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies was constructed as a student-led social movement that works to inspire students towards start-up entrepreneurship. Working around the idea of entrepreneurship seemed to enable a sense of community and belonging, gaining pleasurable feelings, experiences and learning and, importantly, a sense of 'doing' and making a change in the world. This contributes to the lucrativeness of entrepreneurship. A belief in individual agency and the power of entrepreneurship to change the world also emerged. The study argues that whilst promoting entrepreneurship risks over-emphasizing individual agency, it also enables bringing people together, which in turn might enable collective action.

Keywords: *critique, Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship as Practice, entrepreneurship research, Entrepreneurship Societies, ethnography, practices, practice theory, students*

Tiivistelmä

Piritta Parkkari

Yrittäjyyden edistämisen tekeminen:

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Yrittäjyys on suosittu aihe 2010-luvulla. Ihmisiä kannustetaan harkitsemaan sitä vaihtoehtona, ja ihmisille pyritään luomaan yrittäjämäistä ajattelutapaa erilaisten toimien kautta. Mutta mitä tapahtuukaan yrittäjyyttä edistävissä organisaatioissa? Vaikka yrittäjyyden edistämiseen usein suhtaudutaan itsestään selvänä tavoitteena, tutkimus penää kriittistä tarkastelua ja se tuo huomion yrittäjyyden edistämisen käytännön toimiin. Tämä on tärkeää, koska yrittäjyyden edistäminen vaikuttaa siihen, millainen yrittäjyys nähdään haluttavana ja millainen kulttuurinen asema yrittäjyyden ilmiöllä on.

Tutkimus tuo antinsa yrittäjyystutkimukseen yhdistämällä käytäntöteoreettisen ja kriittisen otteen. Käytäntöteoreettinen ote näkee, että käytännöt tuottavat sosiaalisen todellisuuden ja se tuo tutkimuksessa huomion vakiintuneisiin puhumisen ja tekemisen tapoihin. Sen avulla voidaan tarkastella, *miten* yrittäjyys rakentuu erilaisissa käytännöissä. Kriittinen ote puolestaan kyseenalaistaa ja haastaa vallitsevia ymmärryksiä yrittäjyydestä. Sen avulla voidaan kriittisesti pohtia, *mitä tai ketä* voidaan yrittäjyystutkimuksessa empiirisesti tutkia sekä sitä, *mitä* tutkittavissa käytännöissä rakentuu.

Tämä tutkimus kehottaa siirtämään huomion yrittäjiksi nimettyjen ihmisten toiminnasta kohti yrittäjyyden edistämisen etnografista tarkastelua. Tutkimus raportoi opiskelijoiden ja muiden vapaaehtoisten vetämissä suomalaisissa Entrepreneurship Society yrittäjyisyhteisöissä tehdyn kolmivuotisen etnografisen tutkimuksen tulokset. Tutkimuksessa analysoitiin näiden yrittäjyisyhteisöjen käytäntöjä ja sitä, mitä niissä rakentui.

Tutkimus esittää, että yrittäjyyteen liittyvät ymmärrykset sekä uusiintuvat että tulevat haastetuiksi yrittäjyyden edistämisessä. Tutkittujen organisaatioiden käytännöissä startup-yrittäjyydestä rakentui halutunlaista edistettävää yrittäjyyttä. Tähän liittyen rakentui sekä stereotyyppinen kuva sankarillisesta yksilöyrittäjästä että kuva

tiimiperustaisesta yrittäjyydestä. Yrittäjyyden edistämällä tavoiteltiin niin uusien yritysten ja työpaikkojen luomista kuin ihmisten yhteen tuomista sekä yrittäjätalouden parantamista.

Tutkimus esittää myös, että yrittäjyyden edistäminen ylläpitää kulttuurista kuvaa yrittäjyydestä haluttavana ilmiönä. Tutkimuksen kohdeorganisaatioissa yrittäjyyden edistäminen lähti aluekehittämisen tarpeista, mutta suomalaisten Entrepreneurship Society -yhteisöjen epävirallinen verkosto rakentui opiskelijavetoiseksi yhteiskunnalliseksi liikkeeksi, joka inspiroi opiskelijoita startup-yrittäjyyteen. Yrittäjyyden ympärillä työskentely tuntuu mahdollistavan miellyttäviä kokemuksia, kuten yhteisöllisyyden tunteen, uuden oppimista ja uusiin ihmisiin tutustumista sekä tunteen siitä, että ollaan tekemässä asioita ja muuttamassa maailmaa. Tämä tuottaa yrittäjyydestä haluttavan ja houkuttelevan ilmiön. Yrittäjyys näyttäytyi tapana muuttaa maailmaa, mikä ylläpitää uskoa yksilön yrittäjämäiseen toimijuuteen. Yrittäjyyden edistäminen siis toisaalta saattaa ylikorostaa yksilön toimijuutta, mutta toisaalta myös mahdollistaa ihmisten tuomisen yhteen ja sitä kautta saattaa mahdollistaa kollektiivisen toiminnan.

Asiasanat: etnografia, kritiikki, kriittinen yrittäjyystutkimus, käytännöt, käytäntöteoria, käytäntöteoreettinen yrittäjyystutkimus, kriittinen tutkimus, opiskelijat, yrittäjyys, yrittäjyystutkimus, yrittäjyysyhteisöt

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When I said ‘yes’ to doing a PhD, I thought it wouldn’t be *that* much more difficult than doing a Master’s thesis. I also thought that the goal of doing it in four years is manageable. Well... well over five years later I can say that I didn’t get it done in four years and that it was way more difficult than completing a Master’s thesis.

Looking back, I don’t really understand how it took so long to put together this little book. This dissertation you are reading now is just the tip of the iceberg, the concrete evidence and the end-result of my journey towards a PhD. What you don’t see in this book are all the wonderful people I’ve met and gotten to know, the theoretical and not-so-theoretical things I’ve learned, the unforgettable moments I’ve experienced, the rollercoaster of emotions I’ve experienced, and all the insights I’ve gained, forgotten, and hope to remember once again.

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At my 'hotel room' in Mikkeli 10.4.2019

Piritta Parkkari

List of original studies

- I Parkkari, P. and K. Verduijn (forthcoming 2019), 'Introducing three academic conversations: Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, Entrepreneurship as Practice and a Radical Processual Approach to entrepreneurship', in Laveren, Eddy, Robert Blackburn, Ulla Hytti and Hans Landström (eds), *Rigour and Relevance in Entrepreneurship Research. Resources and Outcomes. Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar.
- II Laine, P.M. and P. Parkkari (2015), 'Dynamics of strategic agency and participation in strategy-making: the entanglement of human actions, IT, and other materialities', *International Journal of Innovation in the Digital Economy*, **6** (4), 37–53. DOI: 10.4018/IJIDE.2015100103.
- III Parkkari, P. and K. Kohtakangas (2018), 'We're the biggest student movement in Finland since the 1970s': a practice-based study of student Entrepreneurship Societies', in Hytti, Ulla, Robert Blackburn and Eddy Laveren (eds), *Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Education. Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research*, Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar, pp. 146–164. DOI: 10.4337/9781788972307.00016

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Study III in this publication is a draft chapter. The final version is available in *Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Education. Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research* edited by Hytti, Ulla, Blackburn, Robert and Laveren, Eddy, published in 2018 by Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788972307>. The material cannot be used for any other purpose without further permission of the publisher, and is for private use only.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Entrepreneurship is a hot topic in the 2010s and an important question with researchers, policy makers, educators, politicians, media, regional developers, students and an ever-expanding range of practitioners. As scholars have noted (e.g. Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009; Jones and Murtola, 2012a), hope is placed on entrepreneurship to bring about economic growth, competitiveness, employment, regional development, innovations, solutions to social and environmental challenges and both opportunities and emancipation for minorities or disadvantaged groups. Whilst individuals might have differing views on entrepreneurship, 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship' are generally ascribed a positive cultural value (Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009, p. 189; Jones and Spicer, 2009, p. 2). When entrepreneurship is assumed to be a 'good thing', then it is also assumed that the more entrepreneurship there is, the better (Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009).

As Rehn and Taalas (2004) critically remarked, it is assumed that there is a constant lack of entrepreneurship in society, and actions must be taken to introduce more entrepreneurship because society needs it. Indeed, various measures are taken to promote, support, develop, study and educate people about entrepreneurship. Local, national and supra-national bodies are putting their efforts and resources into entrepreneurship policy and programmes with aims to encourage more people to consider entrepreneurship as an option (Bill, Bjerke and Johansson, 2010; Heinonen and Hytti, 2016; Lahtinen et al., 2016; Härmälä, Lamminkoski, Salminen, Halme and Autio, 2017). In Finland, the Ministry of Education even declared in 2004 that entrepreneurship should be offered at all educational levels from pre-school to university. (Heinonen and Hytti, 2016; Laalo and Heinonen, 2016.) Entrepreneurship enters agendas in hopes of producing self-guided and self-responsible citizens equipped with entrepreneurship mind-sets and skills such as creative thinking, problem-solving, initiative, a constant will and desire for learning and ability to adapt to a constantly changing future (Laalo and Heinonen, 2016; Dahlstedt and Fejes, 2017).

However, some scholars (Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Steyaert and Hjorth, 2009; Berglund and Johansson, 2007, Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009; Rehn, Brännback, Carsrud and Lindahl, 2013; Farny, Hedeboe Frederiksen, Hannibal and Jones, 2016; Skoglund and Berglund, 2018) are wary of how entrepreneurship is often portrayed as a powerful force of good for society and its members. There seems to be a non-

negotiable imperative, cult-like promotion even, of developing an entrepreneurial culture and in institutionalizing entrepreneurship education (Jones, 2014; Farny et al., 2016). This risks a normative promotion of taken-for-granted beliefs and values regarding the phenomenon societal of entrepreneurship (Farny et al., 2016). Jones and Spicer (2009, p. 70) argue that the discourse of entrepreneurship is trying to take over everything, to make everything and everyone 'entrepreneurial', but not everyone is able to don the mantle of entrepreneurship. Hence, the issue of who is (not) an entrepreneur is a political issue regarding who gets to be called an entrepreneur, and thus be imbued with positive valuations (Jones and Spicer, 2009). Indeed, critical studies have argued that the archetypical cultural image of an entrepreneur is an idealized heroic, individualistic, male entrepreneur (Ogbor, 2000; Tedmanson, Verduyn, Essers and Gartner, 2012; Verduijn, Dey, Tedmanson and Essers, 2014).

Scholars have noted that rushing to promote entrepreneurship and produce more entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial citizens might leave little room for discussing issues such as how entrepreneurship is framed, who is seen as successful and how this success is manifested and encouraged (Farny et al., 2016). It also risks perpetuating ideals and images of entrepreneurship that might be difficult to relate to. For example, Jones (2014) noted that the entrepreneur is normalized as male in policy documents regarding entrepreneurship education. This together with the imperative of promoting entrepreneurship leads to deficiency discourses that suggest that 'students as a whole, and women in particular, need to change in order to be considered enterprising or capable of entrepreneurial success.' (p. 247). Thus, female students and male students who do not conform to this form of masculinity potentially struggle to position themselves within the gendered discourses at play. Komulainen, Korhonen and Rätty (2009) argued that entrepreneurship education offers boys and girls different and inherently unequal subject positions to model themselves after and that boys have a wider access to a range of powerful narratives of entrepreneurship to resource their self-making. Berglund (2013) in turn likened entrepreneurship education to employability training. She illustrated how, under the guise of entrepreneurship education, schoolchildren are taught how to continuously work on improving themselves, even though this enterprising self can never be fully realized.

Farny et al. (2016) argue that entrepreneurship education plays a role in perpetuating or challenging the taken-for-granted beliefs that underpin entrepreneurship as a societal phenomenon. Hence, providing entrepreneurship education or training is not a neutral activity and should not be uncritically assumed as an imperative objective (Komulainen et al., 2009; Berglund, 2013; Hytti and Heinonen, 2013; Jones, 2014; Marlow and McAdam, 2015; Farny et al., 2016; Berglund and Verduijn, 2018). It is not just entrepreneurship education but also the way different organizations and actors work to promote entrepreneurship

that can have deliberate and non-deliberate consequences, and it is important to account for these. Therefore, in this dissertation I argue that we need *critical scrutiny of entrepreneurship promotion and its effects*. ‘Entrepreneurship promotion’ here refers to, for example, projects or other activities that are put in place to encourage and inspire people to become entrepreneurial or set up businesses, to change their perceptions of entrepreneurship, to provide them with assistance, and in order to enhance the ‘entrepreneurial spirit’ in general. Such activities might include, but are not limited to, initiating projects, communicating about entrepreneurship, organizing events and activities related to entrepreneurship (e.g. speeches by entrepreneurs, training and accelerator programmes). I keep this definition intentionally vague, because my research approach is more understanding a specific social domain rather than in providing clear definitions (Nicolini, 2012).

Scrutinizing entrepreneurship promotion is important, because it allows for surfacing the dynamics of social inclusion and exclusion in entrepreneurship. I assume that certain understandings of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial actors are constructed as (un-)desirable in settings where entrepreneurship is purposely promoted. Moreover, I assume that what is done within entrepreneurship promotion contribute to the cultural understandings of entrepreneurship. In order to study entrepreneurship promotion, I propose a practice theoretical approach combined with insights from critical research on entrepreneurship. In short, this means reflexively investigating the discursive and material accomplishment of the work done in organizations that promote entrepreneurship and the effects of doing it.

My research rests on three pillars. First, in order to understand what is known about the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship, I draw on insights from the conversation of Critical Entrepreneurship Studies that has questioned the way entrepreneurship is understood and researched. Second, I apply a practice theoretical approach to the study of entrepreneurship to see how sociomaterial practices constructs meanings of entrepreneurship. Third, I employ an ethnographic methodological approach and utilize it to understand select organizations promoting entrepreneurship: student- and other volunteer-led Entrepreneurship Society organizations in Finland.

I decided on these pillars because I first encountered an empirical setting (the Entrepreneurship Society organizations in Finland) of which I wanted to find out more and what I wanted to understand from the point of view of the community. As I observed them, I intuitively started doing ethnography. Entrepreneurship seemed to be an important issue within this field, but I wanted to find out what people are doing around the idea of entrepreneurship, to understand how organizations that promote entrepreneurship work, and what effects this has on the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship. Then, I decided to draw on CES, because they enabled appreciating entrepreneurship as a phenomenon that connects to

society, not just economy, and keeping a sense of wonder regarding the ideological underpinnings of entrepreneurship.

The practice approach, in turn, offered a way to see that even seemingly enduring features of social life, such as the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship, are in fact ‘kept in existence through the recurrent performance of material activities, and to a large extent they only exist as long as those activities are performed’ (Nicolini, 2012, p. 3). The practice approach allowed appreciating how the mundane doings and sayings within the field produce different meanings of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial actors – and how said doings contribute to how images of entrepreneurship are created and sustained.

Figure 1 illustrates these pillars, which I will address in the next sections.

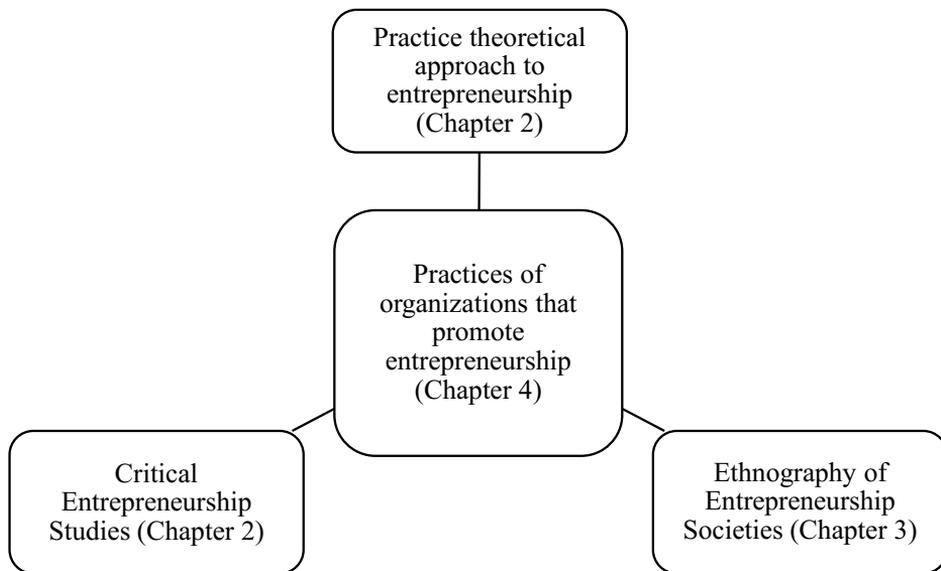


Figure 1. Pillars of this study

1.2. Critical Entrepreneurship Studies

The first pillar of my study is contributing to the academic conversation of Critical Entrepreneurship Studies (CES for short). This conversation, taking place in the margins of entrepreneurship research, has questioned the dominant, taken-for-granted assumptions regarding entrepreneurship and ways of understanding entrepreneurship and conducting entrepreneurship research (Jones and Spicer, 2009; Calás, Smircich and Bourne, 2009; Tedmanson et al., 2012; Verduijn et al., 2014; Verduijn, Dey and Tedmanson, 2017). Studies acknowledge the ethically

and politically charged nature of entrepreneurship and show that entrepreneurship is a gendered, classed, and socio-economically situated activity (Ogbor, 2000; Tedmanson et al., 2012; Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013; Verduijn et al., 2014).

Taking part in this conversation means that in my research I am wary of the tendency in entrepreneurship research to adopt a priori positive assumptions regarding entrepreneurship, which leads to over-optimistic and one-sided attributions to positive dimension of entrepreneurship – a critique voiced by critical scholars (Berglund and Johannisson, 2007; Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009). As I point my attention to how entrepreneurship is promoted, I do not assume that entrepreneurship is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ or if it should or should not be promoted (and ultimately, if it should or should not be such a popular topic). Rather, I assume that people’s mundane doings have deliberate and non-deliberate consequences (Gherardi, 2012) that should be accounted for reflexively.

CES have criticised the ‘mainstream’ discourse of entrepreneurship for its predominantly economic interpretation of entrepreneurship (Calás et al., 2009) that emphasizes the ‘heroic, profit-making entrepreneur and the creation of fast-growing firms that can play powerful games in a market-driven society’ (Berglund and Wigren-Kristoferson, 2012, p. 278). CES see that entrepreneurship is not a unitary or static construct or entity; certain conditions and doings make the phenomenon of entrepreneurship possible and (re)generate it, giving it a multitude of meanings (Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Jones and Spicer, 2009; Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009; Nicolini, 2012; Gill, 2014). I aim to contribute to how this multitude of meanings – and the effects of certain constructions – can be studied beyond discourse and narratives, which the extant studies have largely focused on (e.g. Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004; Costa and Saraiva, 2012; Kenny and Scriver, 2012; Gill, 2014). I take part in the conversation of CES by bringing a practice theoretical approach to this conversation in order to understand the practice-based construction of entrepreneurship within entrepreneurship promotion.

1.3. Practice approach to the study of entrepreneurship

Applying a practice theoretical approach to the study of the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship is the second pillar of this dissertation. This theoretical approach brings about the assumption that social reality consists of practices (Nicolini, 2009, 2012). It sees social life as an ongoing production that is brought into being through everyday activity. (Reckwitz, 2002; Gherardi, 2009a, 2012; Corradi, Gherardi and Verzelloni, 2010; Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011; Nicolini, 2012) and hence it is interested in the activity patterns that constitute daily life (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and von Savigny, 2001). Its domain of study is not the ‘experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal

totality, but social practices ordered across space and time' (Giddens, 1984, p. 2, cited in Hargreaves, 2011, p. 82). It sees that practices constitute the horizon within which all discursive and material actions are made possible and acquire meaning. Following the practice theoretical approach, I see that practices produce meanings for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial actors (Nicolini, 2009, 2012). Hence, I focus my attention on *practices*: routinized ways of doing, being, feeling and talking (Reckwitz, 2002). In doing so, I seek to understand the discursive, relational and material accomplishments of everyday life: how people get things done in complex settings and with what consequences (Nicolini, 2012).

In this dissertation I seek to answer the calls to adopt practice theories into the study of entrepreneurship (Steyaert, 2007; Johannisson, 2011; Anderson and Ronteau, 2017). Entrepreneurship scholars have recently begun to adopt practice theories to the study of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship as Practice (EaP for short) scholars are now interested in using social practice theory to understand the process of doing entrepreneurship; the joint activities that constitute entrepreneurial activity; the constitution and consequences of specific entrepreneurial practices in specific settings; and the activities of ordinary entrepreneurs (Steyaert, 2007; De Clercq and Voronov, 2009a; Johannisson, 2011; Gartner, Stam, Thompson and Verduyn, 2016; Anderson and Ronteau, 2017). This conversation largely prioritizes the activities of people labelled as entrepreneurs. For example, Anderson and Ronteau (2017) have argued that a practice theory of entrepreneurship should strive to understand what, how and why entrepreneurs do what they do. Empirical studies have mostly been conducted in business setting such as within companies and entrepreneurs' networks.

The way I adopt the practice theoretical approach to the study of entrepreneurship differs slightly from the extant EaP studies, as I go beyond the activities of people labelled as 'entrepreneurs', or 'ventures' or 'companies' and seek to study what is constructed in and through the practices of organizations that promote entrepreneurship. This resonates with the idea, from entrepreneurship development, that it is 'essential to sort out different perspectives of various actors such as business partners, authorities, investors, business advisers, bureaucrats, and development agency representatives (Gibb 2000b)' (Peura, 2017, p. 13). I argue that we need to look beyond what people labelled as entrepreneurs do and study what happens when people do things within organizations that seek to promote entrepreneurship. Jones and Murtola (2012a) remind us that the 'critique of entrepreneurship is not a critique of particular individual entrepreneurs, but of the idea of entrepreneurship as such' (p. 131). When it comes to combining CES and the practice approach, critique must then be targeted at *practices*.

1.4. Entrepreneurship Societies and ethnography

The third pillar of this study is adopting ethnographic methodology in order to study organizations that promote entrepreneurship. The variety of organizations and projects that work to promote entrepreneurship is too wide to list here. However, students are one important target group for such activities and incentives. Numerous projects are put in place to promote entrepreneurship in the context of higher education. Student entrepreneurship societies and clubs are particularly interesting in this regard. This is a global phenomenon, and there are different kinds of societies and clubs operating, for example, in the US in higher education institutions and in leading UK universities (Pittaway, Rodriguez-Falcon Aiyegbayo and King, 2011; Preedy and Jones, 2015). In entrepreneurship literature, they have been considered extra-curricular activities in entrepreneurship education. They have been described as informal, non-accredited, student-led organizations; voluntarily formed student groups that join together to raise awareness, support and engage in entrepreneurial activity whilst at university and aim to promote entrepreneurship by arranging various activities around entrepreneurship. (Pittaway et al. 2011; Pittaway, Gazzard, Shore and Williamson, 2015; Preedy and Jones 2017.) The few academic studies about these organizations have focused on individual entrepreneurial learning and motivations for engaging in them (Pittaway et al., 2011, 2015). A few Master's theses done in Finland have focused on understanding Entrepreneurship Societies as start-up innovation communities (Nieminen, 2013) and analysed how engagement in them affects entrepreneurial competences (Marostenmäki, 2018).

I study the Entrepreneurship Society (ES for short) organizations in Finland. There are other organizations that promote entrepreneurship too and some that involve students, such as Junior Achievement Finland (“Nuori Yrittäjyys” in Finnish) who are targeting the Finnish youth and seeking to advance ‘entrepreneurial attitude and an active lifestyle’ among them (JA Finland, 2019). However, I did not consider other organizations as alternatives for study because the ESs were the starting point of this study: I first started observing them and attending their events, decided I wanted to understand what goes on in them and then decided on my theoretical approaches. The ESs in Finland are student- and other volunteer-led organizations that work to promote entrepreneurship as a viable career option for higher education students, inspire people towards start-up entrepreneurship, help people find team members, and in general ‘boost’ an entrepreneurial spirit. They organize entrepreneurship-related events and activities, such as speeches by entrepreneurs, pitching competitions, hackathons, workshops, parties and start-up accelerator programmes.

Taking the Entrepreneurship Society organizations as an empirical setting is important because this phenomenon of ESs has spread in Finland quite rapidly: the first ESs were established in Finland around 2008 and 2009; by 2019 there were (or had been, as not all organizations have stayed active for long periods of time) already

around 20 such organizations spread across the country, with at least one in nearly every city containing a higher education campus (Viljamaa, 2016). The Finnish ESs have even attracted international interest as part of university entrepreneurship ecosystems (Graham, 2014).

The ESs are interesting because they are not your typical educator-led activities or interest and service organizations for entrepreneurs and enterprises: both people who run the organizations and attend their events and activities are mostly higher education students who have taken an interest in entrepreneurship. Some of the people involved do own companies, but the ESs are more about getting people interested in entrepreneurship. Hence, entrepreneurship promotion by students and other young people on a voluntary basis is a neglected social setting for critical and practice-theoretical entrepreneurship research, exception being studies such as Costa and Saraiva (2012) who studied the entrepreneurship discourse in Junior Enterprises in Brazil.

Previous research and reports have portrayed student activity, the ESs included, as the *creators* of a 'start-up hype' in Finland rather than a result of it (Lehdonvirta, 2013). The ESs have even been described as bringing the spirit of Silicon Valley to Finland (Mannevu, 2015) and as being the 'catalyst for a wider cultural change in national attitudes towards startup activities and entrepreneurship more generally' (Graham 2014, p. 26). This is what got me interested in the Entrepreneurship Societies: I was curious to know why students and other young people are devoting their time to 'boost' and promote entrepreneurship and, in general, what goes on in these organizations and with what consequences.

When empirically studying a social setting that connects with the idea of start-up entrepreneurship, it is important to note that entrepreneurship is often talked about as if it were clear what the concepts of 'entrepreneurship' and 'entrepreneur' mean (Berglund and Johansson, 2007). With the multiplication and widening of entrepreneurship concepts and the contexts in which people are expected to act entrepreneurially (Skoglund and Berglund, 2018), the multiplicity of meanings is even stronger. It seems that gone are the days of understanding entrepreneurship simply as the discovery and exploitation of profitable opportunities (Shane and Venkatarman, 2000). When talking about entrepreneurship, we might refer to being enterprising or the 'alternative' forms of entrepreneurship, such as social entrepreneurship, ecopreneurship, cultural entrepreneurship and sustainable entrepreneurship (Skoglund and Berglund, 2018). There is also talk about political, institutional and internal entrepreneurship – not to mention the emerging prefixes such as mumpreneurship. Out of all the 'forms' of entrepreneurship, high-growth and high-technology start-up entrepreneurship has gained a great deal of the attention (Lehdonvirta, 2013; Sipola, 2015; Hyrkäs, 2016), which is why it is important to understand what goes on in organizations that connect to the 'hyped' idea of start-up entrepreneurship.

I employ an ethnographic methodological approach (Fetterman, 2010; Cunliffe, 2010; Van Maanen, 2011; Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013) to study the

Entrepreneurship Societies. Such an approach is not widely used in entrepreneurship research (Berglund and Wigren, 2014), but it is often offered as a way to do empirical practice theoretical research (Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks and Yanow, 2009; Nicolini, 2012). Moreover, Entrepreneurship as Practice scholars have called for using real-time, naturally occurring data (Johannisson, 2011; Chalmers and Shaw, 2017), which is why ethnographic methodology serves well the needs of the practice approach. For me, ethnography enabled me to go to a field, to try to understand the culture of the Entrepreneurship Societies from their point of view and interpret what is going on. It allowed me to construct material that allows analysing the material and discursive accomplishment of practices.

I conducted ethnographic research in one Entrepreneurship Society organization (StartingUp, pseudonym) and its network in Finland, between September 2013 and December 2016. I aimed to understand the practices enacted within such organizations; the ways of doing, talking, feeling and using bodies, spaces and materials within this social setting. I constructed an extensive set of empirical material mainly through participation and observation, but also through interviews. During this fieldwork, I did not only observe the communities but also became a practitioner: an engaged member of StartingUp. Hence, this dissertation is not just about analysing *their* practices, but also trying to make sense of what *we* are up to, how we do things and what the implications of our doings and sayings are.

1.5. Research question and execution

This dissertation answers the following question:

What is constructed in and through the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship?

This dissertation comprises of this introductory article and three individually published studies, all of which contribute toward answering the general research question. The role of this introductory article is to bring together the individually published studies and go beyond them to overcome some of their weaknesses. The article-based format only allows for dealing with limited issues in the individually published studies, and thus in this introductory article, I go into more depth than in the individual articles in presenting the pillars of this study. The two empirical studies do not include much explicit discussion with Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, but here I go into more detail about the role of CES in this research and the way the practice and critical approach to entrepreneurship can complement one another. I also aim to do a more holistic presentation of practices and their effects in the results section of this introduction by weaving the results of the individually

published empirical studies together and expanding on my narrative on the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship.

Table 1 summarizes the individually published studies. Study 1 is a conceptual paper that introduces three recent conversations within entrepreneurship research – Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, Entrepreneurship as Practice and a Radical Processual Approach to entrepreneurship – discussing the commonalities between these conversations. Studies 2 and 3 are empirical research papers, which utilize the practice theoretical approach to study practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship and interpret what is constructed within them. Study 2 considers how one Entrepreneurship Society organization was developed whilst Study 3 considers empirically what happens as multiple Entrepreneurship Societies get together. I chose to include these three individually published studies in this dissertation, because Study 1 works as a conceptual basis for this study as it lays the foundations for drawing on both critical and practice theoretical entrepreneurship research. In studying the practices of StartingUp and the Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies from different points of view, Studies 2 and 3 considered empirically the key focus of this research.

Table 1. Three individually published studies

Title of the Study	Type of study	Content	Contribution toward answering the general research question
<i>Study 1: Introducing three academic conversations: Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, Entrepreneurship as Practice and a Radical Processual Approach to entrepreneurship</i>	Conceptual	<i>Original research questions:</i> What is addressed within the academic conversations of CES, EaP and RPA? What sets these conversations apart and what is their common ground?	Conceptual background for how Critical Entrepreneurship Studies and a practice theoretical approach to entrepreneurship can complement one another
<i>Study 2: Dynamics of strategic agency and participation in strategy-making: the entanglement of human actions, IT, and other materialities</i>	Empirical	<i>Original research question:</i> How does the continuous (re) configuring of human actions, information technology, and other materialities produce strategic agency?	Empirical illustration of the practices in and through which StartingUp was developed; elucidating meanings of entrepreneurship and agency in promoting entrepreneurship
<i>Study 3: 'We're the biggest student movement in Finland since the 1970s!': a practice-based study of student Entrepreneurship Societies</i>	Empirical	<i>Original research questions:</i> How do the meanings of Entrepreneurship Society organizations emerge in and through the practices that intertwine during a get-together event of these organizations? What meanings are constructed for entrepreneurship within these practices?	Empirical illustration of practices enacted when Entrepreneurship Societies get together; elucidating how meanings of the organizations and different ideals were constructed

1.6. Structure of the study

The subsequent chapters are organised as follows. Chapter 2 presents what Critical Entrepreneurship Studies can tell about the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship. It presents my theoretical approach and the way the practice theoretical approach has been applied in the field of entrepreneurship research before arguing that CES and the practice approach can complement one another. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of this study. I discuss ethnography as a way to conduct practice theoretical research, narrate the fieldwork I have carried out and introduce my analyses. Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study. In Chapter 5 I discuss the results, present my contributions and suggest topics for further research.

2. Toward practice-based construction of entrepreneurship

In this chapter, I build my theoretical framework. In Chapters 2.1.-2.3. I consider what previous critical research tells about the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship. Chapter 2.1. looks at how conducting research on entrepreneurship perpetuates certain meanings of entrepreneurship. Chapter 2.2. illustrates the operation and usage of entrepreneurship discourse, considering what research has said about how entrepreneurship discourse works within different settings and with what consequences. Then, in Chapter 2.3. I present my theoretical approach – the practice theoretical approach – and in Chapter 2.4. I show how practice theories have been adopted in the field of entrepreneurship research. In Chapter 2.5. I argue for bringing the practice approach together with the critical studies and illustrate how they can complement one another.

2.1. Entrepreneurship research, the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship

Critical Entrepreneurship Studies (CES) have been unsatisfied with the way entrepreneurship is researched and conceived in so-called ‘mainstream’ entrepreneurship research. CES have thus emerged to question the assumptions within mainstream entrepreneurship research and challenge the dominant understandings of entrepreneurship. (Tedmanson et al., 2012; Verduijn et al., 2014.) The concept of entrepreneurship itself is claimed to be ‘discriminatory, gender-biased, ethnocentrically determined and ideologically controlled, sustaining not only prevailing societal biases, but serving as a tapestry for unexamined and contradictory assumptions and knowledge about the reality of entrepreneurs’ (Ogbor, 2000, p. 605).

Studies have criticized entrepreneurship research for its overtly economized and individualized perspective (Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Steyaert, 2007; Olaison and Sørensen, 2014) and its functionalist tradition (Jennings, Perren and Carter, 2005). The focus on entrepreneurship as ‘desirable’ economic activity is seen to obscure important questions of identity, phenomenology, ideology, relations of power, thus ignoring the inherent contradictions, paradoxes, ambiguities and tensions and the messy, heterogeneous, and problematic nature of entrepreneurship (Calás et al., 2009; Tedmanson et al. 2012, p. 532). Thus, critical studies see that understanding the entrepreneurship phenomenon is hindered by the hegemony of the positive

(Olaison and Sørensen, 2014), over-optimism and one-sided attributions to the positive dimensions of entrepreneurship (Weiskopf and Steyaert 2009, p. 189). This attribution of positive value to entrepreneurship is also seen to marginalize other economic actors (Jones and Spicer 2009, p. 40).

The concepts of 'entrepreneurship' and the 'entrepreneur' are often used as if it were clear what they mean, and thus the variety of meanings is seldom questioned (Berglund and Johansson, 2007). Drawing on Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, one cannot assume that these are unitary or static constructs or entities. Rather, they are taken-for-granted ideas and practices that have historically specific conditions that make them possible to begin with, and that are generated in everyday social interaction dependent on the locale where they emerge. (Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Jones and Spicer, 2009; Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009; Gill, 2014.) The socially constructed concept of entrepreneurship is open to varied interpretations and the meanings attributed to it may vary considerably in different social conditions (Anderson, Drakoulou Dodd and Jack, 2009).

Early days of entrepreneurship research included the search for the entrepreneur and his traits. Jones and Spicer (2005, 2009) famously argued that the unsuccessful quest to identify what is specific about the entrepreneur tells us that entrepreneurship is an empty signifier, not a stable thing. As such, its function is to be articulated onto neighbouring discourses operating in a particular social context. They argue that the entrepreneur should be thought of as a 'sublime object': a figure of discourse, which is attractive but ultimately empty. However, Jones and Spicer (2009) see that this lack actually makes notions of entrepreneurship more attractive and engaging, and the discourse of the entrepreneur so desirable, because the signifier can be (almost) whatever one desires it to be. Going further, they state that 'It is precisely the paradoxical and apparently mysterious nature of entrepreneurship discourse that allows it to be such a continually effective discourse in enlisting budding entrepreneurs, and reproducing political and economic relations' (Jones and Spicer 2009, p. 39).

Conducting entrepreneurship research is said to perpetuate the idea of the entrepreneur as a special kind of person and viewing certain individuals as entrepreneurial (Berglund and Johansson, 2007, Jones and Spicer, 2005, 2009). Research can thus (re-)enforce excluding understandings of entrepreneurship and limit the discursive image of the ideal entrepreneur as a masculine, independent and rational figure. It can reproduce gender, race and class differences (Ogbor, 2000; Gill and Ganesh, 2007; Gill, 2014), making common conceptions of entrepreneurship ethnocentric, gender-biased and patriarchal (Ogbor, 2000; Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio, 2004; Essers and Benschop, 2007). Jones and Murtola (2012a) even argued that research can naturalize both capitalism and entrepreneurship. Critics have argued that conceiving the entrepreneur as an atomistic and isolated agent of change ignores the milieu that supports, drives, produces and receives the entrepreneurial process (Drakoulou Dodd and Anderson, 2007). Entrepreneurial activities also

have interconnections with broader societal and cultural expectations of what entrepreneurs should look like or do (De Clercq and Voronov 2009b, p. 800).

Challenging the images of entrepreneurship put forth by entrepreneurship research is difficult since ideology, popular image, heuristic social construction, and methodological individualism all seem to combine to create and sustain these images, such as that of the solitary individual (Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson, 2007). Studies have, however, tried to challenge the taken-for-granted understandings of entrepreneurship research through, for example, trying to 'voice' subjectivities other than those usually privileged in entrepreneurship research, such as 'barefoot' entrepreneurs operating in marginal areas (Imas, Wilson and Weston, 2012), punk entrepreneurs (Drakopoulou Dodd, 2014), and ethnic minority female entrepreneurs (Essers and Benschop, 2007). They have also tried to challenge what is considered entrepreneurship and where it can happen through, for example, discussing the blat-system of the Soviet Union as entrepreneurial (Rehn and Taalas, 2004) and through reframing entrepreneurship as social change (Calás et al., 2009), emancipation (Rindova, Barry and Ketchen, 2009) and a general creative mode of becoming (Hjorth, Holt and Steyaert, 2015).

2.2. Using the entrepreneurship discourse

Critical scholars have approached entrepreneurship as a discourse, which can mean considering it 'a way of talking, a language used by people that produces power relations, and these power relations may involve problems' (Jones and Spicer, 2009, p. 14). As studies have investigated the relations between entrepreneurship, discourse and ideology (e.g. Ogbor, 2000; Costa and Saraiva, 2012; Kenny and Scriver, 2012; Jones and Murtola, 2012a, 2012b; Dey, 2016; Dey and Lehner, 2017), entrepreneurship has been seen not only as a social construct but also as a political ideology that can be used to 'reproduce conservative assumptions and behaviour and confuse, distort and shape public policy and public perception in ways that serve conservative political or economic (capitalist) ends' (Tedmanson et al., 2012, p. 536).

The 'dark side' critique has been prolific in deconstructing and problematizing discourse on entrepreneurship. Critical scholars have paid attention to the workings and the effects of the entrepreneurship discourse. Kenny and Scriver (2012) studied the operation of entrepreneurship discourse in Ireland during 2007-2010, a social context marked by the economic crisis. Building on Jones and Spicer's (2009) empty signifier argument and drawing on Laclau and Mouffe's conception of hegemony, they showed how entrepreneurship's meaning can be partially fixed in ways that support hegemonic discourses in particular empirical contexts. As the Irish government articulated the signifier 'entrepreneurship', entrepreneurship

acted as a nodal point that linked signifiers that were already imbued with positive meanings to government actions and activities. This served to uphold the position of a hegemonic political party rapidly losing legitimacy as well as legitimize continued belief in market logics even during a time of economic depression.

Costa and Saraiva (2012) in turn drew attention on how entrepreneurial discourse reproduces capitalist ideology as they studied what orders of discourse are emerging from existing entrepreneurial discourse within Junior Enterprises in Brazil. These too belong to the array of extra-curricular entrepreneurship education, as do the Entrepreneurship Societies (Pittaway et al. 2011) where I have conducted ethnographic research. Drawing on interviews with students and professors engaged with these organizations, they identified three orders of discourse: '(1) a consensus regarding the centrality of companies in terms of thinking and acting of a given individual in the world; (2) the exemplarity of the neoliberal capitalist entrepreneurial model and (3) the absence of feasible alternatives for the contemporary capitalism model' (p. 587). Their study showed how the discourse of entrepreneurship tends to implicitly uphold a free market worldview in their study and how entrepreneurship discourse contributes to the hegemonization of capitalism. Thus, they problematized hegemonic discourses on entrepreneurship as ideological mechanisms and suggested that higher education has become less about human enlightenment and more about the reproduction of capitalist ideology.

Research has also related entrepreneurship discourse to identity and subjectivity, seeing individuals as affected and constrained by the discourse, but also as users of discourses. Studies have shown how entrepreneurs or students engaged in entrepreneurship education internalize entrepreneurship discourse (Laalo and Heinonen, 2016) and are influenced and constrained by different discourses and discursive images of entrepreneurs (Essers and Benschop, 2007). Laalo and Heinonen (2016) pointed out that entrepreneurial discourse is a culturally appropriate manner to express oneself as a self-disciplined and self-governed subject and is adopted among students and reproduced in the practices of entrepreneurship education. However, entrepreneurship discourse is received in various ways at the local level and individuals targeted by the discourse of entrepreneurship might identify with or resist it (Dey, 2016).

Even though entrepreneurs have a distinctive presence in society that is shaped by cultural norms and expectations, entrepreneurs can also use the stereotypes for their benefit and dynamically and creatively draw upon different discourses in their identity work (Watson, 2009; Anderson and Warren, 2011). For example, the flamboyant entrepreneur Michel O'Leary has been seen to engage in identity play where he 'deploys the rhetoric and rationality of entrepreneurial discourse, but shapes it through emotional games to establish his unique entrepreneurial identity' (Anderson and Warren, 2011, p. 589). As individuals draw on different discourses there might be tensions at play. Egan-Wyer, Muhr and Rehn (2017)

noticed paradoxical tensions within start-up culture, where employees of a start-up simultaneously draw on discourse of resistance and corporate discourse to make sense of entrepreneurship and their identity. Forsström-Tuominen, Jussila and Kolhinen (2015) in turn noticed how business school students mobilize the individualized discourse of entrepreneurship in their accounts of their potential entrepreneurial future, but also collective constructs of means of becoming an entrepreneur are mobilized.

2.3. Adopting a practice theoretical approach

I now present the theoretical approach I adopt. Practice research originates in an increased interest in human practices in social sciences, and is, to put it broadly, interested in the activity patterns that constitute daily life (Schatzki et al., 2001). There is no unified practice theory, but rather a broad ‘family of theoretical approaches connected by a web of historical and conceptual similarities’ (Nicolini 2012, p. 1). The different approaches all see reality as an ongoing, recurrent accomplishment (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011), thus emphasizing practice as consequential for social reality. Another common thread is the assumption that phenomena such as knowledge, meaning, human activity, and sociality are aspects and effects of the total nexus of interconnected practices. That is, social and organizational phenomena occur within and are aspects, or components, of the field of practices. (Schatzki, 2001.) This involves recognition of the primacy of practice in social matters and seeing practices as fundamental to the (re)production and transformation of social and organizational matters (Nicolini, 2012, p. 13-14). Also, an interest in the collective, situated and provisional nature of knowledge and a sense of shared materiality is another common thread in many studies of practice (Gherardi, 2009b).

Interest in practice(s) can be traced back to the legacy of such thinkers as Wittgenstein, Derrida, Heidegger, Lyotard, Giddens, Bourdieu and Foucault (Nicolini, 2012). Practice theories have (re)gained interest in the social sciences in recent decades – hence the ‘practice turn’ (Schatzki et al., 2001) and ‘re-turn to practice’ (Miettinen et al., 2009). The practice approach has been adopted in many disciplines. I draw from practice thinking as it has been developed in organization studies, where ‘Practice-based studies’ (PBS) is often used as an umbrella term to denote the plurality of the conceptual labels and orientations related to the interest in ‘practice’ (Corradi et al. 2010; Gherardi, 2011). The multitude of ways of engaging with the practice turn can be seen in how scholars use many terms to describe what they are doing. Practice theory, practice-based studies, practice lens, practice thinking, and practice approach are used almost interchangeably (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017; Schatzki, 2001). In this dissertation I refer to the practice theoretical approach, or simply the practice approach.

Definitions of what 'practice' means vary between practice theorists. It is quite common to see practices as comprising of interconnected elements. Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012, p. 9) see that practices consist of competences (skill, know-how, technique), materials (things, technologies, tangible physical entities, the stuff of which objects are made) and meaning (symbolic meanings, ideas and aspirations), which are elements that actively combine. Reckwitz (2002) put this more broadly as he defined that practice consists of interdependencies between diverse elements, including 'forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (p. 249). Practices may take several forms as they may be linguistic and non-representational, social and material, and corporeal and sensual, involving both human and non-human entities (Valtonen, 2013). I follow these definitions and see practices as routinized ways of doing, being, feeling and talking (Reckwitz, 2002).

The practice approach sees practices as always inherently social, and therefore practices are not individual property (Nicolini, 2009, 2012). Individuals are seen to carry out practices, but they also serve as 'carriers' of practices. That is, reflexive human carriers accomplish and perpetuate practices, but the agency of individuals is a result of taking part in practices. (Reckwitz, 2002.) Taking part in practices both enables and constrains people. Practice theories do see individuals as creative, intelligible agents, but they focus on practice(s) rather than on individuals per se. Practice approach treats understandings, know-how, meanings and purposes as 'elements and qualities of a practice in which the single individual participates' (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250) rather than personal attributes and qualities of an individual. Practices also always require knowing and learning, since practices are learned. As we become practitioners, we are only partly aware of a lot of what we do in our everyday lives, how we do it and what the consequences of the doing are ('what the doing does'). (Gherardi, 2011.) However, enacting practices does have deliberate and non-deliberate consequences (Gherardi, 2009a; Nicolini, 2012).

Practices aren't just human endeavours: practice-based studies see the world we live in as something that is routinely made and re-made in practice using tools, discourse, and our bodies (Nicolini, 2012, p. 2). Whilst all practice theories recognize that not just human interaction but also the body and other material aspects play a part in the accomplishment of practices, practice theories differ in their view of how objects and materiality participate in practices (Nicolini, 2012, p. 168-9). I adhere to the view that all practices are sociomaterial practices and practices are carried out through, and made possible by, ideational and material apparatuses (Nicolini, 2012, p. 106). Sociomateriality denotes an ontological understanding that the social and the material are entangled and ontologically inseparable (Barad, 2003). It also denotes seeing that agency is distributed between humans and non-humans (Gherardi, 2012, p. 77).

Practice theories acknowledge that practices are connected to one another, and scholars have developed different concepts to understand this idea of interconnectedness of practices. Thus, 'practices rest on other practices: that is, they are interconnected and their interconnectedness makes it possible to shift the analysis from a practice to a field of practices which contains it, and vice versa' (Gherardi, 2012, p. 155). Gherardi (2012) has utilized the concept of 'texture of practices' to denote how practices are interwoven and come to constitute a field of practices. Crucial here is that practices cannot be understood in isolation, but by always paying attention to the connections-in-action. However, certain practices might anchor, control or organize others and be more powerful and enduring in shaping or constraining social arrangements. (ibid. p. 156.) Thus, not all practices are equal (Nicolini, 2012). Practices and their association perform different and unequal social and material positions, so that the study of practice is also the study of power in the making (Ortner, 1984, cited in Nicolini, 2009).

A practice must be socially sustained, which means that sustaining a practice requires recurrence. This recurrence is due to it being institutionalized, sustained by values, beliefs, norms, habits, and discourses. (Gherardi, 2011.) Practices are institutionalized, but they exist to the extent that they are enacted and re-enacted (Nicolini, 2012, p. 221; Gherardi, 2011). Thus, they are 'open to the dynamic of continuous refinement that takes place in both everyday and long-period reproduction' (Gherardi, 2012, p. 167).

2.4. Applications of practice theories in entrepreneurship research

The practice approach is quite a novel approach in entrepreneurship research. Interest in applying it to the study of entrepreneurship is now emerging under the name Entrepreneurship as Practice (EaP for short). Scholars have sought to outline practice theories of entrepreneurship (Johannisson, 2011; Anderson and Ronteau, 2017) in pursuit of connecting to the larger 'practice turn' in social sciences (Schatzki et al. 2001) and developing novel insights into the study of entrepreneurship.

As this stream of research is just emerging, it is debatable what contributions can be considered to belong to it. Below, I review some of the work that is often mentioned in EaP related conference or special issue calls and thus can be considered as important contributions within the stream. As it is an emerging stream, the number of empirical studies is quite low. There are even fewer studies that draw on real-time, naturally occurring data, which is called for by Johannisson (2011) and Chalmers and Shaw (2017). There have also been studies that do not refer to practice theories but are still interested in entrepreneurial practices (such as Goss, Jones, Betta and Latham, 2011; Imas et al., 2012; Tobias, Mair and Barbosa-Leiker, 2013), which have deepened understandings of the everyday activity and struggles

of entrepreneurship. They have, for example, illustrated the entrepreneurial practices and narratives of individuals who live primarily in marginal, poor and excluded places and contexts (Imas et al., 2012) and unpacked transformative mechanisms that entrepreneuring involves (Tobias et al., 2013).

Entrepreneurship as Practice studies approach entrepreneurship as an everyday hands-on practice and creative organizing (Johannisson, 2011) – an unfolding of everyday practices (De Clercq and Voronov, 2009a). Rather than celebrating the extraordinary actions of heroic individuals or the outcomes of entrepreneurship, they are interested in the activities of ordinary entrepreneurs and how they get things done in complex settings (Johannisson, 2011). Entrepreneurship as practice aims to move away from understanding who an entrepreneur is, toward understanding entrepreneurial practices (Steyaert, 2007; Johannisson, 2011; Anderson and Ronteau, 2017). These understandings are social rather than individualized, and studies acknowledge the situations where actions take place. Gartner et al. (2016) postulate that ‘Entrepreneurship practices are thus routinized ways in which entrepreneurship practitioners move bodies, handle objects, treat subjects, describe things and understand the world’ (p. 814). EaP studies aim to understand the entrepreneurial process ‘as a culturally shaped achievement, the result of engaging with and transforming social practices of doing and living’ (Steyaert, 2007, p. 468) and thus understand how entrepreneurial practices are reproduced. Engaging with entrepreneurship from the practice perspective might thus mean approaching entrepreneurship as a continuous process of engaging with and transforming social practices.

Entrepreneurship as Practice has mostly engaged with ‘practice’ by applying various practice theories. It has utilized theories from Giddens (Jack and Anderson, 2002; Chiasson and Saunders, 2005; Sarason, Dean and Dillard, 2006) and Bourdieu (De Clercq and Voronov, 2009a, 2009b; Terjesen and Elam, 2009; Patel and Conklin, 2009; Anderson, Drakopoulou Dodd and Jack, 2010; Pret and Carter, 2017) to conceptualize and study issues related to entrepreneurship, such as opportunity, legitimacy, effects of embeddedness and transnational entrepreneurship.

Jack and Anderson (2002) were amongst the first who applied the EaP approach, although they didn’t explicitly talk about practice theory or practice approach, but by drawing on Giddens’s structuration theory, they brought in a practice sensitivity. They used structuration theory to explore the link between the entrepreneur (as agent) and the social context (as structure). Their study contributed to understandings of the entrepreneurial process by emphasizing the need to understand and appreciate how the social context influences and impacts upon entrepreneurial activity. Identifying the embeddedness of entrepreneurship and the importance of social integration in entrepreneurial success were probably their biggest contributions.

Chiasson and Saunders (2005) then brought the practice approach (again in the form of structuration theory) to the topic of opportunity. They used structuration

theory to dissolve the formation-recognition dichotomy inherent in research on entrepreneurial opportunity and argued that entrepreneurial opportunities are both formed and recognized by the entrepreneur. Sarason, Dean, and Dillard (2006) also proposed structuration theory as a useful lens through which to view the entrepreneurial process. They suggested characterizing entrepreneurship as a recursive process between entrepreneur and social system wherein entrepreneurs create opportunities as much as discover them – and how entrepreneurs both create and are created by the process of entrepreneurship. Thus, the practice theoretical approach changes the way we understand entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship and the process of entrepreneurship. In later work, Sarason, Dillard and Dean (2010) emphasized how they propose a more subjectivist and agentic (as opposed to objectivist and deterministic) approach to the study of entrepreneurship.

Whilst Giddens's structuration theory has mainly been applied to opportunity, Bourdieu's practice theory and his powerful concepts of habitus, field and capital have been applied in a more varied manner. De Clercq and Voronov (2009a, 2009b) drew upon Bourdieu's concept of habitus to reconceptualize the gaining of legitimacy by newcomers entering a field as the enactment of entrepreneurial habitus. This process of gaining legitimacy involves contradictory expectations for newcomers to enact taken-for-granted, but conflicting, expectations about both 'fitting in' with field rules and 'standing out' as a rule breaker. Anderson et al. (2010) applied Bourdieu's concept of habitus into the study of networking practices and the entrepreneurial growth process. They identified and analysed networking practices that enact the entrepreneurial growth process, discovering how 'the entrepreneur's growth-focused networking practices involved specific patterns of activity' (p. 121). Through their approach, they emphasized that when taking a practice approach, one must see entrepreneurship as a collaborative, relational practice, seeing it as processual.

Terjesen and Elam (2009) utilized Bourdieu's theory of practice as a framework and showed how, within their internationalization strategies, transnational entrepreneurs rely on diverse sets of resources to navigate multiple institutional environments. Patel and Conklin (2009) too dealt with the topic of transnational entrepreneurs through Bourdieu's theory of practice and showed how transnational entrepreneurs mobilize social networks in dual environments and provide a rationale for bifocality (the ability to operate in two different environments).

In addition to utilizing Bourdieu and Giddens's theories, a few studies have drawn on Schatzki's practice theory or mobilized other practice theoretical approaches (Bruni et al. 2004; Johannisson, 2011; Keating, Geiger and McLoughlin, 2013; Chalmers and Shaw, 2017) to understand issues such as resourcing, gender and context. Keating et al. (2013) adopted practice-based perspective as an epistemological stance to understand resourcing practices during new venture development. They argued that social resources are not the property of an individual or a social unit, but rather lie in between, meaning that the act of connecting *is* the resource. In

showing how early venture entrepreneurs engage in socially embedded practices to resource their firms and how these practices unfold over time in practice nets or practice meshes, Keating et al.'s (2013) study highlighted two crucial elements of practice-based approach: the interconnectedness of practices and temporality. These bring focus to the fact that practices don't exist as such, but other practices are tied to them and practice bundles might compete, cohere, persist, evolve and change.

Bruni et al. (2004) studied how gender and entrepreneurship are culturally produced and reproduced in social practices. For them, entrepreneurship (or doing business) is itself seen as a social practice that can intertwine with other social practices, such as doing gender. In fact, the authors argue that the practices of doing gender and doing entrepreneurship form a single intertwined practice. The value of practice-orientation here, as in Keating et al. (2013), lies in being able to understand the interconnections between situated practices. Bruni et al. (2004) go even deeper into this, since they study how doing gender and doing entrepreneurship are intertwined, not just two practices near each other.

Chalmers and Shaw (2017) built a framework based upon insights from ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and broader 'practice turn' in organization studies in order to analyse the endogenous construction of entrepreneurial contexts, thus, to demonstrate how entrepreneurial actors negotiate contextual constraints as they emerge and dissipate over time. They showed how a focus on the situated nature of entrepreneurial practices can help in developing a more refined understanding of context. Houtbeckers (2016) in turn adopted a practice perspective on the work of micro entrepreneurs. She illustrated how micro entrepreneurs who identify, or are identified, with social entrepreneurship coped with and solved mundane, work-related challenges over time. In doing so, she pointed out how social entrepreneurship is part of the very world it tries to change and how the micro entrepreneurs were limited in their power to influence existing practices.

2.5. Bringing the practice theoretical and critical approaches together

In this dissertation, I build a critical, practice theoretical approach to studying entrepreneurship. So far there haven't been many critical, practice theoretical studies of entrepreneurship. Within the conversation of Entrepreneurship as Practice, scholars have been mostly interested in understanding the joint activities that constitute entrepreneurship and the constitution of specific entrepreneurial practices in specific settings. There are, however, some contributions that seem to take part in both the conversation of EaP and Critical Entrepreneurship Studies. For example, De Clercq and Voronov's (2009a, 2009b) utilized Bourdieu's practice theory to question assumptions and to discuss how forces of domination reflect

upon newcomers' ability to be endowed with legitimacy and thus to be legitimized as entrepreneurs. In order to bring attention to the taken-for-granted assumptions of social entrepreneurship, Houtbeckers (2016) utilized the practice approach and focused on how social entrepreneurship is practiced. Goss et al. (2011) could also be considered as a critical practice-based study. They showed how individual entrepreneurial agency unfolds over time through the organization of social situations, and they developed a 'power as practice' approach (albeit without explicit reference to practice theorizing) to study the dynamics of emancipatory entrepreneurship.

So far, the conversation of Entrepreneurship as Practice has included only a few empirical studies, and studies have mostly focused on utilizing practice theories to understand the activities of people labelled as entrepreneurs operating within the context of companies. That is, they have ignored the way entrepreneurial practices contribute to the rest of society and risked treating 'what, how and why entrepreneurs do what they do' (Anderson and Ronteau, 2017) as neutral activity. However, enacting practices has deliberate and non-deliberate consequences (Gherardi, 2009a; Nicolini, 2012). In my research, adopting the practice approach can help account for the (un)intended consequences of doing entrepreneurship promotion.

The extant critical studies on entrepreneurship have brought theoretical and paradigmatic variety to the field entrepreneurship research, which is traditionally dominated by functionalism (Jennings et al., 2005). Verduijn et al. (2017) recounted that Critical Entrepreneurship Studies have adopted Foucault as a foundational figure, and theoretical approaches utilized have included at least 'postcolonial views (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Essers and Tedmanson, 2014); non-entitative stances (emphasizing the relational and processual nature of entrepreneuring, cf. Nayak and Chia, 2011; Hjorth, 2013); feminist theoretical perspectives (Calás, Smircich and Bourne, 2009); and political-philosophical perspectives addressing the discourse of an enterprising subject (Foucault, 2008; du Gay, 2004)' (p. 38). Adopting the practice theoretical approach that positions practices and their aggregations as central for the understanding of social phenomena (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017) expands the range of theoretical approaches used in Critical Entrepreneurship Studies.

Critical Entrepreneurship Studies have engaged with, questioned and problematized the concepts of 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship', also paying attention to how only certain individuals are viewed as entrepreneurial, excluding other kinds of subjectivities. This has by large been done through studies of language use, such as discourse analysis. However, analyses of language use risk ignoring the way things that are quite concrete, such as stages where people labelled as entrepreneurs are raised up into the limelight whilst audience sits below them, produce the speaker as the 'entrepreneur' and the audience as more of a passive receiver of inspiration.

As the practice approach emphasizes the idea of sociomateriality (the ontological inseparability of the human and the material), the practice approach invites CES to move away from human-centric and language-centric critique in entrepreneurship. When drawing on the practice approach, I assume that practices construct the meanings of entrepreneurship. This means going beyond language usage and considering how people talk, do, feel, use ‘things’ and bodies contribute to sustain or challenge the phenomenon of entrepreneurship.

In practice approaches, one does not start the investigation into social phenomena via roles and individuals and their actions (such as an entrepreneur), but via the material and discursive practices that allow them to occupy such subject positions. Practitioners don’t have pre-determined roles but come to be seen as certain kinds of actors in and through different doings and sayings, exposing how widely dispersed practices might restrict the actions of some people, while enabling those of others. That is, practices enable and restrict what individuals can do and what kinds of subject positions they can assume. (Nicolini, 2012.) Hence, through the practice approach I can critically scrutinize how sociomaterial practices related to promoting entrepreneurship produce certain people as certain kinds of entrepreneurial actors – or how certain actors are excluded from donning the mantle of an entrepreneur (see Jones and Spicer, 2009). Combining the two approaches allows for critique of *practices* that produce entrepreneurial actors and power relations, instead of critique of individuals or reified structures.

Practice theories have been criticized for focusing too much on the local and the micro level and thus being unable to explain ‘large phenomena’ and the ‘big issues’ of our time. Such ‘big issues’ pertain to critical studies on entrepreneurship that are interested in understanding how entrepreneurship contributes to the persistence of large-scale societal, cultural, economic and environmental problems, but can also provide solutions to them (e.g. Ogbor, 2000; Jones and Murtola, 2012a, 2012b; Kenny and Scriver, 2012; Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013; Verduijn et al., 2014). Nicolini (2017), nonetheless, suggests that the practice approach *is* capable of representing large-scale phenomena, but they have a specific ontological position regarding this issue. The practice scholars whose work I draw from, Silvia Gherardi and Davide Nicolini in particular, reject the division of social reality into levels (‘micro’ and ‘macro’) and instead adopt a ‘flat ontology’ whereby they see that ‘when it comes to the social, it is practices all the way down’. According to Nicolini (2017), the practice-based study of large-scale phenomena can be conducted through moving from the accomplishment of practices in one locale to another until a ‘global’ overview emerges. The practice approach sees that practices must always be considered as connected to other practices and emerging through such interconnections. Large-scale phenomena, too, emerge from and transpire through connections among practices. This means that by adopting the practice approach, I seek to understand how the local – entrepreneurship promotion done in certain

organizations in Finland in 2010s – contributes to the cultural understandings of entrepreneurship.

In moving forward with this study, I combine practice theoretical approach to entrepreneurship with insights from critical research in order to study practices of organizations that promote entrepreneurship. I will expand on my methodological choices and present these organizations I studied in the next chapter.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, I outline my methodological choices. In Chapter 3.1. I justify my reasons for conducting ethnographic research. In Chapter 3.2. I introduce the ethnographic fieldwork I executed in one Entrepreneurship Society and the network of Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies between September 2013 and December 2016. I also present the empirical material constructed from my fieldwork. In Chapter 3.3. I present my resulting analyses.

3.1. Ethnography as a way to do practice theoretical research on entrepreneurship

This dissertation uses ethnographic methodology to produce practice-based understandings of entrepreneurship for three reasons. First, ethnographic research goes well together with a practice theoretical approach. Adopting a practice perspective affects research methodology, but there are no clear guidelines to how practice theoretical studies should be executed empirically. This choice depends on the studied phenomenon and research aim. (Gherardi, 2012; Nicolini, 2012; Buch, Andersen and Klemsdal, 2015; Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017.) Nicolini (2012, p. 217-8), however, argues that interviews and surveys alone are not sufficient for studying practices. Practice theories highlight that it matters where, who, how, and why something is done. Therefore, many researchers conclude that to find out more about situated practices, they should preferably be examined when they take place; to ‘follow the practices’ (Nicolini, 2012; Gherardi, 2012). Ethnography is one suitable methodological approach for observing what happens in the performance of practice (Hargreaves, 2011). For me, ethnography enabled understanding the unfolding events from the point of view of the studied communities’ practices (Gherardi, 2012; Nicolini, 2012). It also enabled being familiar with the context of the practices under study in order to make sense out of the experiences, which Johannisson (2014) has called for.

Second, ethnography has been used quite sparingly in entrepreneurship research, but scholars have called for adopting it because it is seen to enable taking a non-individualist approach to studying entrepreneurship (Berglund and Wigren, 2014). It is also seen to help understand the emergence and development of ventures in real time, from the point of view of people involved in it (Johnstone, 2007). According to Berglund and Wigren (2014), through subsuming in mundane activities, scholars

can tell new, and alternative, stories of entrepreneurship – even non-polished, rich stories that are often left out from polished stories and the logico-scientific explanation of entrepreneurship. For me, ethnography allowed investigating in real time how entrepreneurship is talked about, how materials and bodies are used, what people do around the idea of entrepreneurship and with what consequences at a certain time and place.

The third reason for choosing ethnography is the way my research process went. When I started with my doctoral studies in autumn 2013, I was interested in studying play in organizational settings and tried to find companies for the purpose of empirical research. This coincided with moving to a new town and trying to find new friends there. I stumbled upon an Entrepreneurship Society organization (to which I have given the pseudonym StartingUp), where I thought I might encounter interesting companies. StartingUp had just started to operate and was organizing its first entrepreneurship-themed events. Once I had attended these events for a while, I realized that the community-in-becoming was interesting in its own right and the way people said and did things around the idea of entrepreneurship seemed interesting. Thus, I let go of the pursuit of studying play in favour of studying the theme of entrepreneurship. It was then that I explicitly framed my methodological approach as ethnographic, because I had already intuitively begun to do ethnography-inspired research: I was doing participant observation and trying to understand a culture from within. Hence, for me the ethnographic approach meant that I did not have to start my empirical study from certain *entrepreneurs* or *ventures*, but rather from the practices of an emerging community where the idea of entrepreneurship seemed to play some role.

3.2. Fieldwork in StartingUp and empirical material

In ethnography, *fieldwork* is of high importance and involves scholars working with people for long periods of time in their natural setting, that is, observing and participating in daily activities (Johnstone, 2007; Cunliffe, 2010; Fetterman, 2010, p. 33). I executed ethnographic fieldwork in StartingUp, an organization (or in the words of its members, a ‘community’) that calls itself an Entrepreneurship Society (ES for short). StartingUp is part of the informal network of Entrepreneurship Societies in Finland. I consider StartingUp as the main ‘field’ of this study and the main source of my empirical material. Engagement with StartingUp led me to be acquainted with the network of ESs and collect material from there too. This means that as I write about Entrepreneurship Societies, my understanding of them is based on engagement with StartingUp and events where people from multiple ESs met. I do not claim to know all the different organizations intimately. My fieldwork within StartingUp and the network of the Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies was

guided by my interest to understand *what was going on*: what was this StartingUp up that called itself an Entrepreneurship Society, what did it do, why, and who was involved.

Ethnography requires *gaining access* to participation in daily-life activities in order to learn about how people live their lives (Berglund and Wigren, 2014; Fetterman, 2010, p. 36). Relatedly, securing *permission* from the research subjects is an important aspect of research ethics. Ethnographers must formally or informally seek informed consent to conduct their research, but the context of the study affects the nature of such requests. (Fetterman, 2010, p. 143.) When my fieldwork began in September 2013, local innovation and technology centre TechCo (pseudonym) had recently established StartingUp as a two-year project that was expected to transform into a volunteer-led community once the project came to a close. As such, it had no 'members' per se, just a project steering group and Tim, a young man in his mid-20s who had been hired as the project manager to develop the community, organize events and help people create start-ups. Gaining access meant asking Tim for a permission to start attending StartingUp's events in the role of a researcher and conduct research on StartingUp. I also informed the TechCo manager responsible for initiating the project of my intentions. Both were quick to welcome me, and I took this to mean that I had gained access and consent from them.

As StartingUp began to develop during my fieldwork, more people got involved, and they mostly saw me both as a member of StartingUp and as a researcher. Gaining access into the network of Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies happened as a result of my involvement in StartingUp, as I started to get invitations to get-together events. I came to realize that gaining access to the world of ESs was easy for me because I was willing to take part in the activities of the ESs and because I was the sort of person they target: young, enthusiastic, extrovert and eager to 'do stuff and get things done'. That is, I was similar to the respondents in aspects such as age, culture and identity (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013).

Throughout my fieldwork, I took the habit of always asking the people present whether I could record a given situation for the sake of my research. That is, I had *oral consent* from the participants. On top of that, I discussed my research with people I met often during the fieldwork, which I consider part of obtaining their informed consent. In order to protect the individuals' privacy, I have given *pseudonyms* to StartingUp, its members, members from other Entrepreneurship Societies as well as other organizations and people that I mention. For the sake of consistency, I use English pseudonyms in this introductory article, and they might be different from those used in Study 2, which used Finnish pseudonyms as well.

Classic ethnography requires from six months to two or more years in the field, but in contemporary appropriations of ethnography shorter stays are considered as valid too (Fetterman, 2010, p. 8). My fieldwork was conducted between *September 2013 and December 2016*. It was carried out mostly in the town where StartingUp

operated, but the fieldwork also included travelling to other Finnish towns. The nature and level of activity of StartingUp varied during different periods of my time in the field. In autumn 2013, the project manager organized public events almost weekly. In spring 2014, the events were less frequent, but there were also meetings between active members, which resulted in the establishment of an association. While organizing an accelerator programme dominated activities in autumn 2014, association meetings also took place.

From spring 2015 onwards, activity level decreased. 2015 saw a few events and the organization of a second accelerator programme, whilst 2016 included pretty much only the accelerator programme. At times, there were long periods of inactivity, but at other times, I was engaged in community activities three times a week. On average, I was physically in the field two times a week. The most intensive engagement period with the field was from September 2013 to February 2015, with less intensive involvement until December 2016. StartingUp begun as a project initiative and then became a volunteer-run association, which meant that it didn't have everyday activities per se (although there was a project manager who worked full-time for about two years on the project that initiated StartingUp). Rather, it had events and meetings, and outside of these, the community only existed online through Facebook, Twitter, a webpage and various project management services, which I also followed.

3.2.1. On roles and emotions

Doing ethnography is about trying to be part of a culture in order to create an understanding of the different meanings that construct the culture (Berglund and Wigren, 2014). Thus, the researcher either participates in and observes activities or joins the group being studied as a full or partial member (Watson, 2010, p. 206, cited in Giazitzoglu and Down, 2017, p. 45). However, the relationship between ethnographers and practitioners is a complex one (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013).

As I started my fieldwork, I was external to the studied community of StartingUp and unfamiliar with the culture of the Entrepreneurship Societies. At first, I attended the events StartingUp organized as a curious bystander who took notes but participated in discussions if there were any. These events included, for example, local entrepreneurs telling their stories and about their business and life as an entrepreneur, StartingUp's launch event at a movie theatre with free popcorn and multiple performers speaking about the greatness of entrepreneurship, and events where we learned about things such as lean start-up and using business model canvases.

Gradually I got to know the project manager and the people I met at StartingUp's events. I started to participate actively in different events and meetings, even going to get-together events where I met people from other Entrepreneurship Societies.

As I immersed myself in the field, I became ‘implicated in the lives of research respondents’ (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013, p. 365). Around January 2014 I found myself referring to StartingUp as ‘us’ rather than ‘them’. Becoming more of an insider seemed to have ‘just happened’ to me: by taking part in the practices of StartingUp, I became seen as a member of StartingUp, as ‘one-of-us’ (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013, p. 372). This meant I was learning the culture through the eyes and ears of the natives (Berglund and Wigren, 2014) in way that I was not ‘merely’ observing but producing said culture as a practitioner.

In spring and summer 2014, StartingUp was moving from a project into a volunteer-run association and a ‘core team’ was formed to develop the community. By Tim’s, the project manager’s, invitation, I was part of the core team. Eventually my insider role deepened further as I was elected first chairman of the board of a registered association founded by the ‘core team’ to run the community in July 2014. From then on, I was truly and well engaged with the research participants in their activities and emotionally very invested. Moreover, I was involved in developing the community and realizing its aims (Cunliffe and Karunanayake, 2013, p. 372). This included, for example, being involved in organizing a start-up accelerator programme, managing the association, recruiting new members, planning and organizing events and meetings and using social media.

As I became an ‘insider’ in StartingUp, I considered myself a practitioner as well as a researcher. Based on this practitioner experience, the practices of participating in an Entrepreneurship Society as an ‘active member’ entailed at least the following: attending formal and informal meetings of the community, organizing entrepreneurship-related events, using social media and other platforms to communicate, hanging out with ES members and engaging in drinking alcohol and taking part in ES get-togethers and doing student and start-up practices there.

My role as an active member, and my position as the board president of StartingUp, gave me full access to not just the formal and informal activities of StartingUp but also to the informal network of Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies. The Entrepreneurship Society organizations in Finland operate as registered associations, led by a board usually consisting of students and other young people. There is no umbrella organization coordinating the different organizations, but they see themselves as a network. They have a shared website and a Facebook group that is hidden from the public and only available to key members of each ES. My fieldwork included attending and representing StartingUp at events where people from multiple ESs gathered to develop their cooperation or met each other as part of a start-up-related event in different Finnish cities. Within the events, the participants talked about what’s going on in the ES they represent, shared tips and experiences, negotiated co-operation and in general had fun together. Through attending these events, I got the embodied sense of being part of the network of ESs in Finland. I also got to know people from the different communities and learned about the

differences between individual Entrepreneurship Societies. I attended a total of ten such events:

- The first was a cottage weekend for Entrepreneurship Societies in Finland, organized by StartingUp in Eastern Finland in January 2014. This was the first time I met people from other ESs, and it included workshops on how to develop co-operation between the ESs, but also partaking in sauna activities and socializing, including having drinks. Material from this event was analysed as part of Study 2.
- The second occasion was a party organized by one of the ESs in Southern Finland in February 2014 and the StartingUp people shared a car to get there. I also conducted an impromptu group interview with four StartingUp people in the car on our way back.
- The third event was a city weekend for Entrepreneurship Societies in Finland, organized by one of the longer-operating ESs in Southern Finland in April 2014. Here the ESs visited a gaming company, took to partying, gave a presentation on their ES, and negotiated co-operation.
- The fourth event was a city weekend for Entrepreneurship Societies in Finland, organized by a newly established ES in Eastern Finland in May 2014. This event included keynotes and a ‘city safari’ where groups brainstormed about how to develop the city, but also took to partying.
- The fifth event was a start-up related festival in Northern Finland in June 2014. StartingUp representatives shared a minivan for the drive up north and met with ES-people while up there.
- The sixth event was an event organized by a Finnish funding agency for innovation in Southern Finland in October 2014, where people from ESs were invited to attend and come up with new project ideas. I conducted short impromptu interviews there with people from other ESs.
- The seventh event was *Slush*, the start-up and technology conference in Helsinki in November 2014, where I represented StartingUp. It also involved a meet-up with people from Finnish ESs and a group photo session.
- The eighth event was an inauguration event for a new ES in Northern Finland in December 2014, with keynotes by entrepreneurs and a few established ESs sharing their stories and having a small gathering.
- The ninth event was a cottage weekend for Entrepreneurship Societies in Finland, which StartingUp organized in Eastern Finland in January 2015. I organized the event together with others from StartingUp, and it included workshops on developing co-operation between ESs as well as partaking in sauna activities and socializing, including having drinks. We analysed this event in Study 3.

- The tenth event was again *Slush*, the start-up and technology conference in Helsinki in November 2015. This time, I represented the university, but I went to the event with people from StartingUp and attended the short meetup and group photo session for ESs. On top of taking fieldnotes along with accompanying by photographs and video, I conducted 20 short impromptu interviews with people from Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies and other conference participants. We used the material collected from the two *Slush* visits in Katila, Laine and Parkkari (2017) to study the construction of identity of start-up entrepreneurs.

My engaged role meant that my presence obviously affected the way things turned out. However, it is generally acknowledged in ethnographic research that the research itself also produces the social reality it studies and consequently affects its surroundings (Hämeenaho and Koskinen-Koivisto, 2014, p. 10). My engaged role was therefore not a weakness or hindrance, but rather enabled understanding practices 'from within' (Gherardi, 2012). Nonetheless, a role where one is both a situated actor and researcher 'engenders a stronger sense of attachment, obligation and responsibility for the subject of the research' (Fletcher, 2011, p. 66). For me, juggling the role of a researcher and a practitioner required a lot of time, energy and focus. It presented the challenge of maintaining a reflexive stance toward what we were doing. Moreover, when I was engaged in my role as a member and board president of StartingUp, it was at times difficult to keep an ethnographic eye on all that was unfolding. If I was, for example, leading a StartingUp meeting, it was challenging to observe and take notes at the same time. In situations where I could not focus on taking notes, I wrote down my observations and feelings the next day. These notes were my 'shortcut' for finding my way back to a certain situation, and constructing audio-visual material enabled 'going back' to a given situation.

Doing ethnography is considered an *emotional experience* (Rossing and Scott, 2016; Hill O'Connor and Baker, 2017; Houtbeckers, 2017), even though the emotional aspects of ethnography are often downplayed in (organizational) ethnography (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). As a researcher and a practitioner (a member and chairman of the board), I experienced feelings ranging from excitement to stress. Certain moments during my fieldwork produced strong emotional experiences and 'crept under my skin' and were important in understanding the practices of the studied communities. For example, I did my first business pitch at a StartingUp event, which provided me with a glimpse of the allure of entrepreneurship. The exhilarating (but fleeting) sensation I got from working on and presenting the idea energized me and, for a while, made me feel like anything is possible. Hence, I could understand why people get excited about working on their business ideas.

The emotional nature of fieldwork led me to the issue of *leaving the field*, which is advisable before the researcher gets too deeply involved in the studied community

and might not be able to maintain their reflexivity (Rossing and Scott, 2016). As I had followed the unstructured, flexible, open-ended way of doing ethnographic research (Johnstone, 2007), I had not pre-set clear conditions for leaving the field. In early 2015, I got the embodied sense that I need to stop doing fieldwork, because I had spent autumn 2014 involved in practical activities of StartingUp (acting as the board president of StartingUp and organizing an accelerator program) while simultaneously acting as a researcher. Juggling the roles caused stress, and I felt that practical engagement was taking too much time from research. By then, I felt confident that the empirical material I had collected was sufficient, covering both events and meetings of StartingUp and the events where I met with people from other ESs.

In early 2015, I told StartingUp people that I would soon leave the community. I consider the most active fieldwork period to have ended in February 2015, but I did not yet leave the field for good. I took a break from my responsibilities toward the community and stepped down as board president. However, it was difficult to leave the field as the 'StartingUp people' had become my friends and I had really started to care about what would happen to the community once my contributions ended. I promised to help out if needed and acted as an 'advisor' in 2015. I also briefly mentored the 2016 chairman of the board of StartingUp. After relinquishing most of my duties toward the community, I continued to attend the few events organized by StartingUp. I was involved in the planning process of the second accelerator program for a time. The last event I attended was in December 2016. From then on, the activity level of StartingUp lowered considerably, which meant that leaving the field for good was easy, as there was not much going on. However, I have continued to stay in touch with some of the people who I met through StartingUp.

3.2.2. On empirical material

In ethnographic research, empirical material is constructed using techniques such as observation, taking field notes, conducting interviews, taking photos and video, recording sound, keeping a journal and gathering other material of interest (e.g. Johnstone, 2007; Fetterman, 2010; Berglund and Wigren, 2014). I have used all of these to construct material from my fieldwork, mainly through attending public events and activities organized by StartingUp, as well as formal and informal meetings and gatherings of its active members. This attendance has involved various levels of observation and active participation. The constructed material consists of observations, field notes, audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, documents and following StartingUp online.

Participant observation in StartingUp's public events was my main means of constructing empirical material, later accompanied by participation in official and informal meetings. Participation and observation included use of ethnographic equipment, aiding my memory and vision and capturing rich details of the

ethnographic experience (Fetterman, 2010, p. 69). My most important piece of equipment was a digital voice recorder, which I used for recording both public events and internal meetings of StartingUp and the network of ESs. I used it so frequently that people started making jokes about it, which seemed to release tensions regarding its presence. I used a small digital camera to take photos and video, sometimes also my smartphone. I used a pen and paper to take notes, sometimes also my smartphone and laptop. I used a laptop to write up the fieldnotes, to prepare for and transcribe interviews and to store, manage and organize data. I also followed StartingUp and other Finnish ESs on social media. This included checking out their Facebook and Twitter profiles and websites from time to time and digitally saving screenshots of the profiles. I also took part in conversations on social media and joined closed Facebook groups related to the Entrepreneurship Societies.

The observation and participation I engaged in was not limited to public events and official meetings of the community: I also took part in unofficial activities. One such activity was socializing, including drinking. In research, such occasions may raise ethical concerns, but I felt I had obtained informed consent as the people who have taken part in the practice of becoming inebriated have already been informed about my research, and if I recorded an occasion I always asked for permission. Moreover, I was not trying to obtain information from inebriated informants, but rather attempting to understand the practices the community enacts. I engaged in the practice of drinking too and felt that the informal occasions of going to the pub or someone's house played an important role in becoming a trusted member of the community and later friends with the others. During such occasions, 'inside jokes' and other symbolic memories were created, which helped form a sense of 'us.' Alcohol was also part of the proceedings when the Entrepreneurship Societies of Finland met each other. As noted in Study 2, the practice of getting inebriated is very common in the context of Finnish student activities and largely accepted, and with 'pizza and beer' said to be an integral part of the start-up scene as well, I felt that by not participating I would miss out on understanding what the community was about.

I took *fieldnotes* from the observations, participation and personal communication I engaged in. As I took notes during an observation or participation and wrote them up afterwards, I was able to reflect on what was going on and add more description to them, such as what I heard, saw and felt and what the material space was like. I thus kept a research journal, where I wrote up my fieldnotes and reflections. In ethnographic research, analysis is already seen to be happening in the field as one interprets their observations (Fetterman, 2010). For me, writing up the notes in my journal was an opportunity to constantly interpret what I think was going on within StartingUp and reflect on what emerged as interesting. Due to the vastness of the material I constructed, the notes were also a shorthand for finding and remembering important occasions.

The material constructed from observation and participation was the most important in obtaining a sense of what was going on in the studied setting. I count material from social media in this too, since it was constructed either by taking part in online discussions or observing the social media activity of Entrepreneurship Societies. These materials provided me with an embodied, tacit understanding of what is being done and how it is done within StartingUp and the network of Finnish ESs. My body learned and remembered this kind of an embodied practical sensitivity. It gave me a sense of what action makes sense, or does not make sense, in a given situation; a feel for the game in the field of Ess and promoting entrepreneurship (Nicolini, Gherardi and Yanow, 2003). It also included seeing and hearing how others spoke about the Ess and acted within them. Empirical material constructed from direct observation of scenes of action in general helped me to study practice, since when asked to describe their practice, practitioners tend to take important aspects of their activity for granted and leave out descriptions of things they consider basic (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017).

I constructed *audio-visual material* (audio recordings, video recordings, photographs) as I took part in events and meetings. As I was engaged in a situation, it was not possible to pay attention to all that was happening there and thus the audio-visual material enabled me to go back to a situation and look at the things I had missed, such as how spaces, bodies and artefacts were used. The audio-visual material allowed for resurfacing what happened and what was said and done. As such, the material helped account for the sociomaterial nature of practices. As practice theoretical approaches see practices as sociomaterial constellations, consisting of human and non-human elements (Gherardi, 2011), it was important for me to be able to *see* how these constellations come to be. Audio-visual material also helped with co-authorship practices as it allowed showing important documented situations to co-authors and discussing the situations with them, augmented by insights from participation.

During the research process I also conducted *interviews*. In late 2013 and early 2014, I conducted interviews with six people who I had seen participate in StartingUp's events, one with a manager from TechCo and two with local entrepreneurs who spoke at StartingUp's events. I also interviewed Tim, the project manager, on a few occasions. These interviews gave insight on why StartingUp had been initiated and about the different backgrounds of people attracted to the community. Later during the research process, interviews allowed me to, for example, hear how participants of an accelerator program reflect on their experiences. Also, short impromptu interviews conducted with ES-people at events where multiple ESs met allowed me to hear how practitioners make sense of ESs and engagement with them.

The interviews I had conducted with actors such as the project manager and TechCo manager gave me background information on the emergence and development of StartingUp. My fieldwork began in late August 2013 when StartingUp had just

begun to organize its first public events. However, the project was initiated before that and some of the documents and social media feeds I have gathered date back to early 2013. Interviews gave depth to my understanding of how things unfolded and helped me understand the project that was behind initiating StartingUp. Hence, they helped me understand how StartingUp relates to the development of the local region. Later the few interviews I did with StartingUp members gave me some understanding on why people were involved in StartingUp and how they experienced it. Interviews I conducted with the participating teams of the 2014 start-up accelerator programme were important in gaining an insight on how the participants experienced the practices of the programme. However, this did not end up as one of the individually published studies of this dissertation. In sum, the interviews deepened my ethnographical interpretations of the studied community and network during the research process, but for the individually published studies their role was minor.

I also collected various digital *documents*, such as screenshots from social media accounts and webpages, presentations, news, planning documents, emails, event programmes, agendas, other documents, and printed documents such as flyers, conference badges, drawings and post-it notes. These documents served as background for understanding and as physical reminders of, for example, what had taken place before my fieldwork began (such as social media feeds that precede August 2013 and project plans that mention StartingUp).

The constructed material includes both Finnish and English, because of the international nature of the studied communities. Most of StartingUp's members and people who attended the get-together events were Finnish, but foreign students took part as well. StartingUp had active members from for example from Vietnam and Russia. The official language of StartingUp was English and if there were non-Finnish-speakers present at an event or meeting, English was used. If only Finns were present, Finnish was spoken.

3.2.3. Summary of the empirical material

To summarize, the empirical material forms two distinctive sets based on where it was collected and on what the material focuses. The first set is material from StartingUp, from participating in its events and meetings and conducting interviews with the people involved. It also included following StartingUp on social media and on its webpage and taking part in online discussions. This material was constructed between September 2013 and December 2016. A sub-part of this set consists of material the Hammer Start-up Accelerator Programme (pseudonym) StartingUp organized in 2014-2016. It is based on participating in the organization of the programme, observing coaching sessions and lectures, and interviews with participating teams and coaches. It also included following the programme on social media and taking part in online discussions. The material is mainly from the first programme, from

August 2014 until December 2014. There is also a smaller set of material from the planning sessions of the 2015 programme and its concluding pitching event, as well as the concluding pitching event of the 2016 programme. I used this material for a study that focused on the practices of the accelerator programme, which has been presented as a conference paper (Parkkari, 2015) but is outside the scope of this dissertation.

The second set of empirical material is constructed from participating in events and meetings where representatives from multiple Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies met each other. This material was constructed between January 2014 and November 2015, and it is based on participant observation and short interviews. It also included following the informal network of Finnish ESs on social media and taking part in online discussions.

The empirical material constructed from my fieldwork is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of empirical material

Type of empirical material	Number/length
Observations	From participation in 124 events/meetings; personal communication
Photographs	2345
Video recordings	Approximately 20 hours
Audio recordings	Approximately 238 hours
Notes	Over 890 pages of notes on Word files (including typed-up field notes from handwritten notebooks, field notes taken directly onto a laptop, and my reflections); hand-written notes
Interviews	49 in total. Three with the project manager of StartingUp, TechCo manager, local entrepreneur, two individual and two group interviews with StartingUp core team members; 20 short interviews from <i>Slush</i> -conference in 2015; three from other events where ESs met; seven with accelerator programme teams, five with accelerator programme coaches, five short interviews from accelerator programme launch party 2015 (potential participants, organizers). Length ranging from 5 minutes to 2 hours
Documents	Over 160 digital documents (screenshots from social media accounts and webpages, presentations, news, planning documents, emails, event programmes, agendas, other documents); printed documents such as flyers, conference badges, drawings and post-it notes

3.3. Analysis

In my research, I operationalize the practice theoretical approach through what Nicolini and Monteiro (2017) have called a ‘situational approach’, whereby engaging with real-time activity in its historical situatedness is emphasized and the local accomplishment, production, and reproduction of practices is addressed (Nicolini,

2017; Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017). Such an approach focuses on ‘concerted accomplishments of (diverse) practices within rather well defined scenes of activity’ (Buch et al., 2015, p. 6). Instead of individual actors, systems, representations of knowledge, symbols and so forth, I have viewed practices as the basic unit of analysis (Reckwitz, 2002; Nicolini, 2012, p. 7). Priority in analysis is thus given to ‘embodied actions, emotions, things, technologies, interactions, encounters, performances, and actual use’ (Buch et al., 2015, p. 2).

In this study, I have analysed how StartingUp’s activities and the get-together events for the network of Finnish ESs were discursively and materially accomplished. I have ‘zoomed in’ (as Nicolini offers as a metaphor) on a certain place and time to interpret who is present and why, what people are doing and saying, the material and symbolic landscape in which the practice is carried out and how the practice is accomplished through the body, and which technologies and artefacts are used in the practice and how (Nicolini, 2012, p. 221). Moreover, I have analysed what is constructed within the studied practices.

Nicolini and Monteiro (2017) recognize that one of the challenges with the situational approach is that in a given scene of action, there are always several practices happening at the same time and we witness actions, projects and tasks that belong to several distinct practices. Practices are not pre-given nor do they rest on any natural distinction. This means that when researching practices, one must define and circumscribe some units of analysis, which are arbitrary choices made by a researcher on the basis of, for example, a theoretical scheme or taking as ‘a’ practice what the practitioners define as practice. (Gherardi 2012, p. 160.) As an empirical researcher, I had to make sense of which practices are happening in the first place, and which are relevant, in the given situations before I studied them in more detail. My insider position helped me gain an embodied practitioner sense of what was going on in a given situation and what might be important to focus on. Hence, I used this sense to decide what to focus on.

As I got familiar with the community, its practices started to become almost invisible and self-evident to me – as happens when people become practitioners (Gherardi, 2012). Having co-authors in the individually published studies helped me overcome this challenge. They helped me ‘distance’ myself, emotionally and analytically, from the ethnographic material and get deeper into the practices enacted within ESs and interpret what was constructed in and through them. The co-authors acted as a sounding board to my observations. Two of the co-authors also analysed some of my empirical material, seeing it through ‘fresh eyes’ as they were ‘outsiders’ to the Entrepreneurship Societies.

Whilst the term ‘practice’ seems to connote something that is common sense, studying practices is not straightforward. Practices can be difficult to access or study because they are ‘hidden, tacit, and often linguistically inexpressible in propositional terms’ (Gherardi, 2011, p. 50). For me, writing up my fieldnotes and writing

reflective narratives into my research journal was a way to describe and work on my lived experience both during my fieldwork and after it. Writing narratives was my way to express the tacit and to make sense of how I took part in enacting the studied community's practices. Writing them was an important part of how I engaged in ethnographic analysis whilst on the field (Fettermann, 2010). Using descriptive language also helped adhere to the idea that all practices are sociomaterial (Gherardi, 2015). I have also aimed to utilize descriptive storytelling in reporting results, as it can enable the reader to relive the story told by the author; to provide a story that can evoke the feeling and atmosphere of the field, to enable the reader to step into the studied world (Conelly and Glandinin, 1990; Ellis and Bochner, 2000, cited in Katila et al., 2017).

As I mentioned in Chapter 2.5, practice theories have been criticised for localism and ignoring or being unable to account for 'big issues' or 'large-scale phenomena.' I acknowledge that the situational approach runs the risk of producing descriptions of how people do things in a given time and place without much reference to the bigger picture. Therefore, in this introductory article I sought to 'zoom out' from the local accomplishments described in Studies 2 and 3 to interpret interconnections between practices in order to understand the 'bigger picture' (Nicolini, 2009, 2012, 2017).

In the next sub-chapters I will present the cycles of analysis I carried out and give examples of how exactly I analysed practices. Table 3 summarizes how I have analysed the empirical material in order to obtain the results I present in Studies 2 and 3 and in Chapter 4.2. Because Study 1 is a conceptual one, I do not present it here. Its summary in Chapter 4.1.1. describes how the study was conducted.

Table 3. Analysis of empirical material

	Empirical material	Analysis
Cycle 1 (results published in Study 2)	Fieldnotes from my observations, participation, social media feeds, documents and interviews	Analysing how StartingUp was developed and whose task was it to develop it
Cycle 2 (results published in Study 3)	Fieldnotes, video, audio recordings, photographs and documents from a get-together cottage weekend for Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies	Analysing what meanings are constructed for Entrepreneurship Societies and entrepreneurship and what ideals emerge as Entrepreneurship Societies get together
Cycle 3 (results elucidated in Chapter 4)	Additional scenes and insights from my fieldwork	Synthesising results of individually published studies; adding scenes and insights

3.3.1. First cycle and its results

The first cycle of analysis was carried out in spring 2014 while my fieldwork was still ongoing. It resulted in the publication of Study 2 in 2015, in co-operation with my co-author Pikka-Maaria Laine. This cycle of analysis was guided by our interest in how the purpose and development of StartingUp was done. That is, we were interested in how the organization was developed and who was responsible for the development.

First, I utilised fieldnotes from my observations, participation, social media feeds and interviews as a basis for writing a thickly descriptive, chronological story (Langley, 1999) of what had happened within StartingUp from the establishment of the project in early 2013 until March 2014. I narrated the public events organized by StartingUp, meetings that had taken place and other important activities, paying attention to their material and discursive accomplishment. In and through writing the story I sought to interpret key turning points for the community, that is, moments where I thought something had changed in the community.

Once I had constructed the story, the analysis cycle continued in co-operation with my co-author. We discussed my observations and our readings of the story I had constructed. I also shared audio-visual material to my co-author so she could see and hear some of the situations I was describing. When looking at the trajectory, we began to see shifts in how the community was developed and who and what was involved in developing it. For example, we noticed a shift in the way I referred to StartingUp. After taking part in the first get-together event for Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies, I had begun to refer to StartingUp as 'us' instead of them. This encouraged us to dig deeper into how the get-together had been materially and discursively accomplished and the effects of this.

We decided to consider the development of StartingUp in terms of strategizing activities, which here refer to all those actions that relate to the purpose, future, survival, and competitiveness of the community (Johnson, Melin and Whittington, 2003). Based on the story, we then coded (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2015) the strategizing activities of StartingUp. As we drew on sociomateriality (Barad, 2003; Suchman, 2007; Orlikowski and Scott, 2008) as a practice philosophical perspective (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011), we guided our attention towards how human and non-human activities produced each other and formed 'configurings.' Then, we proceeded to analyse the various performative effects of these configurings, i.e. what these configurings produced. For example, we investigated how within a get-together event for Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies (that StartingUp organized) laptops and smartphones enabled participants to launch a shared website, and through this the co-operation between Finnish ESs was materialized and the culture of 'learning-by-doing' enacted.

In and through analysing the configurings, we were able to construct three practices of strategy-making, since the activities we detected can be seen as

strategizing activities according to Strategy-as-Practice stream of research (Johnson et al., 2003). We contribute to this stream of research in the paper. Further, we scrutinized what kind of strategic agency (Mantere, 2005) was constructed within the identified practices. This refers here to a capability to act in relation to the purpose and development of StartingUp. For example, we interpreted that the practice of ‘Enacting start-up scene membership’ enabled a large group of people to participate in the strategy-making of StartingUp. Importantly, we noticed that taking part in the practices of a cottage weekend get-together event resulted in some of the participants to begin identifying with the start-up scene.

The practice of ‘informing the purpose of StartingUp’ involved StartingUp being initiated in and through project management procedures, the establishment and usage of social media accounts for StartingUp and organizing entrepreneurship-themed events. In and through the practice, StartingUp was constructed as a project aimed at creating new companies and jobs and as a supporting actor which activates entrepreneurial people and aids new ventures. The newly-founded Entrepreneurship Society materialized to various stakeholders through virtual presence. The role of a project manager in promoting entrepreneurship was emphasized, whilst event participants were produced more as passive listeners and event attendees than StartingUp community members. An ideal startup entrepreneur was constructed as innovative, courageous and curious pioneer, and even heroic representations of entrepreneurship were constructed.

The practice of ‘enacting start-up scene membership’ included having a get-together event for the Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies, where select ‘active members’ of StartingUp were invited. At the event, they participated in discussion and workshops with people from other Finnish ESs and were asked questions about their operations. The event had a cosy physical setting (sauna, fireplace, beer) and the ubiquity of laptops and smartphones enabled participants to launch a shared website. In and through this practice, StartingUp was constructed as an equal member among the Entrepreneurship Societies, and the co-operation between the communities materialized through the creation of the webpage and social media posts. Furthermore, StartingUp was constructed as a joint venture for the members that attended the event, producing them as strategic planners of the community – and as belonging to the ‘start-up scene.’

The practice of ‘providing IT services’ involved establishing a secret Facebook-group for the emerging StartingUp ‘core team’ and using it as their internal communication platform. It also included establishing co-operation with local entrepreneurs through a ‘Problem solving program’, where StartingUp provided solutions to local entrepreneurs’ problems. Struggles over definitions caused issues and forced the core team to define their services as IT consulting and minor software development. In and through this practice, certain people were constructed as the exclusive core team who were allowed to take part in planning the future of

StartingUp. StartingUp became defined as a service provider and the core team was constructed as IT entrepreneurs.

3.3.2. Second cycle and its results

Once I had finished Study 3, for which we analysed the first get-together event of Finnish ESs that I had attended, I proceeded to attend more such events. Attending them inspired me to focus the second round of analysis on what is going on within the world of Entrepreneurship Societies: what meanings are constructed for them as they get together and what meanings are constructed for entrepreneurship. During the second cycle of analysis I cooperated with my co-author Krista Kohtakangas (University of Lapland), and this cooperation led to the publication of Study 3 in 2018.

I shared my typed-up fieldnotes from four get-together events of Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies with Krista. We both read and discussed the notes. Due to the rich and detailed nature of the empirical material available, we decided to focus on one event only: the get-together cottage weekend organized by StartingUp in 2015. Then, I shared selected video and audio recordings and photographs from the selected get-together event with Krista. Our analysis process included multiple rounds of both of us examining the material on our own before coming together to watch and listen to the empirical material and discuss interpretations. Our analysis was focused on how the event was materially and discursively accomplished.

Through analysing the fieldnotes and audio-visual material, we started to recognize that the event itself was an enactment of the Finnish tradition of having a cottage weekend. The elements of such a practice were visible there (such as going to the sauna), and the practitioners talked about the event as such. We interpreted having a cottage weekend as meaning that, for example, the event enabled at least partial detachment from everyday life, that only people in certain positions were invited to join the event, and that it brought along expectations to the participants (such as them being familiar with the context of the ESs). It also brought along a relaxed atmosphere for working on developing co-operation – and having fun and engaging in alcohol drinking.

Numerous social practices were enacted during the weekend, but it did not make sense to focus on listing all of them. Instead, two key practices started to emerge as important in regard to producing the meanings of the ESs. We started to see that the participants of the event carried into the event, and carried out during it, two important practices: doing ‘being a student’ and doing ‘being part of the start-up scene’.

We began to recognize these as we analysed audio-visual material from situations such as the participants engaging in groupwork during the event. We paid attention to the way the people were dressed; what objects were visible and what kind of language was used. Through this, we started to interpret that the participants were

enacting 'being a member of the start-up scene', because they wore logoed t-shirts and hoodies (the stereotypical 'start-up uniform', see Hyrkäs, 2016), had start-up scene-related stickers on their laptops and were talking about Silicon Valley and the Finnish start-up scene. They even engaged in start-up scene practices, such as doing pitching as an evening activity. We started to interpret them as also enacting student practices, as the participants were competent in doing workshop-style groupwork, listening to presentations and presenting their ideas. The way people were dressed in relaxed clothing, how they composed their bodies and engaged in heavy drinking, drinking games and crude jokes also contributed to interpreting them as enacting student practices.

After interpreting these practices, we analysed how the meanings of ESs were constructed as these practices became intertwined, and what ideals emerged. The second cycle of analysis surfaced how, as the enactment of doing 'being a student' and doing 'being part of the start-up scene' intertwined within 'having a cottage weekend,' the Entrepreneurship Society organizations were constructed as a student movement that aims to wake up entrepreneurial latencies within students. Furthermore, multiple contradictions emerged important in constructing the meanings of ESs, such as valuing 'doing', while aiming to stay clear of 'politics'.

3.3.3. Third cycle and its results

Once I had the combined results of the three individually published studies and a draft of this introductory article, I engaged in a third cycle of analysis. This cycle focused on synthesis: I sought to weave together the results of the first two rounds of analysis. As I worked and reworked to write the results of the two studies as one narrative, I came to realize that I needed more space for telling the story of StartingUp and the Entrepreneurship Societies because the article and book chapter format in Studies 2 and 3 had little space for rich ethnographic descriptions.

I considered the results of Studies 2 and 3 side by side and looked for points of interconnection and difference. Certain observations began to emerge as common to both studies: 1) start-up entrepreneurship was constructed as the desired kind of entrepreneurship, and the kind that the StartingUp and the network of ESs promote, 2) different interpretations of what promoting entrepreneurship means emerged, such as aiding the establishment of companies vs. enhancing the entrepreneurial spirit and bringing people together, 3) different actors emerged as active actors in promoting entrepreneurship, 4) a shared identity of the Entrepreneurship Societies emerged, and the ESs were constructed as a social movement, 5) entrepreneurial 'doing' emerged as desirable. In order to go deeper into how these were accomplished, I rewrote the results. I took the results of Studies 2 and 3 and added descriptions and insights from scenes that had not been included or analysed for the individually published studies. I added these based on their illustrative power.

For example, to expand on the observation of how start-up entrepreneurs were constructed as passionate, active actors in Study 2, I looked deeper into a key practice that constructs them as such: the practice of telling entrepreneurial stories. I added more illustration of this practice and its effects, including an occasion where a young man had been invited to share the story of a particular Entrepreneurship Society at a party celebrating the social media achievements of said ES in early 2014. I once again analysed what happened during this occasion: who was there, what they were doing and talking, what the symbolic and material space was like, what the feeling there was and how objects and technologies were used. I noticed how in that party the stage and audience were set up so that they produced the audience as a spectator and the speaker as the ‘entrepreneur.’

To expand on the observation that the ESs were constructed as a student movement, I added insights I gained from analysing how people made sense of their involvement in the ESs and how they spoke about the ESs and entrepreneurship, but also from acknowledging the sociomaterial situations where the conversations took place. First, I added a peer-led, impromptu group interview I conducted in the autumn of 2014 in an event that the Entrepreneurship Societies attended, invited there by a public funding organization. I used this to expand on the observation that the ESs were constructed as a student-led movement and to illustrate how the ‘ES people’ made sense of their engagement in the ESs. I paid particular attention to how they spoke about entrepreneurship and how this reflected cultural understandings of entrepreneurship. Second, I included a fiery extempore speech held by a start-up coach at a get-together event for Finnish ESs in spring 2014. I added this speech because the occasion, so charged with affect, had left a strong mark on me. I used it to illustrate how people outside the community were calling for students to do the ‘revolution of entrepreneurship’ in Finland. Third, to expand on the observation that doing the ES-movement seemed to be about having fun, I added insights from the mundane doings within StartingUp, such as how a StartingUp members made sense of their involvement in the community during interviews I did with them.

To expand on the observation that start-up entrepreneurship is constructed as the ideal kind of entrepreneurship and the kind the ESs promote, I added a brief mention of the start-up accelerator programme organized by StartingUp. Insights on the accelerator programme come from the work I did in 2015 to scrutinize what start-up accelerator programmes are about and look at them as a site for (re) producing (exclusive and problematic) ideals of entrepreneurship. I analysed how an accelerator programme was discursively and materially accomplished, interpreting that practices of pitching, coaching and judging were integral in accomplishing the programme. I elucidated that within these practices, the ideal kind of ‘entrepreneur’ was constructed as able and willing to perform entrepreneurship; to think big and become a start-up. I also argued that within entrepreneurship training programmes, such as accelerator programmes, would-be or nascent entrepreneurs are being

normalized into certain ideals of thinking of and doing entrepreneurship. I did a conference paper on this study (Parkkari, 2015), but it did not end up getting published.

4. Results

In this chapter, I draw together the results of this study. First, in Chapter 4.1. I summarize the three individually published studies that are part of this dissertation and present how they contribute to answering my research question of ‘What is constructed in and through the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship?’ Study 1 provides a conceptual basis for the two empirical studies as it considers how different academic conversations interrelate. The two empirical studies (Studies 2 and 3) address the research question through analyses of practices enacted within Entrepreneurship Societies.

Then, in Chapter 4.2. I move beyond the individually published studies. As I explain in Chapter 3.3.3. I have chosen to add this chapter in order to provide more in-depth and thicker description of the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship. Hence, Chapter 4.2. interweaves the results of the individually published studies, augmented with additional scenes and insights from my fieldwork.

4.1. Three individually published studies

4.1.1. Summary of Study 1

Study 1, published as a book chapter in the series *Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research*, is written together with Senior Lecturer Karen Verduijn (VU Amsterdam). In the paper, I was the lead author. While designing and framing the study was a collaborative effort, I wrote a majority of the chapter. I took the lead on sections regarding Entrepreneurship as Practice and Critical Entrepreneurship Studies and the example research question, whilst Karen took the lead on the Radical processual approach. The results and discussion were constructed collaboratively.

Study 1 is a conceptual paper that introduces three recent conversations within entrepreneurship research that diverge from ‘mainstream’ functionalist entrepreneurship research: Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, Entrepreneurship as Practice and a Radical Processual Approach. We look at these conversations side-by-side, which is necessary because a) they are at times talked about interchangeably and there is a need to understand what sets them apart and what is their common ground, b) such side-by-side consideration is useful guidance for any ‘newcomers’ to these emerging and growing conversations within entrepreneurship research. Moreover, we argue that these conversations could benefit each other and ultimately provide

more space for novel, radical, complexified and nuanced ways of understanding and researching entrepreneurship phenomena.

To achieve the aims of Study 1, we first read through contributions within each conversation. We then constructed brief introductions for each conversation where we consider how the conversation has understood entrepreneurship, the focus of the conversation, and examples of the types of questions the conversation has raised. To go beyond simply introducing the conversation, we utilized a ‘classic question’ from entrepreneurship research (Baron, 2004) – ‘Why do some people become entrepreneurs and others do not?’ as an illustrative question. This means we did not seek answers for the question, but rather used it as a didactic tool for carving out the idiosyncrasies of the conversations. We engaged in a thought exercise where we looked into each conversation to think of ways the conversation would deal with the example question. That is, how it would problematize, reframe or criticize the question and use it to come up with novel questions. We then used this thought exercise and the introductions to discuss how the conversations might provide each other with novel research directions.

Table 4 summarizes the way the conversation would deal with the illustrative question.

Table 4. How conversations of Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, Entrepreneurship as Practice and the Radical Processual Approach to entrepreneurship deal with the illustrative question

	How the conversation would deal with the illustrative question of ‘Why do some people become entrepreneurs and others do not?’
Critical Entrepreneurship Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what assumptions and valuations the question entails, and problematize them • Question the ‘entrepreneur’ part of the question, asking questions about who and what are accepted as legitimate entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship • Refocus questions toward inclusion and exclusion at play as some people might be encouraged, forced to, discouraged, or even prevented from becoming entrepreneurs
Entrepreneurship as Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reframe the question so that it could be re-thought in terms of practices, asking new questions about ‘becoming an entrepreneur’ as a practice • Rethink it to understand how <i>practices</i> produce people as (non-)entrepreneurs and a ‘desire to be’ an entrepreneur • Move toward asking new questions: how does entrepreneurship emerge from, and affect, social relations and arrangements (or not)? Study of entrepreneurship as the study of how bundles and complexes of practices form, persist, and disappear?
Radical Processual Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the <i>becoming</i> in the question seriously and object to the (reified) use of ‘entrepreneur’ as some final entity or identity • Move toward a novel ontological position: ontology of becoming • Reframe the question to emphasise the provisional of/in entrepreneurship: the ‘entre’, the in-between, where actually anyone always already ‘is’ and ‘is not’ (to be seen as) an entrepreneur • Ask new questions regarding the nature of the processes in and through which (relational) events come about, where they stem from, and how they are interwoven with ‘what is already there’

Study 1 showed that none of the three conversations take ‘classic’ questions posed by entrepreneurship research (Baron, 2004), such as ‘Why do some people become entrepreneurs and others do not?’, at face value. The way the conversations take issue with different aspects of the illustrative question shows how the conversations involve slightly different foci: CES engages in questioning the assumptions entailed in the conversation and challenging who is considered an entrepreneur. EaP in turn aims to refocus the question so that the issue could be thought of in terms of practices, whilst RPA wishes to adopt a novel ontological position to studying entrepreneurship, which again challenges whether such questions could be asked.

The conversations share an appreciation of the everydayness of entrepreneurship and a want to move away from functionalist, overtly individualized and economized views of entrepreneurship. As such, we argue that insights from each conversation could inform future research. For starters, the critical ‘attitude’ of CES could help Entrepreneurship as Practice studies avoid falling into entrepreneurship research’s general ‘hegemony of the positive’ (Farny et al., 2016) and to keep sight of the deliberate and non-deliberate consequences of the intricate practice constellations being materialized.

Vice versa, EaP could offer critical studies with novel theoretical resources. For example, the practice approach could be utilized to gain a nuanced understanding of ‘how things are done’ and thus to understand how both problematic and emancipatory aspects of entrepreneurship are being materialized and kept in existence in and through constant repetition of (mundane) practices. Moreover, it could be used to make oppressive practices *visible* in order to *change* them. Whilst discourse and language are central concerns in many critical entrepreneurship contributions, ‘in practice theory (...) discourse and language lose their omnipotent status’ (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 254). This means that through its emphasis on sociomateriality, the practice approach could also be a source of inspiration in moving away from human-centric critique in entrepreneurship.

The radical processual approach could provide both future Critical Entrepreneurship Studies and EaP studies insights in relation to *how* theorizing is done. From the Radical Processual Approach point of view, some of the critical research seems to be postulated on universal principles and ‘dualities’ and as such runs the risk of moulding insights into (fixed) categories. As for the practice studies, RPA might critique them for ‘showing’ certain practices, and then pausing the analysis, resulting in a ‘fixing’ of understanding the world. As the RPA adopts an ontology of becoming, it urges not to ‘stop’ phenomena to comprehend them. Rather, it urges to consider the processual dynamics of things, the inherent movement in and of understanding (social) phenomena, to understand that the world is (still) constantly going on. Conversely, the practice approach could help the radical processual approach in its challenges regarding operationalizing its ontological ideas in empirical work. Whilst there are no clear methodological guidelines regarding

how practice studies should be done (Gherardi, 2012), the practice approach has a 'toolset vocabulary' (Nicolini, 2012) that can further the radical processual conversation in making the radical processual promises more 'concrete'.

Study 1 contributed to the field of entrepreneurship research through providing an overview of three emerging academic conversations and through providing ways forward with future research. The side-by-side approach that appreciates all the presented conversations went against the common practice of arguing for the superiority of one approach over the others. This was needed as these three conversations are some of the current 'hot' approaches in 'non-mainstream' entrepreneurship research, but there is confusion regarding where they interrelate and differ. Whilst wanting to understand this, our intention was not to start producing boundaries (deciding what 'fits' into a conversation), but to open up the conversations and keep them 'alive' and fluid.

Study 1 contributes to answering my research question by offering conceptual and theoretical grounding for combining the practice theoretical and critical approaches to the study of entrepreneurship. Study 1 shows that what separates the conversations of Entrepreneurship as Practice and Critical Entrepreneurship Studies is that CES is more of a political project that sees entrepreneurship as an (ideological) discourse and engages in challenging taken-for-granted conceptions of entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, EaP is more of a theoretical and empirical project that sees entrepreneurship as an everyday hands-on practice and creative organizing (Johannisson, 2011) and is interested in applying practice theories into the study of entrepreneurship in order to understand how entrepreneurship is 'done'. Despite the different foci, the practice approach is quite compatible with the assumptions within CES (although it must be noted that CES are not unitary in their ontological and epistemological assumptions). They both seem to assume that 'entrepreneurship' is not a stable feature of societies and economies, but that certain conditions and social interactions make it possible and (re)generate it, giving it a multitude of meanings (Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Jones and Spicer, 2009; Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009; Nicolini, 2012; Gill, 2014). They also share a common critique of economized and overtly individualized perspectives on entrepreneurship and its heroic representations (e.g. Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Steyaert, 2007; Johannisson, 2011; Olaison and Sørensen, 2014).

As Study 1 presents the academic conversations, it contributes to answering my research question by offering the idea that Entrepreneurship as Practice offers grounding for understanding *how* entrepreneurship is constructed through theoretical orientation on adopting practice theories to the study of entrepreneurship. EaP theorizing can help make oppressive practices visible in order to change them. That is, the practice approach can assist in arriving at a nuanced understanding of 'how things are done' (before rushing to change them). Critical Entrepreneurship Studies, in turn, directs attention toward the issue of *what*: what assumptions do we

hold, what do we study and what is constructed in and through the studied practices. The reflexive and questioning stance of CES is needed in order to account for the various effects of entrepreneurship practices. Conversely, a practice theoretical approach is needed within the theoretical variety of critical studies in order to understand how both problematic and emancipatory aspects of entrepreneurship only exist in and through constant repetition.

4.1.2. Summary of Study 2

Study 2, published in the journal *International Journal of Innovation in the Digital Economy*, is written together with Adjunct Professor and University Lecturer Pikka-Maaria Laine (University of Lapland). I was solely responsible for conducting the fieldwork and constructing empirical material for the study. Pikka-Maaria took the lead in positioning the study within Strategy-as-Practice research and writing the theoretical framework, but we framed the paper collaboratively. Analysis of the empirical material was a collaborative effort, as was writing the rest of the paper.

Study 2 considers how StartingUp was developed and who could take part in developing it. It takes part in the discussions in the research stream of strategy-as-practice, in particular in discussions that highlight the role of material artefacts, the body, tools, and technologies as part of strategy-making (Jarzabkowski, Spee and Mets, 2013; Kaplan, 2011; Stieger, Matzler, Chatterjee and Ladstaetter-Fussenegger, 2012). These studies have provided important insights into the role and implications of material artefacts and technologies in strategy-making. Our research adds on a perceived paucity of studies on how the co-constitution of the social and material produce strategic agency (Jarzabkowski, Balogun and Seidl, 2007; Vaara and Whittington, 2012). Study 3 examines how the continuous (re)configuring of human actions, information technology, and other materialities produce strategic agency. That is, it draws from sociomateriality as a practice philosophical perspective to do a reading of the strategy-making of StartingUp. The study contributes to strategy-as-practice research and adds to studies on the role of technology in strategy-making by arguing that it is not sufficient to focus on information technologies – or other materialities – as such, but rather to acknowledge the whole sociomateriality of strategy practices.

The study utilized ethnographic material I constructed from my fieldwork and analysed the practices in and through which StartingUp was developed. The results distinguished three strategy-making practices according to discernible shifts in participation of the members of StartingUp in strategy-making: the practice of ‘informing the purpose of StartingUp’; ‘enacting startup scene membership’ and ‘providing IT services’. The results illustrated how strategic agency was dispersed to humans, IT, and physical settings. The results demonstrated the dynamics participation along the strategy-making process: how it shifted from a traditional top-down mode of strategy-making and reserved strategic agency to certain people,

to including a larger number of people, before finally reconstructing the exclusive nature of strategy work by appointing strategic agency to a restricted group of people.

Study 2 contributes to answering my research question of ‘What is constructed in and through the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship?’ by theoretically arguing how the social and the material are entangled and inseparable in the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship. It also contributes to answering the research question through demonstrating how strategic agency is produced to both human and non-human actors (such as information technology and physical settings) in and through the continuous (re)configuring of human and non-human actions. That is, it elucidates how determining those who get to take part in developing an organization that promotes entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of exclusion and inclusion. Further, it contributes by illustrating how promoting a certain kind of entrepreneurship (growth- and technology focused ‘start-up entrepreneurship’) emerges as the aim of an organization and as the idealized kind of entrepreneurship.

4.1.3. Summary of Study 3

Study 3, published as a book chapter in the series *Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research*, is written together with administrative sciences doctoral candidate Krista Kohtakangas (University of Lapland). I was the lead author in the paper. The study was framed collaboratively, but I was responsible for positioning the study within the field of entrepreneurship studies. I was also responsible for conducting the fieldwork. Analysing the empirical material was a collaborative effort, but I took the lead on writing up the results.

Study 3 follows the practice theoretical approach to gather a better understanding of organizations that work to promote entrepreneurship. It answers the questions ‘How do the meanings of Entrepreneurship Society organizations emerge in and through the practices that intertwine during a get-together event of these organizations? What meanings are constructed for entrepreneurship within these practices?’ Hence, it strives to illustrate the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship in a social setting where several such organizations get together to work on their cooperation for a limited period of time. Through this, the study is able to discuss how Entrepreneurship Society organizations in Finland and the idea of entrepreneurship are constructed.

Study 3 contributes to the emerging academic discussion of Entrepreneurship as Practice. These studies have provided important insights into understanding what entrepreneurs do and how they do it (Anderson and Ronteau, 2017) and reconceptualized entrepreneurship as an unfolding of everyday practices (De Clercq and Voronov, 2009) or as an everyday, hands-on, ongoing practice of creatively organizing people and resources (Johannisson, 2011). Our research adds to a perceived paucity of studies that utilize real-time, naturally-occurring

data (Chalmers and Shaw, 2017; Johannisson, 2011) while focusing on the phenomenon of entrepreneurship *beyond* individuals labelled as entrepreneurs doing entrepreneurship.

Results of Study 3 illustrate how, as the enactment of doing ‘being a student’ and doing ‘being part of the start-up scene’ intertwined within ‘having a cottage weekend,’ the Entrepreneurship Society organizations were constructed as a student movement that aims to wake up entrepreneurial latencies within students. Furthermore, multiple contradictions emerged as important in constructing the meanings of Ess, such as valuing ‘doing,’ while aiming to stay clear of ‘politics.’

Study 3 contributes to answering my research question of ‘What is constructed in and through the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship?’ through a) illustrating that when it comes to understanding practices, even a single event can be meaningful, b) arguing that if one is interested in entrepreneurship as a practice, it is not just the practices of people labelled as entrepreneurs that matter – doing things related to the idea of entrepreneurship contributes to the meanings and roles that entrepreneurship assumes in different social arenas with varying effects, c) illustrating how the Entrepreneurship Societies were constructed as a social movement, how start-up entrepreneurship became idealized, and how the power of entrepreneurship became valued over the power of politics to affect the world.

4.2. Practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship

Next, I provide a narrative of the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship. In doing so I ‘zoom in’ (Nicolini, 2009, 2012) on the local accomplishment of the practices enacted within StartingUp and the get-together events of Finnish Entrepreneurship Studies.

I first describe how start-up entrepreneurship was constructed as the ideal kind of entrepreneurship and how StartingUp emerged as a project that aims to promote this kind of entrepreneurship. Then, I move on to describe how students were constructed as the ones making a change in regard to the state of start-up entrepreneurship, how the ESs were constructed as a student-led movement, and how a shared identity was constructed for people taking part in the Entrepreneurship Societies. Then I describe how the sense of belonging to a movement provided the members of ESs with opportunities for enjoyment and personal development, before finally describing how the idea of entrepreneurship related to a sense of wanting and being able to make a change in the world.

These results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of the doings and sayings within Entrepreneurship Societies and what is constructed in and through them.

Doings and sayings	What is constructed
<i>Start-up entrepreneurship as the ideal kind of entrepreneurship</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about start-ups, start-up 'scene', start-up events and Silicon Valley • Mystifying the meaning of a start-up • Differentiating between start-up and 'regular' entrepreneurship • Acknowledging the trendiness of start-ups • Wearing a 'tech uniform', start-up logos visible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting the ESs to the idea of start-up entrepreneurship • 'Start-up gurus' as the ones who possess correct definitions of a start-up • Start-up entrepreneurship as the ideal kind of entrepreneurship, making 'regular' entrepreneurship seem inferior to start-ups • Start-up entrepreneurship as 'cool' identity • The clothing and the material artefacts constructed the 'ES people' a shared identity of belonging to the start-up scene
<i>StartingUp as a project that aims to promote start-up entrepreneurship</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing a project plan, hiring a project manager • Posting about StartingUp on social media • Organizing events and activities: speeches by entrepreneurs or other experts, pitching competitions, parties, hackathons, workshops, and a start-up accelerator programme • Would-be entrepreneurs learning 'lean start-up methodology' within an accelerator programme • Entrepreneur telling his story using PowerPoint and Prezi presentations, while the audience sits quietly in a classroom-like setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • StartingUp as a project that aims to promote entrepreneurship, as a supporting actor that activates entrepreneurial people and aids new ventures • Entrepreneurship promotion = the pursuit of activating and helping people to set up businesses • Need to promote entrepreneurship comes from regional development • Enacting entrepreneurship promotion • Start-up 'methodologies' as the sources newcomers should look into for advice and inspiration • Start-up entrepreneur as an easy-going, active, independent and passionate person • Event participants as passive listeners and event attendees, rather than StartingUp community members
<i>Students as making a change to the state of entrepreneurship</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing student-like activities with ease • Having a party in an industrial-style building, students and other people socializing, drinking and eating • Founder of an ES sharing the 'origin story' of one ES • Feeling: electric atmosphere • Speaking English in Finland • Entrepreneurship Societies getting together • Start-up coach doing an impromptu speech on entrepreneurship, audience reacting enthusiastically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'ES people' as students • Promoting entrepreneurship (=changing attitudes towards entrepreneurship) as the aim of the Entrepreneurship Societies • Students as the ones making a change in relation to the state of start-up entrepreneurship • Electrified sensation of audience being part of making a change • Entrepreneurship Societies as international communities • A sense of 'us', of being part of the same cause • Entrepreneurship as an ideology that shouldn't be questioned

<i>A shared identity of the ES people</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a cottage weekend: hanging out, going to the sauna, drinking, workshops • Taking group photos while wearing similar clothing, circulating them on social media • Talking about different ways of co-operating • Talking about the ESs as a student movement • Talking about higher education students as the target group of the movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosy atmosphere, sense of community • A shared identity for the 'ES people' • Rejection of formal cooperation practices • Entrepreneurship Societies as a student-led movement • Students as active actors, getting recognition for the ESs • Aims of the movement: to wake up entrepreneurial latencies in students, to support the creation of new companies
<i>The Entrepreneurship Society movement as providing its members enjoyment, connections and personal development</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having fun and partying • Meeting new people • Talking about reasons for being involved in the Entrepreneurship Societies • Mundane doings involved in being an active ES member • No official status needed to do things within the community • Sharing learning experiences • Incumbent member personally invites people to an event or asks to help with a project; getting to do things within an ES • Talking about what kinds of people should be involved in the ESs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going against the 'we need entrepreneurship to create more jobs' discourse • ES movement as serving start-ups and 'entrepreneurially-minded people', but also providing its members' enjoyment and personal development • Promoting entrepreneurship as 'helping entrepreneurial people and start-ups while having fun doing it', but also as 'bringing people together' • 'Practical' skills as desired learning • Engagement in ESs as a means for augmenting formal education • People as members of an ES • Ideal ES member an entrepreneurial actor who is talented, hard-working, willing and capable of showing passion and excitement
<i>A sense of wanting to and being able to make a change in the world</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking about wanting to and being able to have an influence and making a change • Comparing millennials with students of the 1960s • Talking about 'everything being in your own hands' • Talking about the importance of doing • Talking about wanting to stay away from politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of being able to make a change • Millennials as a generation with a strong sense of agency • Participation provides a feeling of doing something important and making a change • Entrepreneurial worldview • <i>Feeling</i> of doing something important and talking about change more important than defining said change • Identity of 'doers' • Entrepreneurial 'doing' as the preferred way to have impact • Entrepreneurship as an instrument with which one can circumvent the power of existing practices and take control of the situation in their own way

4.2.1. Start-up entrepreneurship as the ideal kind of entrepreneurship

The shared website of the Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies described that 'One of the biggest impacts on Finnish startup scene has been the student-run organizations called Entrepreneurship Societies that are developing an entrepreneurial ecosystems inside their cities and local universities' (StartupFinland, 2017, original in English). This connected the ESs to the idea of 'start-up entrepreneurship' and in fact, it was

the kind of entrepreneurship that was talked about in the field of Entrepreneurship Societies. Hyrkäs (2016) observed that the word ‘start-up’ is ‘commonly used when talking about a new venture that carries with it a promise of high revenues and a high potential of changing the competitive landscape with an innovative idea. Often, new information technology is involved, or simply a new way of using technology to do things.’ (p. 21.)

As people from different Entrepreneurship Societies got together to have a cottage weekend in 2015, the participants referred to the ‘start-up scene’ and ‘start-up ecosystem’ in Finland and talked about start-up related events. However, the meaning of ‘start-ups’ was mystified as Caitlyn, who had been involved in two different Entrepreneurship Societies, said during her presentation at the get-together that

There’s a freaking lot of buzz going on around start-ups and the start-up scene and ESs and everything related to growth companies and entrepreneurship. There’s been a huge change during the last five years how people feel about start-ups, how people actually know what a start-up is. Well, they don’t, but they think that they do. This is one thing: read Steve Blank’s definition of a start-up. Just fucking do that. (Original in English)

Here the concept of a ‘start-up’ was presented as something that people only *think* they understand. The ‘true’ definition of start-ups became assigned here to the (American) start-up ‘gurus’, such as Steve Blank (2013) who defines a start-up as a temporary organization formed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model. Silicon Valley, the ‘Mecca of start-ups’, popped up multiple times during discussions. Someone even came up with the idea of sending the board presidents from each ES on a trip to Silicon Valley. A few attendees challenged the hegemonic role of Silicon Valley and suggested visits to India or other alternative places, but these suggestions did not receive much support. Tim, the project manager of StartingUp, also made a remark in late 2013 that

The autumn [2013] and upcoming early spring are sort of a warm-up and then during the spring the “real thing” will begin, where we really aim to get started with establishing new companies and forming new teams. The goal is to send the best team to Silicon Valley to get funding for their idea. (Field notes, translated from Finnish by the author.)

Thus, Silicon Valley emerged as an ideal location for both Entrepreneurship Society actives and nascent entrepreneurs to go to and learn about start-up entrepreneurship.

Start-up entrepreneurship was differentiated from ‘regular’ entrepreneurship also, for example, when one participant asked the other participants at an ES get-

together: ‘Even though we are about start-up and growth companies, should we still do stuff with regular entrepreneurship?’ In my fieldwork, I heard people from StartingUp use the term ‘Entrepreneur 1.0.’ when referring to entrepreneurs such as florists, butchers and plumbers, and the term ‘Entrepreneur 2.0.’ to describe a start-up entrepreneur – the better, more modern version. Tim, the project manager of StartingUp, also said during an impromptu interview I did with ES people at another get-together in autumn 2014 that

In my view of start-up entrepreneurship, one part of the business idea is mostly about solving a specific problem. In that sense, it is a more complicated type of entrepreneurship. I think most start-up entrepreneurs have some mission as the reason why they go into that particular business. Of course there are growth aspirations, but it is less about doing it for the money. (Translated from Finnish by the author)

Here Tim made sense of start-ups by emphasizing how they solve problems, and differentiated them from ‘regular’ entrepreneurship by portraying them as more ‘complicated’ and ‘mission-driven.’ These sayings construct the ‘traditional’ entrepreneur, who does not have explicit growth aspirations and whose business model is not particularly based on technological solutions, as a non-entrepreneur, as something less valuable than a start-up entrepreneur. Hence, start-up entrepreneurship is as the ideal kind of entrepreneurship, and ‘regular’ entrepreneurship is made to seem inferior to start-up entrepreneurship.

During the interview, Julie, an active member of one Finnish ES that had been operating for quite some time, noted that ‘Some say that start-up entrepreneurship is today’s rock stardom, today’s students’ sort of an underground movement. You always have something, now is just the time for this.’ Tim added: ‘It’s cool, it’s a trend. After a while, Julie continued that ‘Yes, this is a trendy phenomenon, but I don’t think everyone will go and establish companies just because it is trendy.’ Julie continued that ‘Today, that you go there with your laptop and say that you are a start-up entrepreneur is a cool thing to do.’ Tim added that ‘If you’re wearing a hoodie, the more relaxed clothing you have, the tougher guy you are. In my opinion, it’s actually pretty cool after all.’ Hence, people from different ESs saw the phenomenon of start-up entrepreneurship as a contemporary trend, as a ‘cool’ identity.

Clothing played a big role in the ESs. I affirmed Tim’s view on how wearing a hoodie makes one a ‘tough guy’ by saying that ‘You stand out in a crowd with it quite strongly, just look at what we are wearing and what the others here are wearing.’ Indeed, as this was said many of us were wearing our ES’s bright-coloured, logoed t-shirts or hoodies, whilst business people and people from public organizations attending the event had formal business wear. When people from multiple ESs got together within the events I studied, people from different ESs were usually wearing hoodies with a logo of their ES or some other start-up scene-related

organization, a t-shirt, sneakers and jeans. This attire has been called a ‘tech uniform’, the stereotypical attire of start-up entrepreneurs, which is also actively emulated by aspiring entrepreneurs who want to look the part (Hyrkäs, 2016, p. 23). Such attire was also used by StartingUp’s ‘core team’ at StartingUp’s events. The ‘ES people’ also often had start-up scene-related stickers that were attached to laptops and notebooks. The ESs too had their stickers and badges (used by students to stitch onto the overalls they wear for student parties), which were given out during events and meetings. Such clothing and the material artefacts constructed the ‘ES people’ a shared identity of belonging to the start-up scene. The relaxed, informal clothing also served as identity markers that differentiated them from the formality of the ‘business people’.

Table 5 summarizes the doings and sayings that connect the Entrepreneurship Societies to the ‘start-up scene’ and construct start-up entrepreneurship as the ideal kind of entrepreneurship.

4.2.2. StartingUp as a project that aims to promote start-up entrepreneurship

Behind StartingUp was TechCo, a regional technology and innovation centre (a regional development organization) that was inspired by the incumbent Entrepreneurship Societies and wanted to re-create a similar community in the local region. TechCo initiated StartingUp as part of a larger two-year project. StartingUp project was assigned a steering group and a project manager, an administrative sciences student in his mid-20s called Tim, who was referred to as a ‘business community developer’. The project manager’s responsibility was to develop StartingUp into a community and make sure new companies would be created. Project plans defined creating new companies and jobs as the aim of StartingUp. This aim of was also posted on social media: ‘Our common goal is to create dozens of new companies in the local region within the next two years. Join us!’ (StartingUp Facebook). Hence, through project plans and social media usage, promoting entrepreneurship emerged as the aim of StartingUp. Here promoting entrepreneurship came to mean the pursuit of activating and helping people to set up businesses. The aim to promote entrepreneurship did not come from students (as is the case with many of the Finnish ESs), but from the needs of regional development.

StartingUp’s webpage further described that

We develop StartingUp in co-operation with business operators and universities from the local region. StartingUp activates people who are innovative, courageous and curious. We build networks with other Entrepreneurship Societies, Startups and Investors. We operate among the entrepreneurs of the future. We help them to develop business concepts and to create innovative Startup Teams. We also organize inspirational events with an entrepreneurial spirit and great performers. (StartingUp webpage, original in English)

The purpose of StartingUp was constructed to be a supporting actor that activates entrepreneurial people and aids new ventures. This social media usage also constructed StartingUp as connecting to 'start-up entrepreneurship' whereby entrepreneurs were constructed as innovative, courageous, and curious forerunners. Enacting the aim of promoting start-up entrepreneurship was done in StartingUp through organizing events and activities such as speeches by entrepreneurs or other experts, pitching competitions, parties, hackathons, workshops, and a start-up accelerator programme. All the events StartingUp organized were free of charge and open to the public. They were advertised mostly on social media, and the people who came to the events were usually students from the local university, which only had a business school, and the local university of applied sciences. The students were both Finnish and international students, which is why the events were held in English.

For the first time in autumn 2014, StartingUp organized an accelerator programme where the idea was to 'help ambitious teams with an idea for a service or product to take their idea to the 'next level' with guidance and coaching' (accelerator programme webpage). Within the programme, the teams received coaching from a 'head coach' and visiting coaches, lectures from the head coach, and presentations by some of the visiting coaches. The teams of the programme also got together every Friday to do a business pitch and then go through what happened that week. The programme's winner was declared on 'Demo Day', where each team pitched their idea to a jury who picked the winner. The winner received a travel voucher to go to Silicon Valley.

The accelerator programme provided instances for newcomers to be initiated to 'start-up scene' practices, such as following the 'lean start-up methodology' (Ries, 2011) and doing a 'minimum viable product.' Learning the vocabulary of such 'methodologies' and learning to develop their business ideas following the methodology constructed the 'start-up way' as the ideal way for would-be entrepreneurs to develop their businesses, and the methodologies as the sources newcomers should look into for advice and inspiration.

At one of the StartingUp's entrepreneurship-themed events in autumn 2013, Marc, a local creative industry start-up entrepreneur, told his story and described his start-up. Marc sat on a sofa and had his son with him during his speech. This event took place at a local library in an open space where the speaker was in the front of the space with a screen behind him for showing a PowerPoint presentation, with the audience in front looking at the speaker. The way the space was used oriented event participants to sit in traditional classroom formation, albeit in a relaxed fashion, and to listen quietly.

Marc talked about his everyday life as an entrepreneur, as a 'life full of surprises – which I kind of love and which make me feel alive' and about entrepreneurship in terms of passion and work becoming like play: 'Do what you love and the rest will come. Doing the thing you love gives you power'. Marc emphasized that although

he ‘works 24/7’; he does what he loves and would do it anyway – even without monetary compensation. Telling this entrepreneurial narrative materialized the easy-going and autonomous lifestyle of an entrepreneur who does what he wants with his life. Marc’s presentation produced the start-up entrepreneur as an active, independent, and restless person whose passion overrides any stress caused by work. The story drew on clichés of entrepreneurship (Down and Warren, 2008), such as being free and working all the time.

This situation was a telling of a typical narrative of entrepreneurship: the story told emphasized a (team of) founder(s) taking matters into their own hands and succeeding through their own doings even when faced with hardships (Berglund and Wigren, 2014). It constructed the speaker as the ‘entrepreneur’, the unique (male and hero-like) individual with special abilities to be admired (Bill et al., 2010; Johnsen and Sørensen, 2017) and the audience as the spectators of this public showcase of entrepreneurship.

The way the space was used during the event (and other StartingUp’s events) constructed the participants as spectators, who were expected to receive ‘inspiration’ and knowledge about the journey of an entrepreneur. However, StartingUp as a project was itself supposed to be entrepreneurial: to manifest in the creation of a volunteer-run community that would continue the aim of promoting entrepreneurship in the local region after the conclusion of the two-year project. Thus, the people who came to the events appeared more as mere event attendees than community members. Many participants left the facilities right after StartingUp’s events. Only a few events, such as a pitching competition where people were invited to share their business idea, saw participants engage in ‘doing’ other than that of listening to presentations.

Table 5 summarizes the doings and sayings that construct StartingUp as a project that aims to promote entrepreneurship and that construct start-up methodologies as the sources of inspiration for newcomers as entrepreneurship promotion is enacted, but also how entrepreneurship events produced event participants as passive receivers.

4.2.3. Students as making a change to the state of entrepreneurship

Both the people who ran Entrepreneurship Societies and attended their events were mainly higher education students aged between 18 and 30. However, the events were for ‘everyone’ and thus graduates were also welcome. A get-together event for Finnish ESs in 2015 was a rather accurate representation of ES people. They consisted of higher education students or graduates. Most of them were business students, but a few were studying IT or social sciences. Some also had begun their working lives, whilst one was a man in his fifties who was kind of retired already. They were also an international group: although majority of the participants were Finnish, six nationalities were present, and the official language of the event was English, which most of them spoke fluently.

Even though all participants didn't have an actual student status, they were constructed *as* students. That is, they were doing 'being a student.' They quietly listened to the presentations, made comments at appropriate moments and participated in group work with ease. Moreover, they engaged in student-style drinking during the event, with drinking games and sauna activities with drinks. The presence of alcohol is quite common in the student lifeworld in Finland, and largely accepted. Caitlyn, who held a presentation at the event, remarked during the presentation that 'I slept for like three hours, I don't know if I'm still drunk or hungover.' John, a participant, laughed and said, 'That's a successful night.' The difference between students and non-students only emerged in certain conversations, such as when Mathias, another participant from a different ES, said, 'Our people come from a small group of 3,000 students.' Keith, the only older participant (from yet another ES) responded, 'You're actually students; in our case we're business people and so on'. He did not stand out from the crowd; he actively engaged in the drinking, group work and discussions.

Parties were part of doing 'being a student.' One of the Entrepreneurship Societies threw a party in 2014, celebrating their achievements in social media. The party venue was an industrial-looking space equipped with music and dimmed lighting. There were lots of students and young business people mingling, eating the free food, getting mildly inebriated on the free drinks, having fun and using social media. The party had the feeling of a student party mixed with a grungy aesthetic evoking stories of how successful companies are started in founders' garages (see Hyrkäs (2016)) for examples of such canonical start-up stories).

A young man called Chris had been invited to share the story of the celebrated ES, which he did in English as the audience had a large share of foreign students and young professionals along with Finns. He stood in his jeans and a casual sweater in front of the partygoers on a stage with lights pointed at him. Back when he was a university student, he founded the celebrated ES with other students, but he had since moved on with a successful entrepreneurial career. The story Chris told began with an example of a lecture at a business school in 2009 where the professor said at the first lecture 'Never become an entrepreneur, it's the worst choice you can ever make.' Some students attending the lecture had start-ups but had felt ashamed to come forward. The same students had visited foreign universities and been inspired by the entrepreneurial culture there. Hence, the story continued with the students deciding to do something about the bad attitudes towards entrepreneurship in Finland and wanting to make start-up entrepreneurship as a viable career choice for bright students. Furthermore, the students wanted to 'save Finland' and help themselves find co-founders with whom to start the next successful start-up. His story went on to explain in more detail why the ES was founded and what they did to make it succeed despite the challenges they faced. The story drew laughter, admiration and applause from the audience.

This story constructed promoting entrepreneurship as the aim of the Entrepreneurship Societies. Here, however, it came to mean changing attitudes towards entrepreneurship more than striving to create more companies. Different from the project origins of StartingUp, this story highlighted students – the audience who listened to the story – as the ones making a change in relation to the state of start-up entrepreneurship in Finland, the ones who are taking matters into their own hands. The spectacular nature of the party combined with a story that resonated with the crowd constructed an electrified sensation in the audience, immersing the audience in the story. Indeed, as I was in the audience, I momentarily got the sensation that the whole venue was together in this great entrepreneurial story, that we were all part of this, that we were all making the change. I told the people standing next to me ‘Wow, that was interesting to hear!’ This occasion was something I hadn’t often seen in Finland: I felt that shouting ‘Yeah!’ out loud would not have been out of place. This constructed the Entrepreneurship Societies as different from the quite restrained demeanour often encountered in typical Finnish organizations and communities. Moreover, the speaker using English instead of Finnish – and, as the story went, taking inspiration from foreign entrepreneurial ecosystems – constructed the ESs as international communities.

Another speech further cemented students as the ones responsible for making a change in regard to entrepreneurship. At a get-together event for Finnish ESS in spring 2014, taking place in a start-up related industrial building in an urban setting, the ES people had presented their communities to the others. The privacy of the event was briefly disrupted when a start-up coach affiliated with the space, a white middle-aged man, jumped on stage and held a fiery extempore speech about entrepreneurship:

(. . .) One thing that people don’t understand is that our world is coming to an end if we do not change. (. . .) That means we’re looking at the face, in the eyes of a beast, that means on global scale we need to create over a billion new corporations over the period of next two decades. This is no bullshit, this is scientific facts. (. . .) This means that the change is not a change, it is a revolution. My generation, I’m now past 40, my generation’s job was to create a digital platform for people to actually deliver services very rapidly and very cost-efficiently [snaps fingers repeatedly]. Your job now is to make the revolution of entrepreneurship. In Finland, we will have a leading role. The world out there awaits us. Our nation has a responsibility to serve as guides and mentors to the rest of the world. (. . .) And the people representing the future are you. Finnish development aid policy already embraces today, as one of its key components, the export of Finnish values to support the development of entrepreneurship in countries where we provide development aid. (. . .) Your job is to take these facts and look at all the silos that society consists of. Look at the people who are within those silos and tell them: if you do not dare to see our joint future, please remain in your silo, but no

not, you are not allowed, and you should not and you must not avoid us, hinder us from actually achieving those goals that are reachable. Because entrepreneurship is really simple: all you have to do is you have to have an idea and an environment you can trust, and it gives you the ability to acquire skills and knowledge that can assist you in reaching your goals. And that's why we Finns need to work fast. (. . .) (Original in English)

The fiery speech was targeted at the 'actives' of different Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies, who were sitting in a semi-circle in front of the stage where the start-up coach spoke. The atmosphere in the room was electrified and resulted in grand applause. People were generally shouting 'Whooo!' and some told the speaker that 'Hey, you should come and visit our ES!' The situation produced a strong sense of 'us', of the different Entrepreneurship Societies being together for a common cause. Because of the passionate way of delivering the speech and the enthusiastic response from the audience, I myself, as part of the audience, got the feeling of 'gosh, I want to believe him. I want to shout amen to that, we ARE the revolution, let's take over the world!'

The speech gave Entrepreneurship Societies a mandate to promote entrepreneurship, presenting them as frontrunners in the 'entrepreneurial revolution'. Promoting entrepreneurship appeared here as a must, a force of nature that has to be realized – and those who think otherwise should not stand in the way. Talking in such strong terms, such as 'you are not allowed, and you should not, and you must not avoid us, hinder us', constructed entrepreneurship as a truth, as an ideology that shouldn't be questioned. Sitting in the audience, I felt the allure of entrepreneurship draw me in, but as a researcher I tried to stay reflexive about the situation. I felt that I would be seen as a 'hater' of entrepreneurship and even ridiculed or shut down if I had tried to challenge what he was saying. That is, in such situations there was little space for reflexivity about entrepreneurship. The same applied to the speeches held by Marc and Chris: the way the spaces were used oriented the audience to look up to the speaker who appeared as the 'entrepreneur' and as the one possessing the knowledge.

Table 5 summarizes the doings and sayings that construct promoting entrepreneurship as the aim of the Entrepreneurship Societies and how promoting entrepreneurship comes to mean changing attitudes towards entrepreneurship. It also summarizes how students are constructed as the ones making a change in relation to the state of start-up entrepreneurship.

4.2.4. A shared identity of the ES people

In January 2015, people from different Entrepreneurship Societies had gathered to spend time together and to develop cooperation between the different ESs over a weekend – which they had also done the year before. The occasion was set up with Finnish traditions, such as hanging out and being accommodated in the same

cottage-type venue in quite a remote location, taking part in sauna activities, ice swimming, and consuming alcohol. The participants wore relaxed, informal clothing. The material arrangements of the get-together event provided the participants with a cosy atmosphere for becoming easily acquainted with each other and encouraging informal discussions about the purpose and actions of Entrepreneurship Societies. Spending the weekend together allowed for a sense of detachment from everyday life and spending time in close proximity to others whilst talking about ‘us’ and the ‘ES family’ provided a sense of community.

Even though it was the middle of the winter, participants gathered on a clearing on the ice of a frozen lake for a group photo. The photographer, also a member of an ES, guided the people to a formation where she could fit the almost 40 people in the same photo. The best photo shows a great energy; people are raising their arms up to the sky and shouting ‘whooh!’ The photo shows young people clad in red, green, blue and black hoodies and t-shirts with the logos of the ESs they represent. The group is so big that you can only see the hands and heads of some of the people standing in the background. This group photo was posted and circulated on social media. The photo constructed the people as belonging to the same group, constructing a shared identity for the ‘ES people’. Posting and sharing the group photos also seemed to emphasize a sense of ‘we’re here, there’s lots of us, we’re together, we’re important.’

The get-together event also included workshops and presentations held by the ES people. One groupwork task included coming up with event and activity ideas for the ESs. Nhat, a member of StartingUp, suggested an idea to brand the ESs as one society with many branches. Ellie from another ES responded, ‘Oh, be like [a major student organization] and have like different guilds?’ Oscar from yet another ES reacted, ‘Yeah. That’s not very radical (...) plus I don’t like centralized organizations, sounds very un-startuppy’. During his presentation on the shared website for the ESs of Finland, John also said that

Now is a good time to start collaborating on things with others. (...) Since the focus has been on local ESs, we could make it a nationwide, and we could make it an official movement. I’m not speaking about like some head organization, generating some higher-level institution, no nothing like that. It’s more just working together more. (Original in English)

The Entrepreneurship Societies in Finland operate as independent registered associations. They consider themselves a network, but there are no official structures uniting them. Here the Entrepreneurship Societies appeared as simultaneously searching for practices through which to formalize their cooperation while rejecting formal cooperation practices, such as having an umbrella organization. However, it seemed that the shared identity of the ES people translated into describing the informal network of ESs as a ‘movement’. Indeed, on their shared website, the Finnish ESs describe how they are a ‘Movement driven by students who are passionate about entrepreneurship and aimed at making a difference’ (Startup Finland, 2017). At the

get-together, Caitlyn, who had been involved in two ESs, held a presentation and told the participating ES people that

You are a part of the biggest student movement since the 70s. I really think that this is true. Finland hasn't seen this kind of a student movement in national or even in like a local level in decades. (Original in English)

Others nodded in agreement to Caitlyn's comment and described the Entrepreneurship Society network as a movement in other conversations as well. Hence, the ES people making sense of their unofficial network as a movement served to construct Entrepreneurship Societies as a student-led social movement. In fact, others have referred to the Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies as a student movement too (albeit without researching them as such) (Nieminen, 2013; Graham, 2014) and even attributed the student start-up movement as the starters of the 'start-up craze' in Finland (Lehdonvirta, 2013). The concept of social movement is, as any academic concept, a debated one, and there is a large body of literature on social movements. However, the 'ES movement' seems to fit Diani's (1992, p. 12) definition of a social movement as 'a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity.'

The discussions construct an image that now, in the late 2010s, the ESs are emerging, following a long period of nothing noteworthy happening amongst students. Talking about a movement appeared as a way to get recognition for the ESs; to show the whole country that they exist and are doing something important. It is also a rhetorical tactic that presents the group as a serious, large-scale collective actor and not 'just' students fiddling around. In fact, talking about a student movement constructs students as active actors capable of making a change.

Continuing a discussion about wanting to show the ES movement to the whole country, one participant asked and pondered out loud, 'But who are we showing it to? I think what we need is more exposure among students, like young students, who don't know about the option of becoming an entrepreneur'. This idea came up again in John's comment:

One idea we had in [our ES] as our mission is to get people to think about entrepreneurship as a real possibility. Since when you ask about students (...) what do you want to do when you grow up, a really few people say they want to be entrepreneurs (...). But target group [for ESs] could be like higher education students who aren't, erm... they are entrepreneurial, but they don't know it yet. (Original in English)

Here, higher education students appeared as the 'target group' of the ES movement and promoting entrepreneurship to them the aim of the movement. With the ESs, it

wasn't educators or politicians trying to develop entrepreneurial mindsets in young people or encourage them to start companies, but rather people who were (constructed as) students calling upon their *peers* to find the entrepreneur inside them and to see entrepreneurship as a viable career option. Hence, entrepreneurship itself appeared to be understood by participants as something that is 'latent' within people and waiting to be awoken through different activities. Caitlyn also reminded the ES people to 'Always remember, you are in this because start-ups need more tools. Your job is to get people with an entrepreneurial mindset to go from idea level to company level.' Hence, supporting the creation of new companies appeared as an aim of the movement.

Table 5 summarizes the doings and sayings that construct a shared identity for the Entrepreneurship Society people and how the ESs were constructed as a student-led movement that aims to wake up entrepreneurial latencies in students and support the creation of new companies.

4.2.5. The Entrepreneurship Society movement as providing its members enjoyment, connections and personal development

Having fun was an integral part of being involved in the Entrepreneurship Societies: the get-together events for different ESs included drinking and partying and in general a relaxed atmosphere and even crude jokes. Within StartingUp, going to the pub after an event or having a party at someone's house accompanied with lots of laughter were important activities in the community. At the 2015 get-together event, one participant recapped to people who had joined in late that 'So guys, we were just discussing about the entrepreneurial movement, why are we part of it, who are you actually doing it for. Like, are you actually doing it for yourself, the cause, are you doing it for being sexy', which the participants laughed at. In the presentation she held, Caitlyn reflected on why people should engage in the Entrepreneurship Society activities:

What you hear all the time is the buzz about 'we need new jobs' (. . .) I think that start-ups and the start-up scene can have an economic impact. From my point of view, this is not why you do stuff. You don't do this for media or society, you should be doing this for yourself and start-ups. (. . .) Like when the working life is changing hugely towards like more project-oriented and shattered career, entrepreneurship is actually a relevant option for more people. But so fucking what? You're not doing this because, you know, people need to have jobs, you're doing this because it's fun. And you should be doing this because you actually think that new stuff is born when you start working on it. (. . .) I don't think in ES activities it's less meaningful to be involved because it's fun. (. . .) (Original in English)

The ES people appear here as recognizing the dominant way politicians and media talk about the need for more entrepreneurship due to its ability to create jobs, but the ESs are partly going against this discourse. For the ES movement, promoting

entrepreneurship appears as ‘helping entrepreneurial people and start-ups while having fun doing it.’ The ESs were constructed as a social movement, which brings along connotations of aiming to make some kind of a larger-scale change. Here the ‘ES movement’ appears as serving start-ups and ‘entrepreneurially minded people’, but at the same time enjoyment and personal development appear as a rationale for doing the ES activities. That is, quite individualistic reasons appeared as the reasons for being involved in the ES movement.

Having fun meant not only partying but also meeting new people. After the first get-together event of Finnish ESs in 2014, I interviewed Jonas who had attended most of StartingUp’s events along with the get-together. I asked him what the point of StartingUp is, and he said ‘Getting to know other like-minded people, that is the point to me personally. Then if you think more widely, promoting entrepreneurship blah blah, but like, I think it is really nice that you find new friends.’ I asked him if he thinks finding like-minded people is more important than creating new companies, and he answered with a definitive ‘Yes.’

During an impromptu interview with people from StartingUp on a car ride back from the party celebrating the social media achievements of another ES in 2014, I asked the others ‘Why do we need StartingUp?’ Simon, an active member of StartingUp said, ‘We need StartingUp because there are lots of awesome people in [our town], but they don’t know that there are other awesome people.’ This was uttered half-jokingly, but still sincerely.

During another interview I did during a party at Simon’s place, I asked people who had been actively involved in StartingUp since its inception and one person who had joined the community more recently ‘What do you think this StartingUp stuff has been about?’ They said ‘Entrepreneurship’, because ‘It’s fun to support it.’ They also said that as a result of StartingUp, new companies had been established. Indeed, creating new companies had been the key aim for the project within which StartingUp was initiated. However, the StartingUp people noted too that most of StartingUp’s activities have been about meeting people: they recounted how they had met people they wouldn’t have otherwise met, there’d been parties and ‘some events organized too’, they had learnt new things, practiced ‘some kind of social responsibility’, brought together students from two different HE institution (which they called ‘some kind of regional development’), boundaries had been broken and different actors had been connected. StartingUp had even resulted in a relationship between two members! Hence, engagement in an Entrepreneurship Society appeared then as something that connects people, and promoting entrepreneurship came to mean the pursuit of bringing people together more than striving to help create more companies.

Being involved in an Entrepreneurship Society as an active member – in my case in StartingUp – meant handling tasks, such as planning and hosting events and meetings, updating social media profiles and doing social media marketing, and even running an association. Within StartingUp, there weren’t clear definitions

between ‘members’ and ‘non-members’. Rather, how people were seen in the community depended on their level of activity and presence at meetings and events. Even though starting from July 2014, there was an association whose board was ‘officially’ in charge of running StartingUp, the principle was that everyone could do things: one didn’t have to be on the board to be able to organize events, or to participate in them, or even to represent the community publicly. Caitlyn had noted in her presentation that ‘[you] people do this [ESs] for the sake of doing because it’s fun, you get connections, learn stuff you wouldn’t have possibilities to do elsewhere.’ Jane, a member of an ES established just a few years before, too commented that

I can honestly say I haven’t learned shit from school, everything I’ve learned has been from [our ES]. I’ve learned to work with Photoshop, I’ve learned how to analyse Facebook data, I’ve learned you know how to do digital marketing, I’ve learned so much simply from doing all the work. (Original in English)

During the group interview I did at the autumn 2014 event, Lee even said that the most important thing about being involved in an ES is that you ‘learn more than at school.’ The learning aspect also was evident during Josie’s, a member of the same ES as Jane, reflections in the group interview:

When I look at myself in the mirror, I’m a totally different person [after one year’s engagement with an ES]. I think it’s really cool that I’ve gotten to do stuff, to take responsibility of stuff and to really organize some events, I’ve never done it before. Then when you’ve really been in charge and you’ve had to arrange all the guests and another team takes care of marketing and the graphic side. (Translated from Finnish by the author)

Being involved in an ES seemed to be a way for people to access learning that would not be available through their studies. Even though the ES people have formal university or university of applied sciences student statuses, they referred to higher education in quite negative, even derogatory terms. It seemed that skills considered as ‘practical’, such as knowing how to use various software, social media platforms and how to manage events were the kinds of skills that students desired to learn. Hence, being active in an ES appeared as a means to augment learning received through formal education.

Caitlyn was greeted with laughter when she noted during her presentation at the 2015 get-together that ‘At first I didn’t know anything about start-ups, I was tricked into [the ES I was involved in]. Then all kinds of things happened, and I ended up leading [the first ES and another newly founded ES]’. Julie’s story of getting involved, told during a group interview, was similar: another ES active asked her if she wants to do stuff for their start-up accelerator. Julie had no idea what he was talking about but thought that sure, she can help. Hence, she was in. Such experiences reflect the practices in and through which people end up getting

involved in an Entrepreneurship Society: there is an incumbent member or some sort of a spokesman for the community who personally invites people to either come and see an event or, preferably, asks people to help with a project. Experience with certain issues is not required from people asked to help; ‘anyone’ can come to an event, and people who want to help with a project are taken in even if they ‘know nothing about start-ups’ or what the project is about. The people who are invited find themselves engaged ‘by accident’, jumping into the unknown and doing something they are not familiar with.

However, even though the ESs were ‘open for everyone’, Caitlyn’s PowerPoint presentation at the 2015 get-together event included the lines ‘Keep your community open, but kick out the people who don’t deliver. People are the heart and soul of ES activities, and if they suck, everything sucks.’ She further noted in her presentation that,

You’re all associations so it’s all democratic, but I don’t see ESs should be so democratic, that everyone gets an equal share. You should get depending on how much you do, get noted for hard work or potential. (. . .) I think all of you who are here are talented, have a strong learning curve, are passionate; that’s why you are here and that’s what you should require from people that get involved. Your only capital here is people. If people are rotten, aren’t passionate, don’t work their asses off, what do you have? (Original in English)

Here the assumed democratic practices of volunteer-based associations were countered with ‘earning one’s worth’ as the ideal to follow. The participants of the event were praised for their demonstration of passion and ability to work and ‘get things done.’ Here, the ideal active member of an Entrepreneurship Society was constructed as an entrepreneurial actor who ‘works their ass off’ and demonstrates passion. This meant that this type of talented people who are willing and capable of delivering passion and excitement fit easily into the ES movement.

Table 5 summarizes the doings and sayings that construct the Entrepreneurship Society movement as serving both start-ups and the movement’s members’ personal development, connections and enjoyment. It also shows how engagement in an ES is constructed as means for augmenting formal education and gaining desired ‘practical’ skills. Further, it shows how the ideal ES member is constructed as a hard-working and passionate entrepreneurial actor.

4.2.6. A sense of wanting to and being able to make a change in the world

During the group interview, Tom from one of the Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies continued the discussion on the stories of getting involved in an ES:

A friend enticed me to join (. . .) It seemed to be an activity that makes sense, not just the endless beer drinking that other stuff usually is. Something

sensible to do. Maybe because you feel like you can influence things and create networks, that seems great. (Translated from Finnish by the author)

Julie emphasised too ‘That influencing is surely a big thing in why you’re involved.’ She further described that ‘Why I’m involved in a start-up community and would like to develop its operation is that I see it as a movement that is able to make an impact, able to change existing structures’. It seems that taking part in the practices enacted within the Entrepreneurship Societies produces the feeling of wanting to be involved and a sense of being able to influence things. The ESs themselves then were portrayed as organizations that can make a change.

The ES people appeared to be young people who *want to* make a change in the world, as Tim reflected

In the 60s there was a strong politicization, that the youth have gone into politics. Either all the way to the right or the left, there were strong oppositions then. Back then young people wanted to influence their life, the post-war generation. They saw that it is possible. This is probably at hands with us, people born in late 80s and early 90s have seen it. (. . .) (Translated from Finnish by the author)

Here was again comparison between political student movements of the past and the contemporary students. Millennials were portrayed as a generation with a strong sense of agency; as a generation that wants to make a change and believes the change is possible. Wanting to make a change further linked the ES people to the world of student life: young people, in particular students, are often even expected to want to do things differently, to be different than previous generations and to want to change the world for the better.

Julie continued on Tim’s comment saying

Maybe that [being involved] has confirmed even more that everything is in your own hands, that everything is possible as long as you find the right people for it around you. For better or for worse, everything is up to you. (Translated from Finnish by the author)

Tom nodded and said, ‘it has been eye-opening to realize that everything is in your own hands.’ Taking part in the practices enacted within the Entrepreneurship Societies engendered a sort of an entrepreneurial worldview: at the same time an optimistic and dispirited sense of individual agency being the source of making a change in the world. This worldview meant that the ES people made sense of themselves as the ones who take matters into their own hands and work hard. At the get-together event when the participants were talking about the ‘ES scene’, Jane said that

What we do is really hard. We work our asses off, but we make really, really amazing things happen. And we aren't cocky enough to sit at home and do this all at home, we come to this kind of ES weekend and we like share ideas and we continue to be inspirational. (Original in English)

This constructed the ES people with an identity of 'doers', of people who 'get things done.' Talking about their doing was important in creating a sense of community and movement: that *we are doing* something important, that we matter, that we are different from the people who get stuck in the old ways and stuck in 'just talking'. This identity of doers was something that ES people even reminisced after their engagement had ended. In 2017, after my fieldwork period, Mary, one of StartingUp's core team members, recounted during Tim's birthday party that [back when she was actively involved] 'We got a lot done, we brought the [university] and [university of applied sciences] together', and another core team member affirmed that 'Yeah, in a short time.'

It is noteworthy here that the ES people often talked about 'making a change' and 'having an influence' or 'changing structures' without reference to what the said change or influence is. From my practitioner's perspective it seemed that having a gut feeling about what the ESs do was enough to feel as though we were participating in an important change. I haven't been able to explicitly state what that 'something important' we are doing is or what the desired change exactly would be. Hence, it seemed that having the *feeling* of doing something important and talking about the change was more important than defining the said change.

The matter of making a change was interesting in regard to how the ESs were constructed as a student movement. At the get-together event, during a discussion on events that individual ESs and their network could organize, Kane suggested having an event related to the upcoming parliament elections. Andy interrupted him and said, 'Why do we need some kind of fucking politics?' Kane tried to explain that they 'make all the rules', but Andy interrupted again to say, 'That's fucking with bureaucracy; we don't have time for that.' Thus, while Kane tried to explain that politicians are the ones making the rules and laws that affect entrepreneurs, Andy discredited it as 'bureaucracy', something that the ESs do not want to deal with. John, too, followed by saying

But I don't want to get really deep into politics; that's something I would like to personally keep my hands off. (. . .) And they're [politicians] not really relevant to us either, since that's so long their stuff and they get so little done in my opinion. (Original in English)

In negotiating the kinds of activities the ESs should be engaged in, 'politics' and 'bureaucracy' gained strongly negative connotations. 'Politics' even emerged as a swear word and antithetical to what the ESs want to achieve. Refraining from

politics was interesting given that the ESs talked about themselves as a ‘movement’ and compared themselves to the student movements of 1970s. Such comparisons would seem to position the network as being political, but here, all things political were rejected. Of course, one could argue that the act of rejecting politics is, in itself, a political act and that the actions of the ESs could thus be seen as political. Here, ‘politics’ seemed to be understood just as party politics. Politicians were diminished for not getting enough done and bureaucracy appeared as something to be avoided at all cost.

As ‘politics’ emerged as a thing to be avoided, ‘getting things done’ – and getting them done fast – emerged as the desired objective of what the ESs should be doing. During the interview I did the autumn 2014 event, we were talking about why the Entrepreneurship Society phenomenon has risen and spread. Tim reflected that:

People are tired with traditional ways of influencing things that happens through existing structures. Politics, or working for municipalities or the state, it is so stiff in there and sort of prisoners of own practices. (...) Although the welfare state is of course always a good thing, but when it has gone so far that everything is taken care of for you, and sort of many have felt powerless that ‘Am I able to have an impact on my life anymore in any way?’, when the state or someone public takes care. Sort of a resistance reaction that ‘Fuck, we are going to do it ourselves’ and entrepreneurship is probably the best like instrument to realize it. (...) Take your destiny into your own hands, that’s sort of an umbrella theme. (Translated from Finnish by the author)

Here the way ES people talked about the status quo reflected a dissatisfaction with ‘traditional ways of influencing’ such as politics, and a belief in the power of entrepreneurship to make a change. The ES people made sense of entrepreneurship as an ‘instrument’ for taking control over one’s life and having an impact. Further, entrepreneurship appeared as an instrument with which one can circumvent the power of existing practices and take control of the situation in their own way. Entrepreneurial activities appeared in opposition to ‘traditional ways’, ‘politics’, ‘the state’, even the ‘welfare state’ and an as a preferable mode of action to these. The message of the ES movement seemed to be to ‘steer away from politics and use entrepreneurship instead to make an impact on the world.’

Table 5 summarizes the doings and sayings that construct millennials as a generation with a strong sense of agency, and construct participation in the ESs as engendering a feeling of wanting and being able to make an impact on the world. Furthermore, it summarizes how an identity of ‘doers’ is constructed for the ES people and how entrepreneurial ‘doing’ emerges as a preferred option to ways of influencing such as politics.

5. Conclusions

What happens within organizations that promote entrepreneurship? Even though there seems to be a non-negotiable mandate to promote entrepreneurship (Jones, 2014; Farny et al., 2016), promoting entrepreneurship should not be assumed as neutral activity or adopted as a taken-for-granted objective, because it has both deliberate and non-deliberate consequences. That is, the way entrepreneurship is being promoted can limit or widen the kinds of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial actors that are seen as desirable and it can contribute to the cultural understandings of entrepreneurship. Hence, in this dissertation I have sought to answer the main research question of *'What is constructed in and through the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship?'* The individually published studies that are part of this dissertation aimed to do the following:

- To provide conceptual background for how Critical Entrepreneurship Studies and a practice theoretical approach to entrepreneurship can complement one another (Study 1)
- Empirically study the practices in and through which StartingUp was developed; to elucidate the meanings of entrepreneurship and the construction of entrepreneurial actors and agency in promoting entrepreneurship (Study 2)
- Empirically study the practices enacted when Entrepreneurship Societies get together and to elucidate how meanings of the organizations and different ideals were constructed (Study 3)

At the beginning of this study, I suggested combining a practice theoretical approach and insights from critical research on entrepreneurship in order to answer my research question, because the combination of these highlights the power of sociomaterial practices to produce entrepreneurship without taking the presupposed, positive 'goodness' of entrepreneurship for granted. This dissertation reported the results of an ethnographic study of Entrepreneurship Societies, student- and other volunteer-led organizations that promote entrepreneurship. I adopted a situational approach to studying practices and thus analysed the local enactment of practices of StartingUp and the network of Finnish ESs. In Chapter 4.2, I provided answers to my research question through three individually published studies and through narrating the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship.

Next, in Chapter 5.1, I discuss the contributions of this study, which are summarized in Figure 2. I first discuss how I contribute to entrepreneurship research

through combining Critical Entrepreneurship Studies with the practice theoretical approach to entrepreneurship. Then, I discuss the empirical contributions I gained from adopting this approach. The narrative presented in Chapter 4.2. ‘zoomed in’ (Nicolini, 2009, 2012) on the local accomplishment of the practices enacted within StartingUp and the get-together events of Finnish Entrepreneurship Studies. In Chapters 5.1.2. and 5.1.3, I aim to ‘zoom out’ (Nicolini, 2009, 2012) in order to find out more about how such localized doings contribute to the ‘bigger picture’, to see how they construct certain understandings of entrepreneurship as (un)desirable and what effects they have on cultural understandings of entrepreneurship. In Chapter 5.3, I discuss the implications my study has for practitioners. In Chapter 5.4, I discuss some of the limitations of my chosen approach and its execution and present suggestions for future research in Chapter 5.5.

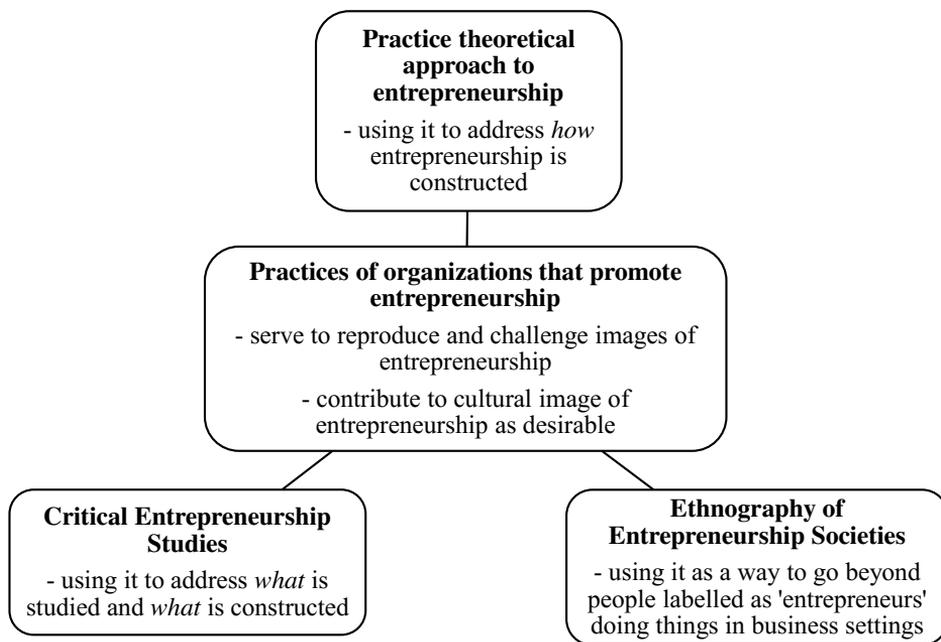


Figure 2. The pillars of this study with contributions

5.2. Key contributions

5.2.1. Bringing the practice theoretical and critical approach together

A key theoretical contribution of this study is combining critical research on entrepreneurship with a practice theoretical approach. I argue that operationalizing these two approaches in empirical research can be done (at least) by using these approaches to consider *how* and *what*.

First, the practice theoretical approach is operationalized as a theoretical ‘lens’ used for studying *how* the phenomenon of entrepreneurship stems from and transpires through the real-time accomplishment of ordinary activities (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017). The practice approach sees that sociomaterial *practices* produce meanings of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial subjectivities and, as such, the approach can be used to consider how meanings and subjectivities are produced (and reproduced) through talking, doing, feeling and using bodies, spaces, objects, and technologies.

When it comes to using the practice approach for answering the *how* in empirical research, one challenge that arises is deciding *who or what to study*. When talking about entrepreneurship, people are quite accustomed to thinking about entrepreneurship as something done by a group of people who tend to be called “entrepreneurs”. Even though the conversations of Entrepreneurship as Practice and Critical Entrepreneurship Studies have been both pushing the boundaries of what can legitimately be studied and how, the few extant empirical EaP studies have tended to prioritize the actions of people labelled as entrepreneur and contexts related to companies or ventures. However, CES have emphasized that the issue who is considered an ‘entrepreneur’ is a political one (Jones and Spicer, 2005, 2009), and studies have tried to reframe entrepreneurship, for example, as social change (Calás et al., 2009), emancipation (Rindova et al., 2009) and organization creation (Hjorth et al., 2015). When combining the practice approach and CES, one must consider questions such as: what social settings do researchers consider as interesting for entrepreneurship research? Where can one turn their empirical attention to? Do scholars ‘limit’ their interests to issues that are perceived somehow being clearly related to entrepreneurship, or do they allow the empirical material to produce revelations that surprise them?

I call for refraining from limiting the range of ‘acceptable’ things to study when it comes to understanding the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship. In this study, I wanted to go beyond people labelled as ‘entrepreneurs.’ Whilst scholars such as Gaddefors and Anderson (2017) have done similar things in a more radical way – their ethnography starts with place and context; with sheep coming to town – I chose to do this by focusing on the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship. My solution to the issue of who and what to study was to adopt ethnographic methodology and to decide not to focus on entrepreneurship prior to beginning my fieldwork. This meant that I was initially interested in another topic but kept an open mind to following what emerges as interesting in the field, and thus ended up finding the phenomenon of entrepreneurship interesting through my engagement in the practices of StartingUp. The approach I adopted also illustrates that entrepreneurship can emerge as an interesting phenomenon through studies of something completely different, and I encourage such studies that end up highlighting something interesting about entrepreneurship through empirical engagement in various social settings.

Second, Critical Entrepreneurship Studies are mobilized to discuss *what* practices produce. CES are engaged in challenging taken-for-granted ideas regarding entrepreneurship and remind us that entrepreneurship is not a neutral activity. Then, contributions from CES are taken to remind how the concept of entrepreneurship itself can be ‘discriminatory, gender-biased, ethnocentrically determined and ideologically controlled’ (Ogbor, 2000, p. 605) and how entrepreneurship links to both oppression and emancipation (Verduijn et al., 2014). Insights from CES are adopted to discuss what is constructed in and through the studied practices and with what effects. The said effects can include, for example, the dynamic of power relations, of what is seen as entrepreneurship and who is seen as an entrepreneur, but also issues such as gender, race, ideology and identity.

When operationalizing the practice approach together with CES, critique isn’t targeted at abstract forces or individual actions, but sociomaterial *practices*. If matters, such as social order, identity, power and inequalities, are seen to result from and transpire through social practices (Nicolini, 2009, 2012, 2017), then we must place critique on the continual enactment of the practices that produce, sustain and even transform things we find problematic. As critique is geared towards practices, the practice approach reminds us that both positive and problematic aspects of entrepreneurship only exist up to the point that the practices, in which these aspects emerge, are enacted. That is, combining the critical and practice approach can remind us that meanings of entrepreneurship and issues related to it are kept in existence through repetition – and herein lies a seed for possible changes, as we could always opt to do things in other ways. When placing critique on practices, one can contribute to understanding ‘big issues’ without resorting to abstract concepts. Instead, we can focus on how the local discursive and material accomplishment of practices are connected to the ‘there and then’ (Nicolini, 2012).

As a summary, I contribute to entrepreneurship research through building this approach where the practice theoretical approach is used as a theoretical tool for studying *how* entrepreneurship is constructed, followed by using the critical approach to reflect on *what or who* to study and *what* the effects of the studied practices are. This approach extends the scope of critical, practice theoretical studies of entrepreneurship, which have been few so far. Whilst Clercq and Voronov’s (2009a, 2009b) utilized Bourdieu’s practice theory to question assumptions regarding entrepreneurship and theorize on legitimation and domination, their studies have been theoretical. However, the approach I am building is suited for the needs of empirical research. Houtbeckers (2016) and Goss et al. (2011) conducted interesting work on social and emancipatory entrepreneurship, but their empirical research focused on activities of people labelled as entrepreneurs. However, my approach can be utilized to study the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship without having to study the actions of people labelled as entrepreneurs.

Next, I will discuss the results I gained from utilizing this approach in empirical research and the significance of these results.

5.2.2. Entrepreneurship promotion as reproducing and challenging images of entrepreneurship

Through operationalizing the practice and critical approach together in empirical, ethnographic research, I found that *promoting entrepreneurship* was constructed as the aim of StartingUp and the network of the Entrepreneurship Societies whereby 'start-up entrepreneurship' was constructed as the desired kind entrepreneurship. Although 'start-ups' were often talked about without clear definitions, they seemed to connote team-based entrepreneurship and growth- and technology-oriented ventures. As start-ups were idealized, other kinds of entrepreneurship became devalued, even portrayed as 'non-entrepreneurship.' It seems that idealizing start-ups is excluding 'traditional' businesses, business ideas that are low-technology, non-scalable, not explicitly growth focused and not trying to solve some large problem; portraying them as something that does not need assistance from organizations that promote entrepreneurship. Indeed, people such as the 'barefoot entrepreneurs' (microentrepreneurs operating in marginal areas) Imas et al. (2014) sought to voice in their research would most likely not be recognized as 'entrepreneurs' within the practices of the ESs. The exclusionary nature related to start-up entrepreneurship was also noted by Ozkazanc-Pan (2014) who showed how women and older males became marginalized through the emergence of a 'hegemonic masculinity' associated with young Turkish male entrepreneurs within networking events of Turkish business people in Silicon Valley.

Even though idealizing start-ups and start-up entrepreneurs is exclusionary in nature, it also challenges the individualized discourses of entrepreneurship (Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson 2007) through an emphasis on the importance of teams in starting new ventures. Within the studied setting, the importance of team-based entrepreneurship was emphasized in the way start-up entrepreneurship was talked about and in the way how a 'holy trinity' of a coder, a business person and a designer was portrayed as the archetypical start-up team. Within the accelerator programme StartingUp organized, which was a key way of enacting entrepreneurship promotion, team-based entrepreneurship was even a necessity: only people with teams were accepted into the programme.

However, another way of enacting entrepreneurship promotion was inviting a person labelled as 'entrepreneur' to share their story. This practice places one person on a literal or figurative stage in front of an audience, telling an entrepreneurial and inspirational story. This produces the speaker as an entrepreneur, a heroic special person (Johnsen and Sørensen, 2017) and the audience as more passive spectators who are supposed to draw inspiration from the speaker. Within StartingUp, it was mostly men stepping there in front, which contributed to reproducing the cultural

images of male individual heroism (Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson, 2007; Tedmanson et al., 2012). Start-up entrepreneurs were constructed as being active, independent and passionate actors.

Moreover, as the Entrepreneurship Societies got together, the ideal Entrepreneurship Society member too appeared as an entrepreneurial actor: one who has lots of potential, 'gets things done' and demonstrates passion. Whilst this kind of actors strive for agile, low-hierarchy solutions and co-operation, at the same time they want to develop co-operation in order to build a movement that gets noticed. This kind of an actor seems to be enacting the kind of ideal self that is called for in entrepreneurship education: a self-guided entrepreneurial subject who is active, adaptable and capable of tolerating uncertainty (Laalo and Heinonen, 2016).

It seemed that practices enacted within StartingUp included a dynamic where both the stereotypical heroic, individualized image of entrepreneurship and the 'newer' team-based ideal were both emphasized. Both entrepreneurs and 'ES people' were expected to be active, passionate, capable individuals, but also to work as teams and co-operate. This involves the risk of producing conflicting ideals and images that might be difficult to relate to (Jones, 2014). However, it might also be that the different ideals co-exist in peace. For example, Forsström-Tuominen et al. (2015) noticed how students might draw on individualized understandings of entrepreneurship, but at the same time they might emphasize how collectiveness and teams are integral elements in enabling entrepreneurship in practice.

By empirically illustrating how start-up entrepreneurship was constructed as the desired kind of entrepreneurship but also how the individualized image of entrepreneurship was reconstructed, my results add to how Critical Entrepreneurship Studies have argued that media (e.g. Nicholson and Anderson, 2005), entrepreneurship research (e.g. Ogbor, 2000; Ahl, 2004; Berglund and Johansson, 2007) and entrepreneurship training, education and policy (e.g. Komulainen et al., 2009; Berglund, 2013; Hytti and Heinonen, 2013; Marlow and McAdam, 2015; Jones, 2014; Farny et al., 2016; Berglund and Verduijn, 2018) perpetuate excluding ideals and images of entrepreneurship that might be difficult to relate to. As a conclusion, I argue that the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship are both reproducing stereotypical heroic and individualized understandings of entrepreneurship, as well as, at same time, challenging these through placing a focus on teams and co-operation.

5.2.3. Entrepreneurship promotion as contributing to the cultural image of entrepreneurship as desirable

A dynamic of who could take part in promoting entrepreneurship emerged in and through the practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship. Within the studied organization (StartingUp), promoting entrepreneurship first appeared as a mandate arising from regional development needs, and the

responsibility of enacting entrepreneurship promotion was placed on a project manager. During other periods, participation was extended to include a larger group of people, but at other periods participation was again restricted to a small group of people. As the informal network of Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies got together, they were constructed as a student movement. As this happened, students were constructed as the active actors in promoting entrepreneurship.

The 'ES movement' comprised of students and other young people coming from independent Entrepreneurship Society organizations around Finland. The movement appeared to be working toward changing people's attitudes towards entrepreneurship, inspiring higher education students towards entrepreneurship and helping start-ups and 'entrepreneurial' people. This movement wasn't likely to hold demonstrations or stage protests. Rather, it organized small- and larger scale events, hackathons, start-up accelerator programmes and pitching competitions, and was active on social media. The target of the movement was the not-yet-entrepreneur (most likely a student) in need of inspiration and support.

As a student movement that celebrates entrepreneurship, the ES movement seemed quite peculiar as other student movements have been more about resisting neoliberalism rather than celebrating business logics (Guzman-Concha, 2012). For example, the 2011 student movement in Chile was protesting the Chilean market-oriented educational system and expressed 'accumulated grievances against some neoliberal features of Chilean education' (Bellei, Cabalinb and Orellanac, 2014). In general, the ES movement is quite different from anti-capitalist, anti-globalist, freedom or political movements or movements that deal with issues such as ethnicity, sexuality, environmentalism, pacifism and human rights (Misoczky, Camara and Böhm, 2017). However, the ES movement is not alone in working in the name entrepreneurship: for example, the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011 have been suggested as a key moment in the proliferation of entrepreneurship and the trend of social entrepreneurship in Egypt (Elsayed, 2017). Mars (2009) even noticed how the student-led emergence of a social venture competition contributed to a larger student-led movement aimed at betterment of society through entrepreneurship. Hence, students can act as 'agents of social change by engaging rather than resisting market permeation in higher education' (Mars and Rhoades, 2012, p. 437).

In my study, entrepreneurship was associated with 'doing' instead of 'just talking' or 'politics.' It appeared as a desired way to make an undefined change in the world. Millennials appeared as a generation with a strong sense of agency, as people who are disillusioned by 'politics,' but believe in their own power and the power of entrepreneurship to change the world. Within the Entrepreneurship Societies, entrepreneurship and 'doing' were even talked about as being a tool for circumventing 'traditional,' 'slow' ways of impacting the society, such as 'politics.' It seems that the sense of agency provided by the idea of entrepreneurship seems to draw people toward it.

In fact, I argue that practices enacted within organizations that promote entrepreneurship reproduce the tendency to associate entrepreneurship with goodness and desirability of entrepreneurship (Rehn and Taalas, 2004; Berglund and Johansson, 2007; Jones and Murtola, 2012a, 2012b; Tedmanson et al., 2012; Rehn et al., 2013; Verduijn et al., 2014; Farny et al., 2016). It could be argued that working around entrepreneurship works to sustain the ‘ideology of entrepreneurship’ (Ogbor, 2000; Armstrong, 2005; Jones and Spicer, 2009; Dey and Lehner, 2017) and the belief in individual, entrepreneurial agency.

The promise of entrepreneurial freedoms and belief in individual capacities – such as believing that ‘everything is in your own hands’ and that through ‘doing’ one can circumvent ‘politics’ – are seductive, but they involve some risks (Skoglund and Berglund, 2018). Critical scholars have warned that the focus on entrepreneurship can limit and restrict our understanding of the forces that shape our social realities and thus contribute to the perpetuation and legitimization of particular versions of reality (Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009, p. 188). What this means is that the ideology of entrepreneurship seems to hide the conditions that ‘are responsible for the exploitation, domination and effective constraining of the individual’ (Weiskopf and Steyaert, 2009, p. 188). If entrepreneurship promotion puts forth the belief in entrepreneurial, individual agency, this involves the risk of ignoring how *practices* both constrain and enable individual agency (Nicolini, 2012). Hence, individuals become seen as responsible for solving problems that are inherently collective (Henttonen and LaPointe, 2015).

My results elucidated that being part of the Entrepreneurship Societies meant that one could get a sense of belonging to a community and a feeling of being part of something important. It also meant having fun, trying out new things and learning skills that might not be possible to learn within formal education. Importantly, working to promote entrepreneurship served to bring people together. It seems that, in fact, such feelings and experiences are paramount to what makes entrepreneurship a lucrative idea and popular topic. Mauksch (2017) showed how practices such as public performances of social entrepreneurship are charged with ‘aesthetic significance, emotional fervour, spiritual dynamism and sensual pleasure’ and play an important part in ‘enchanted’ and giving rising popularity to social entrepreneurship (ibid, p. 133). Whilst Dey and Lehner (2017) argued that the way intermediary organizations portray becoming a social entrepreneur a matter of ‘having fun’ depoliticizes social entrepreneurship and risks depriving it of its more radical possibilities, in my research pleasurable experiences appeared more as contributing to the attractiveness of working to promote entrepreneurship.

In sum, I contribute to critically understanding the role played by the phenomenon of entrepreneurship in our societies (e.g. Rehn and Taalas, 2004; Berglund and Johansson, 2007; 2016; Costa and Saraiva, 2012; Jones and Murtola, 2012a, 2012b; Kenny and Scriver, 2012; Tedmanson et al., 2012; Rehn et al., 2013; Verduijn et al.,

2014; Farny et al., 2016). I recognized how both the oppressive and emancipatory dynamics related to entrepreneurship emerge within entrepreneurship promotion (Verduijn et al., 2014). Working to promote entrepreneurship serves to sustain the 'ideology of entrepreneurship' and the 'dark side' that might attach to it, but at the same time the engaging in promoting entrepreneurship can bring social good to the people involved in doing it. I argue that whilst promoting entrepreneurship risks over-emphasizing individual agency, it also enables bringing people together, which in turn might enable collective action.

5.3. Implications for practitioners

My argument that we need critical scrutiny of the mundane practices of organizations that promote entrepreneurship is a key practitioner implication of this study. That is, I urge practitioners involved in entrepreneurship promotion – be it the student- and other volunteer-led organizations, people working in regional development or higher education entrepreneurship projects or other kinds of organizations – to be reflexive of how the way they do things, talk about issues, use spaces, objects, technologies and bodies has both deliberate and non-deliberate consequences (Gherardi, 2011). Becoming more aware of what is constructed as things are done in certain ways can help, for instance, in recognizing whether the way things are done conflicts with what one is trying to achieve. This means that critique is not done just for the sake of critique, but in order to make problematic things visible in order to change them. Of course, it might not be so easy for practitioners to be reflexive of their doings – let alone to change their practices – as the practice approach sees that practitioners are only partly aware of a lot of what they do in their everyday life, how they do it, and what the consequences of them doing it are (Gherardi, 2011). It might be even more difficult to be reflexive of entrepreneurship because there seems to be even a non-negotiable mandate to promote entrepreneurship (Jones, 2014; Farny et al., 2016). However, scholars have developed practitioner-oriented tools for developing practices, such as a model that analyses doings, the body and feelings, spaces and tools and knowing and knowledge within a given practice (Aromaa, Eriksson and Rajamäki, 2013).

Another implication concerns the issue of who gets to work to promote entrepreneurship, what is understood by it, and why it is done. This issue regards who gets to be seen as a legitimate actor in doing entrepreneurship promotion, who gets the resources for doing it and whose goals and interpretations are put forth. The case of StartingUp illustrates how regional developers have an interest in promoting entrepreneurship (understood as creating new companies, jobs and economic growth to a local area), but so do students and other volunteers, who might understand promoting entrepreneurship more as bringing people together, helping newcomers and building an entrepreneurial atmosphere and ecosystem. Whilst

StartingUp did not connect directly to higher education institutions, some of the other ESs in Finland do and the higher education institutions surely do bring their own interpretations and expectations to the table. It is important for the different actors to be aware of the different meanings and expectations regarding promoting entrepreneurship. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that communities working outside formal entrepreneurship education or regional development – such as the ESs – do matter. Entrepreneurship Societies might be easily passed off as a ‘bunch of students doing stuff’, but students and other people working to promote entrepreneurship on a voluntary basis do matter. In my research, the ESs were even constructed as a student movement working to promote entrepreneurship and thus appear as highly important for the state of start-up entrepreneurship in Finland.

The different meanings entrepreneurship promotion can gain are also important to acknowledge if regional development initiatives that involve students are set up. It could be postulated that in the case of StartingUp, the entrepreneurship discourse was almost imposed on the local student and other young adult community and this could be why such a project did not last (by 2017 activities within StartingUp had pretty much faded out). That is, the idea of entrepreneurship was not enough to keep a community together for long after project resources ran out. Moreover, it would be useful for regional developers to consider if entrepreneurship related projects are initiated to re-label old activities and if so, what consequences it has for the target audiences of these projects.

5.4. Limitations

Whilst the combination of adopting a practice theoretical and critical approach to studying entrepreneurship through an ethnographic study of organizations that promote entrepreneurship allowed surfacing interesting insights, the approach has its limitations.

Becoming a member of the studied community, and thus a practitioner in promoting entrepreneurship, also affected my work. Even though I hoped to adopt the Critical Entrepreneurship Studies position, maintaining reflexivity regarding entrepreneurship and what I observed on the field proved challenging. For one, even when I was experiencing situations where I saw problematic issues that relate to entrepreneurship being done, the situations did not leave space for actively challenging the assumption that entrepreneurship is self-evidently a ‘good thing’ we need more of. When researching one’s own community, there was also a risk of representing the story of StartingUp as an entrepreneurial success story moving from challenges to success. However, I tried to avoid adopting the ‘entrepreneurship hype’ in my writing and instead paint a nuanced picture of the studied community and its network – which did include some successes, but also challenges, as well

as the community ending up slowly fading into inactivity after my fieldwork. Moreover, there is also a risk of presenting the 'ES people' as a homogenic group of people that accepts the orthodoxy of entrepreneurship. Whilst I suggest that 'start-up entrepreneurship' is constructed as the desired kind of entrepreneurship, I learned from informal conversations that not everyone can identify with this ideal that easily. However, my material and adopted approach does not allow probing further into how individuals receive, identify with or resist different discourses of entrepreneurship at the local level (Dey, 2016).

Even though I constructed a vast collection of empirical material, as a novice ethnographer parts of the material are either of low quality or uninteresting. The article-based format also meant I could only focus on analyzing selected parts of the material for the individually published studies. Hence, I did not end up using as much of the material as I could have used and neither I did not provide as deep ethnographic descriptions of the studied culture as one might expect from ethnographic research. However, it also means that I have plenty of material left to be utilized for future studies.

I used the practice theoretical approach to zoom in on the 'details of the accomplishment of a practice in a specific place to make sense of the local accomplishment of the practice' (Nicolini, 2012, p. 209). Doing this was important for understanding *how* the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship was constructed, but these kinds of results run the risk of being seen as 'snapshots' of practice. Even though in the previous chapters I aimed to go beyond the local accomplishment of practices and discuss what is constructed in and through interconnected practices, this study is limited in how much it 'zoomed out' to understand the bigger picture of the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship.

Given that I engaged in ethnographic research within StartingUp and the network of Finnish Entrepreneurship Societies and adopted a situational approach to studying practices (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017), my empirical material and analyses did not account for the state of entrepreneurship in Finland in general nor did it account for other kinds of organizations that promote entrepreneurship. This meant I could go deep into understanding the practices of one kind of organization but could not account for wider or longer-term social effects of practicing (Gherardi, 2012). I was also limited in understanding how the local accomplishment of practices enacted within the ESs are made possible (or restricted) by practices that take place 'outside, beyond, and before the scene of action' (Nicolini, 2012, p. 229). My ethnographic experience with the Entrepreneurship Societies, for example, hinted at how visits to US and UK universities were important for sparking interest toward forming the first ESs in Finland (Sani Leino (2014) also accounts for these in his informative blog post on the Finnish ESs).

My desire to take part in the conversations of Critical Entrepreneurship Studies and combine it with the practice approach that prioritizes practices over individuals

affected my observations and analyses. There is a strong discursive focus within CES, which means that at times I have emphasized language over the sociomaterial nature of practices. Furthermore, CES risks taking a ‘black and white’ view of the world where one either just sees the ‘dark side’ of entrepreneurship or its ‘emancipatory potential’ (Verduijn et al., 2014; Parkkari and Verduijn, forthcoming 2019). In my study, I was more inclined to the ‘dark side’ of entrepreneurship. That is, I tended to (want to) see the problematic aspects related to the sociocultural phenomenon of entrepreneurship, to see how doing things around entrepreneurship produces exclusionary meanings and power relations. This means I might have ignored some of the interpretations that could have been made about the studied practices. For example, I discuss how the practice of telling entrepreneurial stories reproduces individualized understandings of entrepreneurship. However, Marostenmäki (2018) pointed out that ES actives can perceive these types of occasions as inspirational, informative and as an opportunity to speak with real entrepreneurs instead of ‘just’ students. The students’ experiences suggested that getting to hear entrepreneurs’ stories might actually make students perceive entrepreneurs as more humane instead of superhuman.

5.5. Suggestions for future research

To remedy the limitations of this study, I make suggestion for future research. In general, more work is needed on studying how entrepreneurship is promoted by various actors and through various activities. Understanding how entrepreneurship education works at different levels of education (from kindergarten to university), how entrepreneurship is supported and developed through regional, national, and international projects and policies could deepen our understanding of how different understandings of entrepreneurship are dispersed, promoted and rejected. Moreover, we need to understand how these activities are connected to one another and with what effects. Studies could trace connections between practices in order to see, for example, how the mandate to promote entrepreneurship travels from policy towards the grassroots level and vice versa with various (ideological) consequences. If the practices of organizations that promote entrepreneurship could be seen to uphold the ‘ideology of entrepreneurship’, it would be interesting to understand how this ideology is also resisted in and through various practices.

The combination of the practice theoretical and critical approach offers promising avenues for future research. I suggested that one can use practice theory to account for *how* entrepreneurship is constructed and CES to be reflexive of *what* one studies and what is constructed in the studied setting. There might of course be a plethora of other ways of operationalizing these approaches together. Empirical studies could begin with choosing an interesting social domain and going ‘out there’ to try and

understand it (Nicolini, 2012), and based on what emerges, account for the dynamics of both the oppressive and emancipatory potential of entrepreneurship (Verduijn et al., 2014). Or, they might find an issue that CES deal with, such as gender or identity, and then go on to find locales where these issues manifest. As Houtbeckers (2016) has done, the critical approach could also be operationalized to question taken-for-granted ideas and values regarding entrepreneurship in various social arenas. Moreover, the issue of ‘practitioners’ is paramount for future critical, practice-based studies of entrepreneurship to consider. As Barinaga (2016) has encouraged too, I encourage scholars to reflect on who we consider as a practitioner, what is the role of practitioners in doing research, producing knowledge and reporting about it.

Future studies could also combine the different attempts to ‘reframe’ or ‘reimagine’ entrepreneurship. Scholars have suggested that we could consider the process of transforming practices as entrepreneurship (or rather, entrepreneuring) (Steyart, 2007). Considering this as entrepreneurship would indeed involve going beyond the action of people labelled as entrepreneurs operating within company or organization settings. This idea would link together with how entrepreneurship has been reframed as emancipation (Rindova et al., 2009) and/or social change (Calás et al., 2009), and they could be used to study how oppressive practices are transformed or how emancipatory ones are enabled or created.

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List of original studies

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