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The Journey to Entrepreneurship

*A Cultural Analysis of Creative Entrepreneurs in a Business
Incubator in Finland*

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Abstract

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This thesis explores the process of becoming a creative entrepreneur and how this process can be supported in and out of an incubator. Using ethnographic methods and cultural analysis, I argue that being an entrepreneur is an overarching lifestyle and the process of becoming one is affected by each individual's backgrounds, motivations, identities, existing skills, social networks and perceptions of the business culture. An incubator could benefit from learning about these individual backgrounds, work as an interpreter in between the creative and business fields and offer personalised help. In addition, facilitating the creation of a community can lead to sustainable help and support that continues after the incubation programme. The results of this thesis can be applied to any advice-giving service aiming to help their clients in the best and sustainable way possible.

Keywords: entrepreneurship; creative entrepreneurs; incubator; business culture; entrepreneurial lifestyle; applied cultural analysis

Abstrakti

Matka Yrittäjyyteen: Kulttuurianalyysi Luovien Alojen Yrittäjistä Suomalaisessa Yrityshautomossa

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Tässä maisterintutkielmassa käsittelen luovan alan yrittäjien yrittäjäksi tulemisen prosessia, ja kuinka tätä prosessia voidaan tukea sekä yrityshautomon sisällä että sen ulkopuolella.

Analyysini pohjautuu kolmen kuukauden kenttätutkimukseen suomalaisessa yrityshautomossa, tänä aina tehtyyn havainnointiin, osallistuvaan havainnointiin sekä haastatteluihin. Yrittäjät mielletään usein yhdeksi ryhmäksi, jonka jäseniä tulisi ajaa eteenpäin halu kasvaa ja kansainvälistyä. Jokaisella yrittäjällä on kuitenkin eri taustat, motivaatiot, identiteetit, opitut taidot, sosiaaliset verkostot sekä mielikuvat yrityskulttuurista. Nämä kaikki vaikuttavat osaltaan yrittäjäksi tulemiseen ja yrittäjänä kasvamiseen.

Tutkimukseni mukaan yrittäjäksi tuleminen tarkoittaa myös uuden elämäntyylin omaksumista sen sijaan, että kyseessä olisi vain tiettyä aikana tehtävä työ. Yrityshautomo voi hyötyä yksilöllisten taustojen selvittämisestä, sillä tiedon avulla voidaan tarjota yksilöityä neuvontaa. Luovan alan hautomon tulisi myös toimia tulkkina luovan alan kulttuurin ja yrityskulttuurin välillä, sekä auttaa luovan alan yrittäjien yhteisön luomisessa. Yhteisö voi johtaa jatkuvampaan tukeen, joka ei ole vain hautomosta riippuvaista. Tutkielmani tuloksia voidaan soveltaa myös muihin neuvontaa tarjoaviin tahoihin.

Avainsanat: yrittäjyys; luova alan yrittäjät; yrityshautomo; yrityskulttuuri; yrittäjän elämäntapa; soveltava kulttuurianalyysi

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1. Introduction

As I looked around me at the creative entrepreneurs listening to the man in a suit talk about applying for financing, I wrote down the question: “Do these people have a background in economics?” As the first week was coming to an end, I myself felt pressure, anxiety and an overwhelming sense of exhaustion. What I had been told about being an anthropologist in between two worlds, had become so clear to me now. I was an outsider in the business world — a world previously so unknown and even uncomfortable to me. People around me were using unfamiliar words that I still had to secretly google; words, that seemed obvious to everyone else. On the last day of the first week, another question came to me: “Where is the creativity?”

1.1 Background

In the Nordic countries, entrepreneurship is something generally perceived as positive, and from a governmental level people are encouraged to pursue it already from an early age. In fact, entrepreneurship and “entrepreneurial learning” are in Finland implemented in the curriculum of all subjects already from the first grade in primary schools (Opetushallitus, 2015). Teaching business skills early on is seen as something that will lift Finland to the same level as its eternal benchmark Sweden and help conquer the weaknesses Finland faces in commercialisation and building of global brands (Lassila, 2016). In addition to the Finnish educational goals, it is also on a higher European level that public policies have aimed for the creation of an “enterprise culture” that would enforce European students’ attitudes and skills on entrepreneurship, in order for Europe to stay competitive globally (Henry & Treanor 2013, p. 249).

As a result, incubators in Finland have an important role in creating entrepreneurship and making the country open and positive to it (Aernoudt, 2004, p. 132). According to Rudy Aernoudt (2004) “business incubators nurture young firms, helping them to survive and grow during the start-up period when they are most vulnerable.” Aernoudt (2004) goes on to explain that “besides accommodation, an incubator should offer services such as hands-on management, access to finance (mainly through links with seed capital funds or business angels), legal advice, operational know-how and access to new markets.” (P. 127.) The goal is to produce companies that will be financially autonomous and survive after graduating the incubation programme, with a potential to grow (p. 128).

Entrepreneurship seems to be a set of skills that can not only be taught but skills and characteristics that are also valued higher than others. However, during my three months of fieldwork at a Finnish incubator for creative industries, it was mentioned that artists cannot be internationally successful entrepreneurs. I became intrigued by this perception and the contradiction the comment pointed to. It became clear to me, that there were issues that should be investigated more, both on a national and a local level. Who is this *entrepreneur* that is referred to and why would someone with a creative background fail to be one?

1.2 Objective and Overview

In the incubator, it seemed that what was taught was the same package of general business knowledge offered to everyone regardless of their background. In this thesis, I argue that providing the same package of knowledge to all is not sufficient, because every individual has different skills and knowledge when they enter the incubation programme. I also argue, that while general knowledge and practical skills are essential to learn to run a company, they alone will not produce the financially autonomous entrepreneurs who would survive and grow after the incubation period. Becoming an entrepreneur means more to an individual than starting a new profession, and creatives can be as lost as I was in the unknown world of business; led by their existing individual identities and personal motivations. Moreover, after an incubation programme the creative entrepreneurs can end up not only without sufficient know-how but also feeling lonely — not autonomous. Therefore, for a creative entrepreneur to become successful, other forms of support, shared stories and help in the building of networks are also needed. Based on my research, I suggest that there is a lack of understanding from an administrative level on who these individuals are and why they may fail to meet the set standards for success.

My aim is to investigate how the creative entrepreneurs who have used the services of the incubator perceive the business advice given, and why they may face challenges in being entrepreneurs. Understanding the reasons behind these challenges will generate better and more sustainable tools for helping the creative entrepreneurs in an incubator setting but will also provide knowledge on a broader level for other advice-giving services and actors in the economic and political fields. I argue that more attention must be given to personal identities, different acquired forms of capital that affect the entrepreneurial identity as well as the individual perceptions of the business culture. I also argue that a stronger community can help individuals deal with the challenges they face in being entrepreneurs and create new

creative ventures. I aim to answer the following questions:

1. What is the process of becoming an entrepreneur?
2. How do the entrepreneurs perceive the advice and support given by the incubator?
3. How do the entrepreneurs perceive the distances to the business culture and different markets and shorten these perceived distances?

To provide a better sense of what is meant when talking about an entrepreneur or creativity, I will begin by looking into these concepts and tie them to the incubator where I conducted my fieldwork. I will also present an overview of the previous research done on creative entrepreneurship. Next, I will move on to explain the theoretical framework for my analysis. As the theoretical tools throughout this thesis, I will use the concepts of *lifestyle*, *habitus*, 'forms of capital', *fields* and *identity*. In chapter four, I will talk about my field and the methods I used to gather my data, which were participant observations, observations and interviews. In this chapter, I will also present my informants and the main actor in the incubator.

In chapter five, I discuss my informants' backgrounds and motivations for becoming entrepreneurs and investigate how these had affected the negotiation of their entrepreneurial identities at the time of my fieldwork. I also discuss the process of an entrepreneur and investigate what kind of changes and challenges can come along on this journey of becoming an entrepreneur. In the following chapter, I investigate what this incubator for creative entrepreneurs was and who could use its services, analyse the perceptions that my informants had of the incubator and what was missing from the service. I also contest what an incubator should and could be in the future. In chapter seven, I will elaborate on the perceived distances to the business culture and international markets that affect the process of becoming an entrepreneur and growing to the expectations of the incubator. I will conclude the thesis by bringing my results together and discussing how they could be applied in the future.

2. Creative Entrepreneurship

In this section I will briefly present who is an entrepreneur and how entrepreneurship has traditionally been understood. I will also introduce what is meant by 'creative industries' and the 'creative entrepreneur' and what previous research has been done on creative entrepreneurship.

2.1 The Entrepreneur

When entrepreneurship is discussed the ideas of Joseph Schumpeter (1883-1950) cannot be ignored. According to Schumpeter, what separates entrepreneurship from other economic behaviour is the fact that an entrepreneur is always doing something that is new. In his book *The Theory of Economic Development* first published in 1911 and later revised and translated to English in 1934 Schumpeter argues that all social phenomena can be divided into activities that are either creative and innovative or repetitive and mechanical. Entrepreneurship is something that happens when a person is “making innovations” and not inventions meaning that they are making a “new combination” of things that already exist. (As cited in Swedberg, 2000.) According to Swedberg (2000) Schumpeter continues to influence modern researchers and is the main theorist in entrepreneurship literature. It is his definitions of entrepreneurship that have formed the characteristics that an entrepreneur is expected to have. An entrepreneur is someone who takes risks and is creative and innovative. (Naudin, 2018, p. 11.) Richard Weiskopf and Chris Steyaert (2009) state the following:

Since Schumpeter (1934) has pointed at the entrepreneur as the central economic actor, this actor has usually been painted as a great individual – usually a ‘great man’ – with exceptional qualities. The image of the entrepreneur as the strong autonomous individual endowed with certain qualities has been reproduced over and over again. *He* is constructed as a heroic figure who holds the promise (and *bears the load*) of revitalizing society/economy/organizations and leading us into the promised land of economic growth and prosperity. (p.185)

For Max Weber (1864-1920) entrepreneurship was about making profit at someone’s own economic risk. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber argues that Protestantism helped in changing the attitudes towards business, money making and work from a previous negative to positive. (As cited in Swedberg, 2000.) Since Weber, research with more of a cultural studies perspective has kept its focus mainly on institutional change, social stratification, ethnicity and gender. In the beginning of the 21st century a common theme has also been cultural production in entrepreneurship, which is thought of as things such as new concepts, rules, and meanings. (Ruef & Lounsbury, 2007.) Martin Ruef and Michael Lounsbury (2007) have suggested that more attention should be put on social networks as well as human and social capital in the midst of the overdrawn economic concern.

When entrepreneurship is brought forward and discussed in different forms of media and academia, technology often takes centre stage. This focus forms the general, sometimes institutionalised images of the role and behaviour of an entrepreneur. (Rindova, Barry, & Ketchen, 2009.) Violina Rindova, Daved Barry and David J. Ketchen (2009) define “entrepreneurship” as the creation of something new – a thing, an idea, a market or even a set of possibilities for an individual or a group. “Entrepreneurship” is an emancipatory process meaning it can bring change to social and cultural environments and therefore entrepreneurship research should focus more on the less traditional contexts such as art, science and freelancing. Rindova et al. (2009) argue that research should acknowledge the aspect of emancipation as well as the challenges faced by entrepreneurs instead of the ruling focus on the creation of wealth. As a result of the research focus, entrepreneurship is portrayed as a positive and desirable activity often leaving out questions of identity, ideology or power. What are missing are the tensions and contradictions that are part of entrepreneurship. (Tedmanson, Verduyn, Essers, & Gartner, 2012, p. 352.)

According to Richard Swedberg (2000) Schumpeter’s idea is that an entrepreneur is an entrepreneur only when they are doing the innovative activity (p. 15). However, in academia as well as in popular culture exist an idea of a born entrepreneur. There are countless quizzes and articles to test your entrepreneurial traits on websites of magazines such as Harvard Business Review, Forbes and Entrepreneur. These articles propose questions such as “Were you interested in business as a child?” and personal traits like “I like to win” or “I provide for my own needs with little support from others” (Roth, n.d.; Isenberg, 2010; Post, 2012) as a proof that you have either got what it takes to be an entrepreneur or you do not.

2.2 Creative Industries and the Creative Entrepreneur

Creative economy is “one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the world economy” (UNDP and UNESCO 2013, p. 10). UNESCO (2000) defines cultural and creative industries broadly as: “industries that combine the creation, production and commercialization of contents that are intangible and cultural in nature. These contents are typically protected by copyright and they can take the form of goods or services” (p. 11-12). However, the definitions for creative economy and ‘cultural and creative industries’ also vary in different contexts and are constantly discussed and evolve in different models of classification. Creative economy mainly revolves around cultural activities, goods and services but is also connected to forms

of creativity in industries that are not considered “cultural”. (UNDP and UNESCO 2013, pp. 19-22.) Most policymakers use the term creative industries and a more critical term to use according to Annette Naudin (2018) would be cultural industries. This is in part because literature with the term ‘creative industries entrepreneurship’ comes mainly from the fields of entrepreneurship and business that do not question entrepreneurship in the creative industry. In cultural studies the term ‘cultural worker’ is more often used, and entrepreneurship is associated with development work related to social issues and communities. (Naudin, 2018, p. 36.) In this thesis, I use the term creative entrepreneur or simply entrepreneur based on how my informants identified themselves.

The incubator companies in the creative industries could come from various different fields such as design, digital marketing, sports or experience production but what the companies had in common is that they dealt with intellectual property rights (IPR). IPR are about immaterial products, copyrights, patents and trademarks of things that are the result of someone’s intellectual creation (e.g., WTO). A creative entrepreneur is considered someone who individually or together with a team sets up their company in the creative industry. Inside the incubator it was important to specifically use the word *company* instead of a *startup*. According to the person in charge of the incubator, the word startup is too loaded with connotations of a certain role and way of life. As a result, some people apply for funding and after getting it live “the startup life” for a year without actually doing anything for the future of their company. From the incubator’s perspective, companies should aim to survive without public funding and become autonomous actors who survive with the revenue they make. I also aim to avoid the word startup, because as a concept it is something that would require a deeper focus and because of how the incubator aimed to define their entrepreneurs.

2.3 Previous Research on Entrepreneurship in the Cultural and Creative Industries

Annette Naudin (2018) states that a lot of the existing research on entrepreneurship has generally been focused on the economic impacts of it or the character of an entrepreneur (p. 10). These studies usually come from the field of economy and the topic is dominated by people in the business school community (Swedberg, 2000, p. 8). Economic theories are the ones that governments most often lean on because these theories have a focus on global and future trends and work as supportive evidence for politics and policy making (Naudin, 2018, p. 12). Entrepreneurship and *startups* are in policy-making and research conducted for policy

makers seen as something positive that bring with them economic success, growth and employment. According to Weiskopf and Steyaert (2009) this results in the prioritising of a growth-paradigm in entrepreneurship research which leaves out critiques of this growth orientation. Entrepreneurship is seen as something that can solve problems of all sorts – be it social, cultural or educational. (Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009, pp. 187-188.) This is also why creative and cultural entrepreneurship is portrayed as unchallenged and research around it tends to ignore its cultural contexts. Problems that arise are simply talked about as a lack of business skills which to policy-makers means the need for more business training. (Naudin, 2018, p. 39.)

However, ethnographic studies show that there is more to creative entrepreneurship than its economic aspects. Naudin (2018) has interviewed cultural workers in Birmingham and with her research broadened the view on cultural entrepreneurship. Through interviews she brings out the challenges faced by the people doing the entrepreneurial work and how their identities are formed but also emphasises that they work in a specific cultural milieu. In Birmingham, cultural entrepreneurs have formed strong networks to not only support each other but to influence the whole city, and key entrepreneurs in the city are identified and talked about as role models. Her study is a significant contribution to the growing need to question the traditional ideas of an entrepreneur. However, her results are framed by the geographical location, milieu and policies of not only Birmingham but more broadly the UK. Therefore, they cannot be directly applied to a different location and milieu where even the notion of a cultural or creative entrepreneur may differ.

Naudin draws inspiration from Mine Karataş-Özkan and Elizabeth Chell's (2010) applications of Pierre Bourdieu's theories. Karataş-Özkan and Chell (2010) have also studied entrepreneurs in the UK context through case studies and their study focuses on nascent entrepreneurs, meaning entrepreneurs who are in the beginning of the creation of new ventures. While their research on the effects of the micro-individual level, the meso-level of social processes and macro-level of the enterprise culture provide valuable insights on entrepreneurial learning, it is also created on context-based examples. Therefore, they cannot be transferred directly to a different context but instead need to be tested in order to make them applicable and helpful for a business support agency like an incubator. Charles Leadbeater and Kate Oakley (1999), as well as Mark Banks (e.g., 2006, 2007) and David Hesmondhalgh (2007), have all contributed to the research of cultural industries, cultural workers and creative entrepreneurship but they all also come from within the UK where the

creative industries are a constantly growing part of economy. In Finland literature around creative entrepreneurship appears to come from the business school community and it emphasises creativity in the development of global market competitiveness (e.g., Niinikoski, Sibelius, & Ashorn, 2003; Wilenius & Rauhala, 2004) or works as guidebooks for the development of creative economy or starting a creative business of your own (e.g., Förbom, 2012; Rämö & Valtari, 2017). Some exceptions come in the form of doctoral dissertations, for example with Outi Hägg's (2011) take on the development of entrepreneurial identity in entrepreneurial training.

3. Theoretical Framework

According to Anthony Giddens (1991) *lifestyles* are “routinised practices” that are adopted and can be seen as ways of acting but also ways of being. This means all the decisions individuals make from the behaviour in different situations, such as in the workplace, to their interests or choosing what to wear. Although often connected specifically to consumption and not work, Giddens (1991) emphasises that work is not separate of choices and lifestyle orientations. In fact, groups that have separated themselves from the traditional contexts have a variety of lifestyle choices and the choice of work is in itself a lifestyle orientation. (Pp. 81-82.) In the post-traditional society, people have varying physical and social environments and Giddens (1991) calls activities and choices in these milieus of action ‘lifestyle sectors’ that exist in a specific part of time and space of all the individual’s activities, for example on weekends or in a friendship. If a person is committed to a lifestyle, they may feel uncomfortable in milieus where the lifestyle is questioned, and they reflect on different available options based on that lifestyle. (Giddens, 1991, pp. 82-83.) For Pierre Bourdieu (2010), lifestyles are products of habitus, because habitus indicates ways of acting. Habitus is conceptualised by Bourdieu (1977; 2010) as a set of dispositions, a “structured” and “structuring structure” (1977, p. 72). It is the ways of acting but also taste, embodied behaviour, worldview, skills and aspirations (Smith & Riley, 2009, p. 131). The family we have been born into, schools we have attended and who we have been in the past is internalised in ourselves and is part of our unconsciousness and habitus that guides our current and future worldviews. As such it is more broadly linked to our possessed cultural capital and our positions in different fields. (Bourdieu, 1977; 2010.)

Cultural capital is one of the three main ‘forms of capital’ introduced by Bourdieu. It refers to the mentioned dispositions and the embodied habitus but also to the embodied skills and know-how. It can be objectified in the form of for example books or instruments, but also as for example educational qualifications which are cultural capital in its institutionalised form. Cultural capital is also symbolic capital in the form of recognised competence and authority. For example, an instrument can be materialised and turned into economic capital but for playing it embodied skills are needed, which can increase the social recognition in a field. Social recognition can also be gained through the educational qualifications which work as certificates of their holders’ competence. In its simplest form, economic capital means financial resources (for example money or properties) whereas by social capital Bourdieu (1986) refers to social connections, titles and positions in different networks. It is not only about the amount of people you know but also about a membership of a certain group, such as a family name or a university. (Bourdieu, 1986.)

The volume of possessed capital is what matters, which indicates the size and scope of the individual’s network, and what kind of sets of capital the people in it possess. Bourdieu (1986) states that “the link between economic and cultural capital is established through the mediation of the time needed for acquisition” (p. 246). He refers to being born into a family with strong cultural capital in which case the process of acquiring the capital starts early on and more time can be used for it. As can be seen, a form of capital can be exchanged to another. Sometimes the exchange can take time and work that from an economic perspective may seem like a waste but in the long run can be thought of as a good investment whose profits in the form of different capital can be seen later. In this sense, the exchange of economic capital into cultural one is also about the amount of time the possession of economic capital allows a person to have for acquiring the cultural capital. (Bourdieu, 1986.)

In different fields, capital is unequally distributed (Bourdieu, 1986). Fields are parts of the social life and in the case of creative entrepreneurship can be thought of as the fields of arts and culture, politics or business. In different fields, different forms of capital are valued higher than others and a certain habitus can either help the position in a field or make it more difficult. (Smith & Riley, 2009, p. 133.) For example, in the field of arts and culture it could be thought that cultural capital is valued higher than economic one, whereas in the field of business the value of economic capital rises. This is because the volume of capital means actual resources that can be used in the field (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 108). Fields are also where

matters of taste are disputed such as what kind of art is valued higher than another. This makes the fields domains of symbolic power and status. (Smith & Riley, 2009, p. 134.)

Lifestyle is linked to self-identity and its negotiations. Giddens (1991) defines self-identity as “the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography” and created in “reflexive activities of the individual”. Identity is a choice of maintaining a certain narrative. (Giddens, 1991, pp. 52-54.) In this thesis, I will also talk about identity as the sense of belonging to a group and the formation of identity as a process of being and becoming and a negotiation. As such, identities are never final and always exist in both the individual as well as the collective form. (Jenkins, 2008.) Identities are not stable but are constructed through difference and in the relation to what they are not (Hall, 2000, p.19). Identifying who we are, is therefore also connected to who we think others are. It is about how we categorise a group and our membership in it and understand the group and what our places as individuals or members of groups are in the world. (Jenkins, 2008, pp. 5-12.)

Giddens (1991) talks about ‘fateful moments’ in people’s lives, such as taking examinations, getting married or starting a company where an individual is at a crossroads in their life. They are always the start of something new that will change one’s life in one way or another and in this sense also affect self-identity. In these moments or before they happen, the individual’s sense of security is questioned, and the related risks fall on them. The risks are not necessarily about things going wrong but rather about the possibility of what would happen if they did. To handle the risks, expert advice of for example professionals or self-help books is often used. This is not necessarily help in deciding what to do but can bring with it a sense of security in assessing the risks, empowerment and at times reconstruct the self-identity. (Giddens, 1991.) The expert advice can be thought of as paid or free advice gotten from the incubator or an entrepreneur paying an outside consultant. However, according to Bourdieu (1986) exchanging economic capital into someone else’s cultural capital is difficult because cultural capital is integral to people. Advice can also change over time, in a different country or from one professional to another. For example, what has previously been considered part of a healthy lifestyle may now be against the dietary recommendations. Because the risks are always interpreted by individuals and there is a plurality of choice, meaning advice can differ depending on the source, it can be difficult to decide who to trust. (Giddens, 1991.)

4. Methods

4.1 The Field

The expressed aim of the incubator at the time of my fieldwork was to develop their international network. However, I was told that any incubator's overall aim should be in becoming unneeded by its clients, the entrepreneurs, in the future. To me this statement meant that my focus should be directed on investigating the experiences of the people who were using or had used the services of the incubator because without them the incubator itself would not exist. However, the task of developing a network remained, which meant that the initial field and focus of the incubator was divided into two – the local and the international. The data for this thesis was gathered on a local level by observations done in the location of the incubator and a two-day conference aiming to bring together creative work and business. In addition, three semi-structured interviews were conducted lasting from an hour to an hour and a half.

4.2 Participant Observations

I started the project doing observations and participant observations to gain more knowledge of the field previously unknown to me. Through participant observations it is possible to notice certain behaviours and find out more about social structures and cultural meanings which can lead to understanding the informants better (Davies, 2008, pp. 77-81). Adopting some of the language used and learning how the incubator operated was essential before the interviews. Topics discussed and questions that arose while doing observations led to questions asked from the informants. During the three months of my fieldwork, I worked and spent time in the business complex where the incubator was located, had informal conversations and attended a monthly staff meeting and a team day in order to learn about the physical location as well as the social and cultural milieu. I also participated in a workshop and a course day for creative entrepreneurs as well as informational events on funding possibilities, where I aimed to position myself in the role of someone starting up a business without any previous know-how of it.

The two-day conference gathered together students and professionals from the art and cultural sectors as well as creative entrepreneurs and business service experts. The programme consisted of advisory meetings with business experts, speeches, presentations and a panel discussion. I observed informational presentations from different business advisors as

well as speeches from creative industry professionals. Furthermore, I spent time with a creative entrepreneur, informant D, who has also used the services of the incubator. I went along with her to different business advice clinics and afterwards discussed the advice given. I also took part in the constantly encouraged networking during the event and had an informal conversation with a professional working for a creative incubator in Sweden. All these participant observations and informal conversations played an important part in the production of the analysis in this thesis.

4.3 Observations

According to Davies (2008) “ethnographers help to construct the observations that become their data” because the researcher’s own background and sociocultural circumstances affect the topic and data gathered (p. 5). Because of my own background outside of the business world, I was able to notice things through my observations that insiders would not, which led me to consider the difficulties that entrepreneurs without a business background might also have. The companies the incubator helped could be referred to as their clients, because the incubator offered services the companies bought and used. The incubation services cost money for the companies but group advice given in open informational events about for example funding and a course for nascent entrepreneurs were free of charge. The incubator as a space was a small office which was located in a larger complex of business to business service providers. The end goal with all the service providers was to create new startups, commercialise new innovations and support companies’ growth and internationalisation. These goals were essentially also what defined the incubator. The difference from the other services was that it was specialised in creative industries and was funded by an institute of higher education in addition to the revenue gained from selling its services.

The daily operations and the incubation services were run by a single person, who I will from now on refer to as E. E was the only connection I had to the incubator. For a period of five weeks she was absent for personal reasons and left me handling some of her tasks and emails. Sometimes field experiences can actually end up shifting the research focus and theoretical perspectives (Davies, 2008, p. 34). This period of time revealed interesting observations of E’s position in not only the incubator but also the larger local network and community, to which I will return to in chapter six. Observations were also done during the two-day creative industries conference. For the duration of the project I kept a field journal

with observations, took pictures and wrote fieldnotes that took the form of text, mindmaps and doodles.

4.4 Interviews

To gain further knowledge about the creative entrepreneurs' experiences, I conducted interviews. Because of the size of the incubator, the group of possible informants was fairly small since people had to have taken part in the incubator. It was also here that the time constraints which were often mentioned by my informants were articulated in practice, because getting informants proved to be a difficult task. Most of the individual entrepreneurs I approached either left my emails or calls unanswered or simply replied that they were too busy to participate. Creative entrepreneurs with small businesses are either personally or together with a small team in charge of all the daily operations. In fact, one of the informants mentioned that giving an interview meant that the operations would stop for the length of the interview while another seemed to use the time as efficiently as possible by eating breakfast during the interview. A wider array of informants might have brought more variation to the analysis, but not being able to gain them emphasises the importance of time as a resource in entrepreneurial work. In addition, all the informants represented a different stage in the process of being and becoming a creative entrepreneur, providing a better understanding of the process.

The names of the informants have been left out to give the informants more freedom to discuss their work, identities and thoughts on improving the incubation services. The informants will instead be referred to as informant A, informant B and informant C. Informant A was a young entrepreneur both by her age and the time spent as an entrepreneur. She had had her dance studio company running for four months after graduating from a university of applied sciences. In addition to her company, she also gave dance lessons in other places. Informant B represented two different companies. The first one she had owned by herself for a longer period and its focus was on freelance design projects. She co-owned and operated the second company with a business partner, focusing on a product designed by B that was aimed for an international market and more precisely at the time the UK. B had an educational background in design but professional experience both through her first company as well as in a production company as an employee. Informant C had a background in advertising and marketing and had once owned and later sold his own graphic design studio. At the time of the interview, he owned two companies. Through the first established one he

did business consulting, while the newer one in the development stages of a food product he owned together with a small team. A and B were of Finnish nationality, while C had moved to Finland in 2009 from the UK.

In addition to the difficulties in getting informants, another issue arose with the suggestions for them which were made by the contact person of the incubator, E. E was also the one who first approached the entrepreneurs I interviewed and presented me and the project of network building to them. While this helped in getting informants and made me seem trustworthy it also created a framework for the interviews that I had no control over. Despite my elaborating follow-up email on my broader interests in the informants and their personal experiences as entrepreneurs and more information given at the start of the interviews, the informants often spoke with the framework of internationalisation in mind. Their interpretations of the topic seemed to at some instances make them think their role was to give direct answers around it (see Davies, 2008, p. 57). I wanted to know more about the deeper reasons and meanings for why they for example felt that they could have been helped in a certain way or why they chose to become entrepreneurs, instead of the direct suggestions given for the operations of an international network. For this reason, it was at times important to steer the conversation away from their thought-out framework to the whys behind what they were suggesting.

Because of E's direct involvement and my role presented by her not as an outside researcher but a temporary part of the organisation, the informants seemed to at times have difficulties in speaking completely freely about the incubator and instead disguised any negative feelings in wordings such as "it could have been better if". While it was not surprising in itself that the informants mentioned her – keeping in mind the situation and the framework set – it became more a matter of how they talked about her. It shed light on the fact that she was considered a key connector in the informants' networks and someone who they felt gratitude towards for helping them start their company or connect them to important people.

All the interviews were transcribed with notes about changes in the tone or tempo of speech. Notes on the locations of the interviews were also made because of the possible effects on the interview situation. One interview was conducted in the informant's work room, which was a secluded space, while two others were conducted in a café, which might have affected what was said and how. It is important to be flexible during interviews because the initially thought out topics can turn into something other than what was planned (Davies,

2008, p. 34). For this reason, I used themes and questions to guide me through what I wanted to learn more about but still let the informants talk in a conversational manner. This method revealed aspects that I otherwise as an outsider would not have discovered and eventually led me to the research focus in this thesis.

4.4.1 Reflections on ethics.

I presented the interview situation as a chance for my informants to help future entrepreneurs and talk about their experiences to an outsider (see Davies, 2008, p. 56). I clearly stated that the informants would remain anonymous and recorded interviews and transcripts would not be shared further, hoping this would help them speak freely. However, using quotes and talking about the informants' entrepreneurial backgrounds can make the informants and their companies recognisable (Davies, 2008, p. 60). For this reason, the names of the incubator and the contact person have also been left out because stating them would lead to a direct connection to the informants and their companies and confidentiality would be lost. Confidential information provided by the informants of things such as sales numbers as well as information on operations of the incubator not available for the general public have also been left out of the analysis.

Two of the interviews were conducted in Finnish so it is also important to keep in mind the possible effects of me presenting these interviews in translation. According to Walter Benjamin (1997) "the form and sense of the original", in this case text, should be conveyed "as accurately as possible" but as Benjamin's discussion about original and reproduction indicates, this transformation does not mean that translations have to be exact copies of the original. A translation should not communicate meaning but rather intention making both languages "fragments of a greater language". (Benjamin, 1997, pp. 155, 161.) It was important to look at the quotes as words when translating them and not insert my own interpretations of meaning to them. For this reason, some orders of words may differ from the grammatically correct English, because of the different emphasis put on words in Finnish. I have also aimed to stay as true as possible to the original pauses in my informants' speech by using commas and dots only in moments the pauses seemed to appear in the recordings. I am the one who has had the power to choose how to translate certain words, in what order and what to leave out. However, being able to conduct all the interviews in the native languages of the informants meant they could speak in a more relaxed manner and let their speech flow which led to deeper knowledge gained from the interviews.

5. Becoming an Entrepreneur

But at the same time that is the challenge that I learn something new and it's fun but then again, I'm constantly put into that uncertainty and I end up in situations where I'm not at my best that I don't know how to do. So it's nice and horrible at the same time. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

Were my informants similar to Schumpeter's (1934) autonomous individuals, leading the country to economic growth and aiming to make profit at their own economic risk? Were they born with a set of skills and had an interest in business since childhood? In this chapter, my aim is to investigate how different educational and professional backgrounds had led the informants to the choice of setting up their own companies and what their motivations for becoming and being entrepreneurs were. I also aim to look into how they identified and perceived themselves as entrepreneurs, what problems they faced and where they were in their entrepreneurial process. I argue that being an entrepreneur shaped who they were and was never simply a job or a specific lifestyle sector, but rather a lifestyle commitment that affected the informants' dispositions and positions in all areas of their lives.

5.1 Background and Motivations

"Well, not exactly by force but..." was how informant B started describing what had led her to entrepreneurship. She had previously worked in a production company but when she had imagined her future she could not see it there. This was the reason she studied to become a designer. Afterwards, she was offered a permanent position as an assistant director in the production company but in B's words it would have been "so far from the creative work and you'd have to budget and deal with the money and other deadlines". This is part of the reason she set up her own design company through which she could do work for the production company. B went on to explain her decision:

As a designer I think I hit a wall when I looked at people I studied with who got jobs because mostly it's that you go to a design agency to do 3D models and of course start from the so called bottom so you are executing other people's visions. And I had no interest in doing that and I had no know-how [of it] so I would have had to learn all the 3D modelling programs pretty well and that was really far from where

my strengths lie so entrepreneurship almost happened by itself. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

Working in the offered position would have meant a focus on things she did not want to deal with and working for someone else as a designer would have meant not being able to execute her own visions as a designer. By becoming an entrepreneur, she was able to become the creative she wanted, free from what others would tell her to do. This aspect of freedom was also mentioned by an entrepreneur in the workshop I attended. For her, entrepreneurship meant freedom from the traditional office life, and the possibility to choose who she worked with.

As an entrepreneur, B had also had to learn new things and deal with money and deadlines, but she had been able to do this because of her own volition and by her own terms. In her second company that she operated with her colleague, she was still in charge, but she was also faced with expectations from investors who owned parts of the company. The motivation for starting this second company seemed to have been very different from the first one, because it had been set up with an aim to do business instead of an aim to be creative. B explained her visions for the future:

I dream that we'll have a fairly large product family that is in the global markets and of course since we have investors involved our dream is to be able to... in some years' time to sell the company... Because we have to be able to give the investors the money they have invested with some profit as well so the only way to do that is to sell the company. Which as an entrepreneur is very different from when I've at the time set up my own agency and my business partner has also set up her own agency neither of us have even for a moment thought that those companies would be sold. They are also so personified to our own know-how and we work alone, so I think that that one may live on but this company now we aim for it to be saleable someday. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

Creative values were important in the second company as well, but the first one was a representation of *who she was*, whereas the second company was more about *what they did*, and it was run with a set goal to someday sell the company.

Informant C had a long professional background in the business world having for example worked in America already in the 1990s and having previously sold his graphic design company in England. C had also been and still was in the role of a business adviser consulting other Finnish creative companies through his own company. This had an impact

on how he viewed not only other companies but also business agency services such as those of an incubator, and he reflected on his position as both an entrepreneur and a consultant. In the creative company, he had a chef and a designer as his team members and he defined the company as being “a nice fit” for the incubator because of “a lot of creative thinking” that was involved. It could be said that C was an entrepreneur and a business owner with a creative idea he wanted to pursue instead of a creative who had become an entrepreneur. From the incubator’s perspective he was thought of as the ideal entrepreneur that others should aspire to be, and someone E had told would not even need the help they provided.

Informant A described the process of setting up her company as quick and “crazy”. In some way, having her own dance studio was something she had dreamt about before. However, meeting E, joining the incubator and getting funding had finally made the dream real for her. She described her emotional connection to the company:

They don’t realise what kind of amounts economically I have at stake here or people in general who are not in that situation themselves don’t get the amount of work or the risk I’ve taken. Although like I also said in the incubator it’s not the economic risk that is big but it’s more the emotional side and the fear that I’ll mess up or, somehow, that if this doesn’t work out especially in a passion work like mine then. You know somehow you put so much of yourself into it that if this doesn’t work people will think that I’m some loser or something... (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

Although she mentioned money, it was not about the money itself, it was about success and failure on an emotional level and in other people’s eyes. The work was personal for her and a portrayal of who she was and wanted to be perceived as. Anthony Giddens’ (1991) fateful moments were about specific moments where the possibility of risks becomes imminent. However, I argue that in the process of becoming an entrepreneur, the risks are not tied to certain events but are instead always present. Because the entrepreneurs are faced with new challenges every day, they are also constantly aware of the possibility of things going wrong.

Although money was a source of stress and constantly on the entrepreneurs’ minds, for B with her first company or A with her dance studio, it was not what motivated them the most in the start nor why they kept going. Therefore, the motivation of a creative entrepreneur may be very different from the growth-orientation an incubator expects it to be. A company may fail to grow quickly or to become internationally successful and financially independent, because on the list of motivations and aims, economic growth sometimes does

not come in the first place. This does not mean that the entrepreneur does not see the growth as a possibility but rather that it is not what they purposely work for, and they are often not willing to compromise on their creative or social values for its sake. Informant B talked about this:

In our line of business you come across that if someone starts saying that this has to be made in China and this has to be done cheap and this will be made into a volume product and even though it costs 60 euros it can only cost 20 euros so if you come across that kind of a consultant, like we have, then they're not the right partner for us. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

It is about the narrative the entrepreneur chooses to maintain and how they reflect on it compared to others (see Giddens, 1991). B described that they would not want their product to be part of a bigger catalogue of a sales agent because most of the other products would be "junk". They were not prepared to lose the quality and social consciousness that were behind the product for the sake of bigger sales.

In a similar way, informant A described how some people in the dance community had "big egos" and her not wanting to have her dance school perceived as something based on the teachers' egos. She identified these others around her and compared them to who she did not want to be. By doing this, she reflected on her own and her company's position in the surrounding world. (See Hall, 2000; Jenkins, 2008.) It was important for her that people had the right perception of the company straight from the start and this could also be seen in her motivation to invest money on the location, a "professional" website and a big sign displayed outside the dance school. Informant C talked about his company and business idea as something that they had done research about, that they were only getting ready to launch and *if* the pilot launch would go well they would expand to other markets. He was responding to the pull of the market instead of pushing the product and he was prepared to negotiate on his ideas based on what the consumers would want.

Because of the differing backgrounds and motivations, it is complicated to put these entrepreneurs in the same category and consider one to be better than the other. Someone with more background in the business world may be able to take their business idea further, enter new markets more easily and create more revenue as a result. However, it is important to remember the reasons behind this success and the process that has led to where the entrepreneur is now. A creative entrepreneur's motivation may differ from the expectations

set for them, but they may also want to grow, gain revenue and eventually sell their company and just have not yet gained the know-how for succeeding in it.

5.2 Negotiating identities

During our interview, informant A positioned herself as a young entrepreneur but also referred to herself as a “student with no savings”. I could notice the shifts between her roles as a new entrepreneur, a creative worker and the student she was trying to leave behind. These shifts also came up in the language and words she used and the way she compared herself to other entrepreneurs: “some people coming to the incubator have more knowledge of that kinda stuff but I didn’t... maybe because I am quite young, just studied and so on”. Informant A mentioned that so much had happened in a short period of time that she had not “internalised the roles yet”. She had not yet had enough time to embody the habitus or the skills expected from her as an entrepreneur and a business owner (e.g., Bourdieu, 1986; 1977). She did not only struggle with her new entrepreneurial identity but also the one of a dance teacher and a seriously taken professional in the surrounding creative community. She stated: “I still don’t easily, somehow have the courage to say that I am a dance teacher because I don’t have the formal education, even though I’ve been teaching dance for a long time.”

The professional education which could be transferred into social recognition was missing. Because of this missing part of cultural capital, she hesitated in identifying herself as a professional dancer or a dance teacher, even though she had worked as one before. She recognised this herself and her identity was constantly contested because of the doubts from others in the community. She also talked about her new role as an owner of a company and how others might perceive this role:

Suddenly I’m in a kind of superior role or like a boss ... in a way everywhere I am now, or like when you go to a salsa party I can’t be in there like a nobody, cause I always in a way represent the company. Not that I would have gone crazy or something before but anyway you always are in a way kinda like your company’s business card. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

What A meant by being a business card, was that everywhere she went she represented her company. She had to perform a certain role and behave in a certain way that she thought others were expecting from her, because her choice of lifestyle set rules for her behaviour and actions (see Giddens, 1991). She had not necessarily changed her behaviour from what it was

before, but she had become aware of it in a new way, and consciously managed the impressions she gave to others (see Goffman, 1990).

Informant A mentioned that what people bought from her were not necessarily dance choreographies, but instead a stress release. This meant that her energy and positivity were resources that could be turned into economic capital. Staying physically and mentally in shape was something she “had to” do to be successful. She also mentioned that she had to *look* like she was feeling well. Her creative work can be seen as a form of performance, in which her appearance and manner were important to the whole brand of her company. (See Goffman, 1990.) Being an entrepreneur was for her also linked to the space of entrepreneurship. She explained:

It’s so crazy that in a way, when I teach something similar in another town, like couples’ salsa in another place, I feel relaxed there... But then when I teach in my own place I immediately get the sort of pressure that now these people know that I am the owner of this place so now this lesson has to be so good even though I’ve always been teaching that completely same thing in all the other places. But when it’s your own there’s a different pressure like well now, they have to like this so they’ll come again and I didn’t have that before, working for others. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

Her company was the stage of her performance, where she reflected upon her own actions based primarily on how others might perceive them.

The informants did not only compare themselves to others, but also made comparison to their previous selves. For example, informant B talked about the statistics of how many had gained funding through a business angel network and the fact that she and her colleague had succeeded in this. This gave her confidence for the future. She conveyed:

The insecurity is continuing but then you can always think or you have to psych yourself up to the fact that even though the insecurity is certain, at least when you look back we have succeeded in some uncertain things. And a million things could go wrong in this. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

Constant focus on the future can be a cause of anxiety to entrepreneurs, because the future is full of new issues and problems that are still unresolved. Looking back can make it clearer that they have succeeded and moved forward and overcome obstacles previously considered pressuring to them. B also made a distinction in her talk between her two companies. When she talked about the first one she referred to herself as a designer. In this first one, she was a

designer before an entrepreneur and she trusted her skills so much that she described how she could even do a project for a client with her own economic risk and get paid only after the benefits of her work could be seen. With the second company she explained that she instead could give up a part of the company to get that same valuable know-how, that could be proved to have been beneficial, from another actor.

When B introduced the second company she referred to it as a “design industry company”. The product of that company had been created with a clear strategy and awareness of her and her colleague’s potential markets and the creative side had been entwined with an economic purpose from the start. They knew that people in their target market were already familiar with the product, but their aim was to make an existing product “visually more beautiful” with a better user experience. It is possible for a creative entrepreneur to have multiple identities that they attach to different contexts at play at the same time. In the creative field, B’s identity as a designer was stronger and she felt more confident about it because of her already gained cultural and social capital. In the field of international business, she did not have all the resources and volume of capitals she would have needed to make her position in the field stronger. (E.g., Bourdieu, 1986.)

However, in the words B used it was noticeable that over the years she had already gained a lot of business knowledge and a sense of being an entrepreneur. By gaining more experience and knowledge the entrepreneurial identity had become stronger from what it had been. This know-how and adopted parts of the entrepreneurial habitus had come to informant B over time by learning, succeeding and making mistakes (e.g., Bourdieu, 2010). Despite that, the negotiation was still ongoing. Problems of the entrepreneurial work continued to exist, but they simply took new forms. When I asked B, why the dream for the future was to sell the second company, she replied:

Because we have gone into this with the idea that if we take in outside investors they'll want the exit to happen some time. And also in an ideal situation I would sell this company for a lot of money as quickly as possible but I could stay and do concepts more and design work and so on. But that I would stay in this company doing all this that I really don't know how to do, and that every day I have to learn some new thing, I'd like to vacation from that at some point. So, so the feeling of inadequacy, constantly, when you battle with that I do look forward to that amazing feeling when you'd get to do something that you know how to do... (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

Who she was and what she knew were constantly contested. Because of her background as an entrepreneur, this had not been a surprise for her and she also described that in the future she could even set up another company or work as an investor sharing the knowledge she had gained to others. She said that “it would be nice to be involved in building something in a way that you aren't in agony with that thing every day but that there is that operational actor and you could just give the advice from above.”

When informant C talked about doing the entrepreneurial work and things such as internationalisation, he used words like “obviously”, “easily” and “not difficult”. These were a stark contrast to B’s uncertainty with words like “should”, “have to” or “if I could”, and to the lack of confidence that could be heard in A’s talk with her cutting many sentences before she could finish them and ending them with “...or I don’t know”. There was also an ease in C’s talk, whereas, when B talked about things her and her colleague had been advised they should do in business, her tone of voice changed, and tempo increased. Her talk became intense and her words turned into a list of information without any pauses. These all exposed their level of confidence in the entrepreneurial position and how they perceived the business side. For C, there did not seem to be any overwhelming challenges in doing business, because he had the skills to deal with the new and unexpected. He also had an international professional background and embodied knowledge on how to connect to people and who to trust. He explained:

...you get a good feeling for companies quite quickly when you when you talk to them. Like the guy I was talking to today I have a very good feeling of them as a potential supplier. And you can make that judgement from experience whether they're in, you know Finland or Germany or the US or wherever they are, you know people are human beings and the same in the end... (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Because C had such a long background in being an entrepreneur and also knowledge on how to do international business in different markets, it could be said that he identified himself first and foremost as an entrepreneur and not a creative worker.

5.3 Adopting a Lifestyle

Some people don’t get it but like my car is so messy, because I prioritise in a way like I may have my clothes all over there, I didn’t use to have them. But because in a

way, when you have the actually [stressful things] in a way I don't stress over any little stuff anymore. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

Being an entrepreneur is an overarching lifestyle. For informants A and B, it was not simply work but what they portrayed their surrounding life against as well. This seemed especially true for someone at the start of their process, like informant A. To survive as an entrepreneur, there has to be a high level of adaptability. Informant A referred to this as the need to say "whatever" to a lot of obstacles that previously would have caused her stress in the everyday life. These were things such as painting her dance studio perfectly or being stuck in a traffic jam. She recounted:

We had a dance teacher giving a workshop and she said, in [my] car, there was some horrible traffic jam and she was like 'how can you be so relaxed' cause I wasn't at all nervous about it. But then somehow, well, why would I stress over some little things that I can't do anything about. When you have big things you get perspective so you don't really stress about any little thing in a way. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

Inside the dance school she had to be organised, she had responsibilities and a role to play. For A, her car could be thought of as a space almost equivalent to home. It was where she did not have a role to perform or people to reflect her identity to; where she could simply be without any judgement from others. (See Goffman, 1990.) She also held the power of deciding who to allow into this space.

Informant A explained that she had heard criticism from people inside the dance community and mentioned that "you have to have a pretty good self-esteem". She described one instance where a competitor had called her on the phone telling her she was ruining the culture of her taught dance. She had also been talked about publicly on Facebook in a way she referred to as cyber bullying. She did not fit the characteristics expected from her by the surrounding dance community and this in turn challenged her identity as an entrepreneur, because she did not have an entrepreneurial community to relate to either. The part that to her brought the most anxiety was being alone with the responsibilities of the entrepreneurial work. Informant A explained that she had hired a secretary even though from an economic perspective she could not afford it. However, she went on to say that "mentally I cannot afford not to hire one".

From A's perspective, many others should have shifted their focus too: "People should think more about how they cope and time and not just the money because it's like... when you get a burnout it really doesn't matter whether you have that money or not." Managing the business meant managing an emotional burden too and the decision to have someone help with the "dry" and "basic" things also gave her more time for herself. Previously, she had also had to put issues of her personal life aside to be able to deal with the issues that came with starting a business. She described the end of a ten-year relationship that happened at the same time as her entrepreneurial journey was starting: "It's so crazy because I was so crushed over the breakup, but I couldn't sort of process it properly because I was so busy with the company." Sometimes personal sacrifices are made because of the company and the new lifestyle commitment and this can include not being able to deal with emotions related to the personal life, because the focus has to instead be put on dealing with being an entrepreneur.

As an entrepreneur, the informal relationships can also become a burden because it can be hard for other people to separate the entrepreneurial and personal motivations for the entrepreneur's actions. Informant A mentioned that in her role as a business owner "you don't want to disappoint people but sometimes you have to be really unpleasant." Informal relationships also gain more value from a business perspective and become social capital to use, when they support the role of an entrepreneur. A described how her father, who is a lawyer, had helped her in many ways. However, what had helped her in the role of an entrepreneur the most was not someone in the role of her father, but rather a lawyer she had a personal connection to. She went on to describe the position of her mother in comparison to someone like E:

Like my mum has helped me a lot but she as well is a bit like, you know always 'that's great I'm so proud of you and yay, yay, yay' like yeah it's great but that isn't really helping me as much as someone saying 'okay what are we gonna do today, what will you do tomorrow' which is something that's actually realistic. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

The support gained from family members and friends is often emotional support and cheering on. However, this does not support the entrepreneur in a practical sense which would lead them to manage the company and their time in a better way and handle the stress caused by the entrepreneurial tasks. Informant A added that she wishes "you just had someone to discuss some things with because in a way you still are so alone with everything." A

community of creative entrepreneurs would therefore also have to be built and facilitated from the viewpoint of the entrepreneurial work. The relationships built inside this community can later develop into strong personal ties, but the first step should be to connect people with shared motives that can offer each other peer support.

Informant A described that for her there was still learning to do in balancing the division of time in her life by which she meant focusing on not constantly working. The line between work and spare time had become blurred and she for example explained how people kept sending her Facebook messages about work-related things. This medium that used to be tied to her spare time was now also part of her work life and the boundaries between formal and informal were no longer clear. Informant A described the managing of time as follows:

It's not really the amount of work that stresses you, like okay you have a lot of emails or a lot of something, I don't care, because this work is my passion so it's not like I count the working hours like well did I work five hours today. But it's more the responsibility that stresses you the most in it. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

Being an entrepreneur makes it possible for some creatives to express their passion, which is why the amount of work is an accepted factor. However, dealing with all the responsibilities that come with the entrepreneurial work and the business side, as well as handling these previously unknown issues alone, is what causes the stress. The entrepreneurial work takes time over from the creative work which has in fact often been the initial motivation for setting up a company.

Informant B explained that because of her first company, she had known the reality of being an entrepreneur when she started the second one. She mentioned that:

"If you're a designer you don't do design work even five percent of your time" and went on to talk about the tension between what time is spent on and should be spent on. She elaborated: Right now we absolutely, if I could focus on it we would have our next products and the product portfolio. And the whole concept that we need to get to the sales numbers that we have promised to our investors, that's what I really should be doing. But in a way the eagerness to do that is lost when you constantly think that I can do stuff like draw and design but I have to get the financing... and I have to, I have to find the collaboration partner who does the mould and the one who does the production and the one who does the package and the one who does the label and the one who translates the label and the one who does the package design

and the one who does, but that's what this entrepreneurship is, so I'm not in a way complaining, but if you think of the challenges then, if only you had a top team.

(Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

This is how B defined what entrepreneurship is. She made a notion of how these knowledge gaps could be filled by having a team. In a team each member has their own sets of capital; their own special skills and networks that can be combined and shared with other team members. I argue that this is where the building of a community would also be beneficial. Each entrepreneur goes through similar difficulties at different stages of the process and often someone already holds the knowledge of who for example could translate a label. Forming the “top team” and possibly creating new companies together also requires first knowing people whose knowledge would fill the solitary entrepreneur’s existing knowledge gaps.

What B described was almost like a vicious circle. What the entrepreneur should do to succeed financially, is the creative work, because that is the whole basis for the company and the only way it can grow. However, the time taken by the entrepreneurial tasks and finding out new things is what takes over. Like B, informant A also knew that there was more value for her company in her planning the creative work than doing the entrepreneurial work and mechanical tasks, but there was a tension in negotiating the time spent on them. The creative work was in fact seen as more important for the success of her company as well, but it had become something she had to make time for. A mentioned: “...I think that I should maybe focus more on reserving time during the day for the creative work.” She described herself as too busy to do the creative work. She did not have enough time to plan the dance classes and instead she spent most of her days in front of a computer. This was very different from the movement and the creative work of a dancer. Speaking of her dance classes, she added that: “in the end that is what I sell, so it should be really good, so I should actually reserve more time for it”. The entrepreneurs are aware of the imbalance and yet instead of the creative work the focus has to be put on running the operations of a company. B explained:

It is sort of a constant search and that is where the time is spent on and then when you should start thinking in a strict way where the day is spent then it's just this wandering around and for a long time sort of idling before you then find someone who can do it for us... (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

With limited amounts of cultural and social capital a big proportion of the day is often spent on figuring out how to do something, googling for advice online or trying to find someone else with the know-how that is missing from the entrepreneur.

5.4 A New Sense of Time

Entrepreneurship is different from the traditional work or educational life with timeframes and goals set by someone else. An entrepreneur must by themselves define the times for their work and negotiate the informal life based on the entrepreneurial work. Informant A separated her work from the traditional working life: "...on Monday mornings I'm always off or like yesterday I didn't wake up until 11, when normally people are so busy on Monday mornings. So you have to take time off for yourself because you can't in the evenings." The notion of a workday also loses its meaning, because time is not linear. Informant A discussed the feelings of inadequacy this different notion of time caused:

...that even though you have a sort of complete feeling of inadequacy, all the time, because the jobs are never done. It's maybe a bit different when you're working somewhere, it's basically like you've done this task, then you can go on holiday without a worry, or depends on the work but, like I never have that so then you just have to be like whatever. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

When working in a traditional working environment or as a freelancer, there are often projects that have a start and a finish. However, in the entrepreneurial work, time is not seen as having an end. B described the continuity of work:

But now of course this design company takes up all the time and there the challenge is that in a way you are never doing enough and you can always think am I doing the right things and in the right order and... somehow... like the prioritising and use of time in general. You always have a new idea that you could start doing and like marketing or a collaboration partner or, a new market or something, that is challenging. You never think at the end of the day that phew now everything is done, now I can go home cause you always have things at the back of your head that you could do next. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

B talked about how in her first company, what caused stress was the uncertainty of future projects, whereas in the second company stress was caused by these challenges with prioritising and managing herself.

A freelance entrepreneur's time has to be thought of as flexible because they cannot fully plan what will happen the following month or who will offer them the next project. When the company is based around an entrepreneur's own product, work is not project-based and does not follow a linear order. A project done for an outside actor always has an ending point and after it is finished it becomes a part of the past that shapes the individual's identity

and habitus. However, when the company is based around putting forward a single product or service that revenue needs to be gained with, the work is never finished. The situation changes constantly and with it part of the identity is constantly negotiated and tested. Both B and A mentioned they had ideas but no time to put them into action. Therefore, the problems were never solved, but instead always stayed open.

The entrepreneur has to focus on several different things at the same time and live in different moments of time. B's product was seasonal, so it could not be sold in the present moment, but instead in advance before its season started. This was also why money had to be invested several months before any possible results could be seen. Informant A also talked about the division of time:

...somehow the time just easily goes into reacting, like you constantly receive messages and then you do this written thing and you design today's lessons but then the things on the long term like I should be thinking about Christmas sales and I should be thinking about the beginning of January and do next year's lesson schedules already. But I haven't had time to do any of that because somehow, I feel like all that time is spent on little things. Like now I'm marketing next weekend's course and next week I'll be marketing the following week's course so you kinda should somehow... prioritise more... (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

Informant A discussed how she had made “great plans” for the future during the incubation process but the reality of being an entrepreneur was different from all the plans made because “you don't have the time”. For B planning in advance was actually also time-consuming, because preparing for everything meant nothing would get done. This was a matter of not knowing how to prioritise and “constantly making mistakes” that could only be noticed after they had already been made.

I argue that time is one of the most important resources for my informants. Bourdieu (1986) talks about economic capital allowing a person to have time to acquire cultural capital, but for my informants having more time and knowing how to manage and balance their time would enable them to not only acquire more cultural capital but to use the cultural capital they already possessed that could have been exchanged into economic capital. Both A and B were focused on the actions that they felt they had to do from an economic perspective. I argue, that the focus should be shifted from time thought of as something that is lost into time thought of as an investment. To do this, the entrepreneurs need sustainable support, skills and

connections that enable them to not only focus on the now and the running of business operations, but also allow them to invest time in the future by using their existing cultural capital – by being creatives.

In this discussion of lifestyle and time, informant C's views have been missing. Compared to informant A, C was so far in the entrepreneurial process, that his lifestyle and identity were no longer a matter of negotiation. His issues were not caused by a tension between the creative and entrepreneurial work nor balancing his time. He had already made the right connections that had enabled him to gather a team where each member possessed different forms of capital. For C, it was self-evident that putting in economic capital and investing time was something a company had to do if they wanted to gain cultural capital in return: "You can find out a lot about companies, quite easily. And then if you feel you need that personal connection it's of course you just have to pay the cost of a flight and hotel and go and visit them." While B spent most of her time searching for outside actors who could provide her the know-how she was missing, C simply walked into a supermarket. C explained:

Like this company I was talking to this morning in Holland, I found them by looking on the bottom of a pack that I found in the supermarket and they had their name on the bottom. So then I looked up their website and contacted them. So it's quite easy to do, you just have to kind of ... take the trouble to kind of look into things, and it's quite easy to find. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

How C perceived the distances to not only other countries but to the business world in general was very different from A and B, and something I will explore more in chapter seven.

5.5 The Destination

Big or small things can happen that will make this fail and that is more than certain, so [there's] the constant uncertainty but at the same time the belief that this can work out. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

The creative entrepreneurs have to have a strong belief in themselves and in the fact that what they do will possibly become successful in the future, all the while living in uncertainty, feeling inadequate and making mistakes. Informant A stated: "I have a strong intuition that this is the right thing and it'll get going and you just have to work, but still, this starting phase

is just economically and just like, hard", and added: "I know I'd never want to retire from this job." A explained that in the future she would want to be able to do less teaching, so she could focus on running the company. As mentioned, B in contrast saw the aim with her second company to be able to one day sell it for a high price, to stop doing the operational tasks and instead focus on the design work. A and B wanted to first and foremost succeed as entrepreneurs, because becoming one had been a conscious choice, and was also the only way their companies could survive in the future. Their companies were what they had created themselves and entrepreneurship was now the lifestyle they were committed to. However, they both saw the aim as keeping the creative and entrepreneurial work separate.

This separation was already a reality for informant C. He was solely focused on the entrepreneurial work and only mentioned his background with graphic design once. C defined what he was doing and what the aim was in the following way:

At the end of the day in my case I'm developing an international business... which, has to have, you know a very strong integration with what's going on in Finland. So when we, when we grow, of course, point of me, you know, the work we do in Tekes [the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation] for example is that ... as we grow we'll employ people and create opportunities here in Finland for people, for wealth here in Finland. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

For C, the aim was not as personal as it was for A and B, but instead it was to grow and create opportunities on a national level – perfectly fitting the image of an entrepreneur influenced by Schumpeter. In contrast, for A and B, combining the two worlds of creativity and entrepreneurship was part of what caused their problems because of the feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty that arose when their existing skills and know-how were portrayed against the things they did not know how to do. They were not born entrepreneurs but instead still in the constant process of learning. B stated the following: "...when my hard drive starts to be so full that I don't want to learn new things anymore then that's when I'll be at the end of this road." What is important, is that these entrepreneurs had a high level of motivation for wanting to learn. What was missing after the incubation process, was a teacher.

6. Perceptions of the Incubator

Maybe what the incubator could be building, not that you in general tell about something but that someone sits down and says right, now we'll do the IPR strategy. And then you write it. And maybe you don't have time right then but that someone interviews you, teaches you and tells about it and then is involved in doing it so that it actually gets finished. That would be amazing.

(Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

The incubator was not only funded by an institute for higher education, but final decisions of its actions were also decided by people representing this institution. For this reason, it was clear that the national educational goals and the creation of an entrepreneurial culture were part of its aim. The incubator occasionally took part in creating course projects for the students of the institution and offered their services free of charge to teams where at least one member was a student. However, most teams or individuals were people who had no connection to the institution and as a result, the creative entrepreneurs could either be people for whom the incubator represented one of their first contacts to the business world or alternatively individuals who had already had years of experience in business and entrepreneurship. On their website, the incubator is described as a place to get personal support and concrete help from, when you need them and for as long as you want them. The support and help could either be for starting the operations, for growing or for internationalising and this goal for internationalisation was what the companies should have in common. Success as an entrepreneur, therefore meant international success; economic growth, revenue and new markets. It was advertised that the incubation programme included “set goals, a personal trainer, continuing support, help in applying for funding, gained confidence and the best contacts”.

Richard Florida (2012) defines the ‘creative class’ as “people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology, and new creative content” (p. 8). As mentioned, the incubator took in companies from just as wide a variety of fields but what they shared was dealing with intellectual property rights. Therefore, creativity was not defined only as artistic or cultural creativity, despite many entrepreneurs coming from these backgrounds. It was rather about whether the creative business idea would lead to being

scalable, meaning it could grow with minimal costs and possibly become licensed. For this reason, it seemed that this was a business service with expertise in a specified industry, and that is what set them apart from other business advisers. When I talk about “them” I refer to my observations of working alongside E, who in and out of her small office was the sole representation of this clearly bigger group of decision-makers. As an observer, it was sometimes hard to distinguish what were E’s own ideas and what were ideas expected from her by this unknown group of people standing above and beside her. She would sometimes talk about her visions for the future and there was friction between how she, through her experience, thought things should be like and what the others thought money should be spent on. For this reason, I do not aim to criticise E, but rather bring out her position as the representative of the incubator and as a key person in the entrepreneurs’ lives. For these entrepreneurs, “the incubator” meant solely E.

In this chapter, I aim to investigate how my informants perceived E’s role, what they gained from the incubator and what was missing. I also aim to explore how E and the incubator’s position affected the help the incubator offered and whether the incubator offered any form of community or space for the entrepreneurs. Finally, I question whether the current set notions of what an incubator is and how it should work are the best ones to not only create but also sustain entrepreneurship. Throughout this chapter, I will talk about the previously presented ideas of Bourdieu’s fields and capital and implement them in my analysis.

6.1 The Role of E

...it's obviously kinda quite a big thing to say, a fact probably E in the past year, if I was sort of ranking the kind of people that have made the biggest difference, she'd probably come, you know she has really really stepped in at key times and helped me, in really really important ways with those, personal connections. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

E could be identified as an important person in the entrepreneurs’ business networks. What I mean by this, is that she was the one who stood in between the entrepreneurs and public agencies. She was what I would call a key connector between the fields of creative and business and was widely known by actors on both of these fields on a local and sometimes even national level. Informant C explained that he had heard about the incubator through

someone he knew. This person had used the services of the incubator, but C did not mention them talking about the quality of a specific service, but instead went on to say that “the owner of that company was telling me about E”. This emphasised that the incubator was personified to E. One of the common factors with all the informants was that whenever they talked about the positive things they had gained from the incubator, they specifically mentioned E and her role in their lives as an entrepreneur. However, when the talk turned into anything that could be perceived as negative, they were talking about “the incubator”. The newest entrepreneur, Informant A seemed especially hesitant to talk about her time in the incubator in a negative manner. She described the only coaching session she had had the opportunity to choose as part of the programme:

Somehow I maybe would have wanted for them to like read my marketing plan beforehand like actually through it and, I think it was a bit sort of general and pointless. Of course that also depends on the fact that I have quite a lot of knowledge on marketing myself, so it's not really useful for me to be told to focus on Facebook advertising or so on, because, or in a way... Of course time is limited but maybe if they had got to know more what I had already planned, and not just repeated the same things that I sort of had already thought about. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

A said that since this was the one opportunity she had for personal business coaching, the benefits of it were lost but continued hesitantly with: “Well... Well it wasn't the incubator's fault in any way. But maybe they just didn't, it was sort of general and...” Even though she did not get the kind of the help she would have wanted, there seemed to be a lot of difficulties in talking about this.

While my perceived position as being part of the incubator might have affected A's careful choice of words, the following quote also clarified the reason behind this: “I was really satisfied in a way, like I wouldn't even have the whole company without the incubator but...” She considered the incubator the whole reason for having a company and from A's talk it could be identified that in her solitary role it was E who in A's mind was to thank for for her entire position as an entrepreneur. Even for an advanced entrepreneur like informant C, E played an important role. He said:

Actually my experience of the incubator has been purely E, who I've been working with, and she has actually been incredibly helpful, and gone out of her way to kind of help, in key moments in our development. Because one thing I didn't have was I,

what E gave was these kind of connections in Finland with all of these different organisations. ... And, I think without her help we would not have got the, the startup company off the ground, easily, to be honest... Cause she's been great cause, you know it's all very well having lots of great ideas and lots of great connections overseas but, if you can't kind of integrate yourself effectively here in Finland then it, you know it doesn't work. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

As an entrepreneur it is essential to gain the right kind of social capital in a specific country, because each country is its own social space (see Earle, 1999, pp. 177-182; Bourdieu, 1998). Without it, success in the specific country's market is harder and significantly slower. In the Finnish market this was where E came in. Informant C went on to emphasise E's role:

I needed more help with terms of how we, make the right connections here in Finland. So she would introduce me for example to, the ELY-keskus [Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment], she made the appointment, so maybe if I would have tried to make contact, it would have been more difficult. ... she was my middle person, here, and that made it work.

(Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The value of E and her position in different networks was in fact acknowledged even after the services had not been used in a while. Informant B talked about how after the incubation programme help would still be needed: "Something not so intense when you need it but then the thing is that down the line we've probably had a lot of things that E and her networks could have helped with."

For C, starting the company in Finland would have been more difficult without E, because he did not have knowledge of the local and national business actors and public agencies, and E helped him to integrate in the Finnish business world. For a Finnish entrepreneur without a lot of previous business know-how, starting the business in Finland can be just as hard. The role E played for them was of the person deep inside of the business field who knew the business culture as well as the national one and had the right connections required inside the field. E had *tacit knowledge* that could be described as embodied know-how, skills and hunches (Polanyi, 2009). It is not only about knowing the official information available to everyone but knowing how the field works and what goes on behind the scenes even before something actually happens. This is knowledge only an insider in the field can have. C said:

It takes a long time, from just reading a website you only kind of get the first layer of information, I think you need to have somebody who has that local knowledge and like E's been working with Tekes and Finnvera [state-owned financing company] and, ELY-keskus and, for so many years that, she straight away knows or if she doesn't, she'll have a meeting with them on your behalf and ask that.

(Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

What emphasised the tacit nature of her knowledge was the fact that E was not fully aware of her position in the entrepreneurs' eyes. She was an expert in solving the problems the entrepreneurs might face and in case she did not know something she still knew how to get to a solution. (See Polanyi, 2009.) She was also the professional described by Giddens (1991) whose presence brought a sense of security and empowerment and whose advice the entrepreneurs had a high level of trust in.

E was described as someone who gave constructive criticism, helped in making decisions about the company and worked as the voice of reason; the one who did not simply cheer them on but also kept their expectations realistic. Informant A compared E's role to others around her:

I can explain some things to my good friends or my boyfriend but then they usually are just like 'well, hopefully everything will work out and good luck' so they don't really delve into it in a realistic way. I think in the beginning it's really good that E criticises some things and isn't just 'good, good, nice, nice and good luck' cause that doesn't give me anything. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

In this sense, her role can also be seen as a mentor. This was in fact one of the most valued things about the incubation process. Because a lot of trust was put on E, she had had an active role in shaping the decisions the entrepreneurs would make. One of the reasons for valuing the mentoring role was that it was seen as efficient because of the personal connection the entrepreneurs had developed with E. This meant that E's advice was company and entrepreneur specific and the entrepreneur could directly ask her the question of what to do next. This was also important for someone like C, for whom E represented a personal business-related relationship outside of his company. As C explained:

Like in my case I have business partners but most of the time I'm working on my own, it's nice to have someone to go and meet with and, you know, to be able to run your ideas by and you know what I mean to get some advice from. But they know

what you are doing. And it might be that they have 50 different people that they do the same thing for but in that hour you can get quite a lot out of it. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

The fact that the outside person knows what the aim of the company is, was also mentioned by informants A and B, and even D in the conference.

E shared her business knowledge and experience of different funding actors with the entrepreneurs, which makes it clear that the mentoring role does not necessarily have to be taken by someone from the same specific field, like it often is expected to be. Locations in different fields represent individual sets of capital that are socially recognised in the specific field (Earle, 1999, p. 179; Bourdieu, 1998). Therefore, the location in another field can actually help, because a mentor's position in a different field from the entrepreneur can open access to capital the entrepreneur would not otherwise have. C also mentioned that he would value this kind of business mentoring he now received from E "very highly" if it was offered in other countries as well. C said:

I think it's having the kind of E type model and, people with that same knowledge and expertise who could make the right connections for you there and, help you mentor you in that market, in that sort of business mentoring is really important, from my point of view... (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

C mentioned that the motivation for helping has to be something else than simply money. When help comes from an external consultancy service, the motives of the service provider are questioned. The help received from external consultants often does not match the value of the economical capital invested in it. The service that E offered at the incubator was valued higher because of her personal contribution; it was efficient, trustworthy and led to a wider network in the field of business. E was the one with the right kind of social and cultural capital whose competence was recognised (see Bourdieu, 1986). She was highly valued and respected and as such it can be said that she possessed plenty of symbolic capital (see Bourdieu, 1977). This made her position very powerful. By giving opinions and advice she not only shaped the entrepreneurs' choices, but also the local creative and business fields.

6.2 The Missing Community

All the people who are in the incubator at the same time, I didn't really get to know them and didn't really even see many of them. So there isn't really a lot of peer

support available that maybe, could have been. ... And it doesn't need to be about someone holding your hand getting to know people but maybe if something regular had been organised, I don't know. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

While E's connections were valued, these were connections to business actors in public agencies and funding networks. Connections to other entrepreneurs and people considered as peers were missing. As a result, there was no knowledge on other entrepreneurs' experiences nor any support shared by people in the same position. David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis (1986) define a sense of community as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p.9). The entrepreneurs were separate individuals who did not feel any sense of community. E was the connector all these entrepreneurs had in common but her position as such was not used.

A wish to meet people in the same situation was in fact the number one wish for informant A who was in the beginning of her entrepreneurial journey. She expressed that "it would be good to know from those other people that this is normal" but these stories of what is "normal" or how others have dealt with issues that have arisen were not shared. McMillan and Chavis (1986) talk about a "sense of belonging and identification" which leads to the individual feeling accepted by their community (p.10). A nascent entrepreneur like informant A had no previous experience as an entrepreneur to reflect upon nor did she know other entrepreneurs which lead to her questioning her own choices but also affected her confidence as an entrepreneur. However, even someone with years of experience, like informant C, alluded to the fact that he had never met other entrepreneurs like him who were funded by Tekes nor was there any space for the incubator companies to meet. C contemplated on this as follows:

I was thinking that recently about Tekes actually whether, you know I don't know whether in the longer term whether it would be good to have, when I visit them at their offices in Helsinki it looks very impressive office. I was thinking when I left there recently that, it would be good if there was a place where you could take some desk there and, meet other people from other, cause I've never met anybody, apart from through my existing contacts I've never, met other Tekes, you know people who have been funded by Tekes. So, you know like where there's more oppor... you

know, sort of next steps, where you could meet people within the same office, I think that would be quite good. And I mean, the incubator, the incubator companies at the moment they're all doing their own thing you know there's no sort of central office. That would be interesting if there was... (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

In the business complex where the incubator was located it could be seen that technology companies were brought together more with specific co-working spaces which provided the opportunity for it to lead to the creation of new ventures and business opportunities as well as building a community. While I cannot claim that they had a community, it should not be diminished that they had an opportunity to build one and create a sense of belonging to something bigger (see McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.10). It seems that creative industries should rely on a 'do-it-yourself' mentality whereas technology industries get more help and encouragement from outside operators. All the other business advice providers surrounding the incubator's office could be seen through glass walls sitting in similar offices to each other while the creative incubator displayed splashes of colour and local design products. It was set apart from its surrounding actors in a very visual way which also emphasised its recognised difference among the others. However, this was simply a small office and there was no separated space for the specific group of people to meet.

Informant B mentioned that the sharing of inside knowledge could be turned into operations quicker than outsiders' suggestions on what should be done. After suggestions from outsiders on what she and her colleague should do, the question of who they will actually turn to for help in doing these tasks always rises and this is where knowing people and having opportunities or a space to meet people with different skills would become important. Having a shared space could also bring with it a sense of community, trust and belonging that could be turned into the sharing of stories, insider information and experiences. However, it does not have to start from a physical location of an actual office where they all sit every day. Henri Lefebvre (1991; see also Merrifield, 2000) talks about a *representational space*; a space that is experienced, alive and shaped by the history of individuals and a group. It is formed by symbols and images. In different interactions *spatial practices* arise formed by perceptions of individuals' everyday worlds. Spaces are always produced before they can be reproduced and for this reason to become a community the incubator space should be felt by the entrepreneurs as a common connection they all share through the similar narratives of being entrepreneurs.

This could be thought of in a similar way to an apartment block with separate houses and homes representing different companies that all share the same inner yard that represents an incubator-like space. Each one has their individual motivations but they all share the same motivation of for example keeping the yard safe and clean and may occasionally gather together with shared activities. Only after this felt sense of community, they can start to reproduce the space and activities but also their relationships further. The physical location can be a symbol of the community, but the group of people is what makes the space a place. To bring the individual entrepreneurs together, a facilitator such as E is needed. Informants also mentioned an existing Facebook group which can be thought of as virtual space for the community. However, this space was not used, because there was no connection to it. It was a conceptualised space constructed without them by someone before E, which emphasised the lack of a sense of community. (See Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 2000.) A space and a community cannot be created *for* the entrepreneurs but instead have to be developed *with* them over time. This shared power can create feelings of ownership, satisfaction and cohesion among the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 12).

6.3 Building a Better Incubator

When you are already strongly going [international] then who will be by your side...
(Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

All my informants brought up that going back to the incubator might be a useful investment for them and yet they had not returned. Informant A even stated that "maybe it would even be more useful for me now". This suggested that something in the service was missing that kept them from returning and the incubator did not fully respond to their clients' needs. To some issues I brought up to E, she responded that it was not the incubator's job to help solve them. Based on Aernoudt's (2004) definition of what an incubator is meant for, it can be said that indeed a lot of things are not the incubator's job. However, informant B questioned, who an entrepreneur that has passed the starting phase and is trying to become international could turn to for advice. Since the incubator sets itself apart from other business advice providers, the entrepreneurs may find it hard to seek further help from these "non-creative" places. However, this part of the process is what help would most be needed for. Therefore, I contest what the incubator's job should actually be in the future. It is thought that an entrepreneur

creating a product should not push the product to the market but instead respond to a need from potential customers. The same should be applied to any business advice giving service aiming to help their clients.

As mentioned before, informant A felt she had made the wrong choice by choosing a marketing sparring session and by doing this she had wasted this only opportunity of personal coaching on the wrong thing. However, it seemed that the incubator did not have enough knowledge of her background and know-how to advise her in that choice. In this instance, A also mentioned that “of course time is limited” but what is the value of time for the incubator? It seems that time efficiency is valued at the cost of long term benefits. When B talked about people from outside of their company giving advice to her and her colleague, she described how sometimes the pieces of advice given to them were completely opposite from one another. What had worked for someone else was not necessarily the best option for their specific situation and they could "never compare it".

One entrepreneur's process can never be fully compared to another's because each process is different, and each entrepreneur is situated at different stages of the process. Informant A had no idea in the beginning of her entrepreneurial journey about things such as insurances or tax payments. These were things she referred to as “dry”, “boring” and “basic” that nonetheless, were the ones that caused her the most problems and insecurities, because making a mistake in them could lead to bigger consequences. However, she did not receive any help in dealing with them. These problems were things that she could have found solutions to online, but she had not even realised some of them existed.

For someone with a bit more business experience like informant B, help would have been needed for other things, but the issue of not getting the right help was still the same. She described how help often took the form of informational lectures about a certain topic, but the tools for implementing what was conveyed into a specific context were missing. B said:

Like at the incubator a good example is that we had such good discussions with an IPR expert and they told us about that world in general that you need this and that and showed programmes and were on some international sites and through this and this and this and this and this link so I didn't even know where they found the stuff anymore. So it was good for the overall picture but when that meeting was over we just had a long list of things that we know that actually we know nothing about, and then, that's kinda it. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

In a similar way, informant A said that plans made in the incubator were good for getting funding but sticking to them and knowing what to actually do was more complicated because the reality was different from all the plans made. Even after the incubation process E stayed in the entrepreneurs' networks, but it seemed that her help was not often used. This was possibly due to the fact that the entrepreneurs were not reminded of it, but also because her being the only employee of the incubator and at times also the only connection to the business world the entrepreneurs had, meant E was highly overworked. During my fieldwork E was also absent for five weeks for personal reasons which led to a stop in most of the services and contact, making it clear that the help received was not sustainable and support was not continuing. When the person with the keys of knowledge was not available, all the doors stayed locked.

When B explained that help was broad and general, she in one instance changed her voice and spoke in a childish manner which emphasised the way she perceived the help that had been offered to her. What she would have needed was actual operational help aimed for their specific company. Informant D, who I followed during the conference in business advice clinics also mentioned that the 15 minutes spent there on discussing her company on a precise level were more useful than the long general informational events she had attended in the incubator. Informant C mentioned that he had never understood what "being creative" even meant or who the incubator was actually for. It brought out the fact that the incubator had failed to communicate what the companies had in common and who had used their services. This was a faceless group of people for its alumni entrepreneurs who rarely returned, and for the incubator it seemed to be a cohesive group whose members could be offered the same service while still keeping these actors separate.

E's role as a mentor but also as someone with cultural and social capital in both the creative and the business field, is what I would call an interpreter in between two worlds. However, at the time of my fieldwork she was situated more on the business side which made it hard for her to see the difficulties that some creative entrepreneurs could face. She did not seem to understand why they would not want to grow their sales or why they sometimes struggled in doing what they were told they should do. The incubator in general was situated too much on this business side where there was not enough knowledge of the entrepreneurs' backgrounds, their gained social and cultural capital or what their goals and motivations for becoming an entrepreneur were which lead to the advice given seen as fruitless. It was interesting that the aim for the companies had to be in becoming international and yet there

seemed to be very little help on any level on how one could do this in practice. On a governmental level, international success is a main objective as well, but this seems to be something everyone is expected to do on their own. The entrepreneur should succeed autonomously and independently, but in the case of succeeding their company can often be talked about as a Finnish success story. In the following chapter, I will delve deeper into these perceived distances between the creative and business worlds, as well as into perceptions on internationalisation.

7. Perceived Distances

Now if I look back, now two years of this have passed, that what sort of a person I was two years ago, and what I am now, and I haven't changed as a person but I mean the amount of learning I've had to do. Like I remember thinking once when someone said that 'oh well you know now you do something and somewhere in the international markets' and I was like me like no way and that I could never walk in front of an investor and ask for financing, like no way. Well now I've done it. And now I have those similar ideas about the future as well. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

Without any previous business knowledge or social contacts in the field of business, a creative entrepreneur must start their journey of learning from the very beginning. By becoming an entrepreneur, the creative must become familiar with the business culture, which at first is perceived as something distant and intangible. Familiar things, skills and existing knowledge are constantly challenged which brings a continuing feeling of insecurity and inadequacy. Informant B said the following: "In a way it could be that we have these same issues [in a year], but they are just in a different market. And that is how it continues." Doing business in another country makes the perceived distance seem even greater, since for example norms and laws are unknown and the creative may not have any previous connections abroad. Therefore, some problems are never fully solved, but are instead transferred to a different milieu. When the entrepreneurs do not have the skills for solving problems by themselves, or a network of people to ask advice from, paying for someone else's knowledge often seems like the easiest way to tackle the problems and move forward.

The first steps are often taken in an incubation programme where money gained from funding is exchanged into business know-how and this exchange between economic and cultural capital continues through the process in different ways.

7.1 Distances to the Business Culture

I previously discussed how informant A felt pressure from having all the responsibility to herself. However, informant C, in his role as a consultant, had a different viewpoint:

...a lot of the consulting work I do, you know could easily be done by the client themselves, a lot of the, the leg work that you do. But they just want to go to one person and give them a task and someone else takes responsibility for making it happen. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

C could identify a change in how the business world used to work with “middle people” like him, but how nowadays it was easy to find potential partners and information about them. He said: “it's more of a perception thing in people's heads that they have to work with people they know normally. And that they're safer to do that.” However, in the same way, being able to handle the pressure of the responsibilities and not seeing issues in contacting previously unknown people is also a perception thing.

Informant B described that her colleague had worked in the Nordic countries but in such different industries that they had not been able to use her existing contacts. She said that in terms of any market they had “started from nothing” and this included Finland. In the Finnish context, B explained having some networks locally, but these networks had not helped in many of their issues. She went on to say: “...like I know people but we don't have any instance where we would sit down and talk.” Networking is something an entrepreneur should constantly do, but no actual tools are given for how to do it. Networking events are advertised as opportunities to meet new people, but the potential of existing networks is often not seen unless their actors are from a directly related field of the company. Mapping these networks could reveal potentially helpful connectors – especially to other countries – that stay hidden at first glance. Therefore, it is not only a matter of a lack of social capital, but also about not having the volume of capital with the existing contacts (see Bourdieu, 2010).

Networking is a skill taken for granted and something everyone is expected to be good at. However, when a stranger you have just met hands you a business card, what do you do with it? In the office of the incubator stacks of different business cards were piled on the table. In my meetings with other people, I was always handed a business card, and in the

conference I attended, people who I had hardly talked with always ended the conversation with this gesture. People were doing the act of networking but most of these cards were in no way related to plans we had discussed which to me made them seem somewhat meaningless. However, as a nascent entrepreneur in a workshop eagerly handed out her freshly printed business cards, while her peers discussed the cards' unusual design, it became clear that this was an important symbol of the entrepreneur's role and of her becoming part of the business culture. Perhaps these pieces of paper did not lead to an increased volume of social capital, but they were an important act adopted from the business world and pieces of objectified cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1986).

In a similar way, getting governmental funding for a company in Finland is not just important for the entrepreneurs in the sense of getting money, but also in a symbolic sense. It is institutionalised cultural capital (see Bourdieu, 1986) the creative gains from the business field. For informant A, funding was what finally made her an entrepreneur and it was also what informant C had used in trying to validate his role and emphasise his reliability to a Finnish manufacturer. C was further in the entrepreneurial process and inside the field of business, but the new market meant having to not only gain new and specific cultural and social capital, but also having the need to prove that he was not an outsider. Funding was one way to do this. In the incubator, E emphasised that the entrepreneurs should aim for financial independency achieved quickly. However, in addition to the economic difficulties, not having funding can also mean having to take a great mental leap towards the business culture or integrating to a new country. Therefore, it is not only how the entrepreneurs perceive others but also how others perceive them.

Informant B described that they had to "resonate" with the potential partner and the partner would have to "understand" them, but they often did not know how to find these people. She explained: "We can't trust that if Finpro [Finnish service for internationalisation of businesses] tells us five companies, it can be, you have to start with the idea that maybe none of them is really suited for us." When the entrepreneur is not physically in a specific market, their own knowledge of it is limited. B and her colleague did not have the cultural capital nor the social capital to work in the new market which meant that in B's words they paid for a "consultant who knows the market and can open us doors". The constant feeling of risk in the entrepreneur's life means they turn to expert advice to handle the lack of cultural capital and manage the feelings of inadequacy caused by the unknown business culture. However, B continued that, "we had no idea whether it [consultant paid in the UK] would be

useful or not. And well, we still don't." The physical distance meant they had to trust the connectors that could open the doors for them. (See Giddens, 1991.)

Because they did not have the knowledge themselves, they had to exchange economic capital into someone else's social and cultural capital and by doing so, they lost their own power of the situation. As mentioned, an outside consultant's motivation is perceived as being the acquiring of economic capital, but the knowledge given in exchange does not always match what the entrepreneur needs. Informant C spoke about this both as an entrepreneur and a consultant. C said:

I don't know there could be other support groups somehow or other ways of supporting businesses than just these Finnish consulting companies. They're charging, I mean I've come across one where, they were charging, what I thought was ridiculous amounts of money per hour, to help people internationalise themselves ... cause I think there's a, maybe there's an insecurity on behalf of Finnish companies where they feel that, they don't quite understand the landscape of what they're going into, so then they're paying a lot of money to a consultant, and, I'm not sure whether that's the right, what place to spend that money, especially if you're developing a new product. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

For informant B, paying these consultants was problematic, but it seemed like the only solution for gaining the information she and her colleague were missing. However, informant C had already been in the business world for such a long time that he had developed a 'gut feeling' of knowing who to trust. He said:

...you get a good feeling for companies quite quickly when you talk to them. Like the guy I was talking to today I have a very good feeling of them as a potential supplier. And you can make that judgement from experience whether they're in, you know Finland or Germany or the US or wherever they are, you know people are, human beings are the same in the end so... (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

I argue that this feeling is related to knowledge the entrepreneurs gain while doing business and as they become more immersed in the business world. Therefore, it is about confidence and know-how gained from working with different people in the business world and the embodied ability to trust yourself and your business decisions because of previous experience. In order to grow the amount of cultural capital, time and already gained

knowledge, instead of money, could be exchanged into someone else's knowledge.

7.2 Distances to Other Countries

In a way if I now think that you'd have to create an international business when not that many others have done it either. Even Marimekko [long-standing Finnish design company] is not, based on the numbers not yet an international business and they have existed and have tried and they've had time and resources. And then compared to what comes out of Sweden all the time, like these international brands, so when I've at times been asked 'who would you like to have in your team?' I'm like I don't know. Has anyone from Finland done it, that they would have taken two or three international brands to the world? (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

How the entrepreneurs perceived internationalisation, other countries and new markets, was connected to their backgrounds, their possessed cultural and social capitals, their perceptions of the business culture and their entrepreneurial identity. Informant C identified himself as international because of his background: "I'm in any way very international in terms of living in a different country as an outsider, so, you know it's quite easy to think about, your work and business in a very international sense as well." However, for informant B, who said she did not have any background or connections in other countries, the perceived distance was much greater. B explained that she and her colleague had to constantly remind themselves that nine out of ten "startups" fail and she brought out that she did not know any other Finnish design company that had succeeded on an international level. There were no success stories from the creative industries or commercially successful individuals that she would have considered as the ideal team members. The lack of stories can make the distance between Finland and other countries seem longer because of the awareness of the leaps that would have to be taken to succeed in these new markets.

Being able to gain revenue from markets other than Finland is an indicator for how success is perceived. Although B mentioned that they would need more sales in Finland, she also stated the following:

We haven't done really any sales operations in Finland or anything else. There was a big newspaper article about us in the local paper last spring and then all these

grannies started calling like 'where can you get it' ... We could have done that the whole summer and there could be a lot of places that sell the product but we haven't worked towards it because we've had to think about which one to work towards, Finland or the UK. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

These local elderly women were not the buyers that would make them successful because success meant succeeding in larger scale in the UK market. B explained this further:

...if we can make it in the UK then Finland will follow. Then it's easier to go to a Finnish economy or finance paper and say that in the UK this is what we've got so who in Finland wants it so then our phones would start ringing and not so we're trying to get to some buyer. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

In Finland, B and her colleague had some social connections and they knew the culture. In addition, their operations were based in Finland where they also had potential buyers. However, they were willing to take bigger risks by aiming for the UK market, not only because of higher potential revenue but also because of the recognition that would follow if they succeeded. The Finnish market was in this sense seen as small and valued lower than any other market. Since internationalisation was also the aim set by the incubator, this value applied to it and E as well.

As mentioned, each country is its own social space and therefore, for a company aiming to be internationally successful it is not enough to have social capital in the home market (see Earle, 1999, pp. 177-182; Bourdieu, 1998). The individual must situate themselves in multiple social and geographical contexts at the same time. It is also important to understand, that gaining the know-how in one market does not mean that it could be directly transferred to another. Informant C mentioned that if he expanded to Sweden, it would be laws and the "whole government side" that would be the most important things to know, because these are things that can be very different depending on the country. Going to another country did not mean that C would already know everything, complicated matters such as new laws simply did not cause him as much anxiety as to someone starting their process – like informant A in her home country of Finland. Therefore, what can be gained are skills and tools that give the individual confidence and make the discussed perceived distance to the business culture shorter. This can make acquiring information in a new market quicker and easier. Informant C exemplified:

...the other day, you know even in Finland which in some ways is an unfamiliar country to me in some ways, I found that, there was someone that hadn't paid a bill, and it took me about five minutes to figure out how you would make some kind of financial claim against them ... and I'm sure it'd be the same case if you ordered something from, from Germany and a client hadn't supplied it, I'm sure it would be very easy... (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Informant C's perceptions and gained know-how allowed him to solve issues he faced quickly, and he did not see one Western country being more difficult than another.

However, even C had faced challenges in Finland – not because of his perceptions, but because of how others perceived him. He referred to himself as being an outsider in a different country, and gave an example of the perceptions he had encountered:

Actually, like for example if you go to Holland people speak English, always in Holland and sometimes they don't here or they have a more, kind of local outlook on things here. Like for example I went to see this big Finnish food manufacturer recently and they didn't take me very seriously because I wasn't Finnish probably and I was this Englishman visiting them. And I think maybe they, for that reason they thought well hang on you know if he's from outside Finland somehow they took me less seriously than if I'd been Finnish, for some reason. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

Informant B talked about this reversed perception as well, but for her and her colleague it was about being Finns in England. She described how having an English consultant as their spokesperson at a fair in the UK had helped in how potential collaborators perceived them:

The UK especially is a pretty traditional market. Like now you could notice when my colleague was at a fair with our consultant that immediately they were like ooh from the UK, someone who handles things. So it's easier to be in touch with your fellow countryman instead of going into business with a small Finnish company when some people don't even know where Finland is. (Informant B, personal communication, September 26, 2017)

A consultant, who potential collaborators at the fair shared the same nationality with, had made them trust B and her colleague's company more and shortened the perceived distance these outsiders had towards Finland.

All the informants made comparisons between Finland and other countries, and in most of them, other countries were perceived more positively than Finland. Informant A talked about what can be considered a Finnish mentality:

In Finland I somehow feel that there's still a... there's such a fear of failure with many people or like a different culture than somewhere like America where people just set up more businesses and fail and then they try again. (Informant A, personal communication, October 24, 2017)

Informant C also singled out and mentioned these Finnish perceptions:

I mean and that's kind of human nature, you know people always kind of gravitate towards, you know doing things in a set way and Finland is very much like that as a society. You know you like, things to be in a certain way and that's what makes one of the great things about this, you know about Finland but, it does... it creates challenges for Finns I think, as well, in certain circumstances. (Informant C, personal communication, October 25, 2017)

These quotes bring out how entrepreneurs and others in Finland gaze towards other countries for operating models and how Finland is perceived and described as distant and remote. Yet, it is the neighbouring country Sweden that most often provides the comparative for Finnish entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

These comparisons between Swedish and Finnish companies came up in conversations with E but they are also made in the Finnish media and in general talk. This talk usually centres around the Swedish companies' ability to brand themselves and become internationally successful and the Finnish companies' inability to do the same. Because of the lack of stories shared about Finnish creative companies, succeeding internationally would also mean rising to the level of the stories told about Swedish companies. Swedish creative entrepreneurs' networking skills, and the ability to productise their creativity are portrayed in Finnish media as something to look up to and even envy (e.g. Vedenpää, 2014). Sweden is often also the first place to expand to for Finnish companies, because even though it is close geographically, and in many ways mentally, it is still seen as a step towards the international markets. It is the one country Finland must beat in sports, and yet the one whose recipes for success are talked about with admiration. Despite the closeness, Finland is not Sweden. I therefore question, if these comparisons are actually doing more harm than good. Should one size fit all? I argue, that what works in one country – or even one incubator – cannot be

directly transferred to another, because as I have shown, even entrepreneurs in the same city have differences.

8. Conclusions and Applicability

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate the process of becoming an entrepreneur, the effects of that process and how my informants have perceived the role and support of the incubator. Based on the existing literature, being an entrepreneur is something that happens when someone makes creative innovations, takes economic risks and aims to grow and gain revenue. In the incubator as well as on a national level, an entrepreneur is also expected to do these actions. In addition, the entrepreneur should possess certain characteristics, behaviour and skills and aspire to be independent and autonomous. Based on my research, an individual is not only an entrepreneur when they are doing entrepreneurial activities. Being a creative entrepreneur is not simply a profession but instead a new overarching lifestyle the individual adopts over time.

Adopting the entrepreneurial lifestyle means adjusting previously embodied knowledge to outside expectations and handling new tensions that can arise when other aspects of life clash with the entrepreneurial work. The process of becoming an entrepreneur is affected by the background and motivations of an individual. The background forms the embodied knowledge, acquired forms of capital and existing identities that are part of a culture that is known and where things seem unchallenged and sustainable. As part of this culture, the individual feels secure in what they do, and they have also embodied a specific system of time. Becoming an entrepreneur means renegotiating the existing sense of self as well as adjusting to a new culture. To bridge the gap between the embodied culture and the new business culture, shorten the perceived distances and make the process of becoming an entrepreneur easier, the incubator needs to take the position of an interpreter in the middle of the creative and business worlds. Building and facilitating a community where know-how and experiences are shared can also help in transferring information between the two sides.

In the start of the process the individual does not yet have the knowledge needed to succeed economically, the social connections nor the know-how to deal with some of the challenges of the business culture. For someone further along in the process, the things that for a new entrepreneur are difficult are instead talked about as “easy” and “obvious”. This is

because of a stronger entrepreneurial identity and more developed knowledge and tools to tackle possible problems. The entrepreneur further in the process might not for example have all the right social capital they need, but the way they perceive networking and contacting new people means they know how to easily exchange their cultural capital into social capital.

The mindset of the incubator and other business advice giving services is more focused on the growth and revenue achieved by an entrepreneur. Growth equals success – or so the story goes. For a creative entrepreneur this may not be the most important motivator for becoming an entrepreneur. If the original motivation for becoming an entrepreneur has been the creative work, the process is more complicated and time consuming. The learning of new things is described as both positive and negative and the entrepreneurs have the motivation to learn more. However, without support or a community, the learning process can be difficult and time-consuming. Trying to deal with the problems that come with learning the entrepreneurial work can take time away from the actual innovative actions and being a creative which, after all, are what the sold product or service is based on. This means constantly doing something new the individual does not know how to do, instead of doing what they already have the skills for. Because of these tensions, the creative entrepreneurs see the process ending in either the selling of their company and doing only creative work or not doing the creative work at all to be able to focus on running the company they do not want to give up to someone else.

An incubator should therefore not look at creative entrepreneurs as one cohesive group, but rather as a diverse assemblage of individuals. It is important to find out the motivations for being an entrepreneur and individuals that do not share the same aims as the incubator could be guided to different service providers. To provide the best help in succeeding internationally, the incubator should also map the existing know-how of the individuals to be able to provide personified help and tools the entrepreneurs can use without the incubator as well. For example, networking should not be an abstract thing and an empty symbolic act but instead, the entrepreneurs need to be *taught* how to increase the volume of social capital. A community of creative entrepreneurs who share the same lifestyle and aims should also be facilitated. This can lead to an enforced *sense* of community, shared knowledge and sustainable help but also to the creation of new teams and business ventures in the future.

During my research, my two female informants mentioned their position as women in the business world, and the image of the entrepreneur as ”a great man” is also something

talked about by Weiskopf and Steyaert (2009). Gender is an aspect that can affect the entrepreneurial identity in many ways, and although some research has already been done about it, it should be investigated more in this case as well. Future research should also be conducted on the effects of space and a community in the process of becoming an entrepreneur.

In this thesis, I have discussed the incubator as an advice-giving service. Although incubators are an example from the world of business, the idea that one size *does not* fit all can be applied to any place aiming to help and support people. This should also be remembered on a higher political level, where quick solutions are often valued higher than time invested into long term plans. Each individual entrepreneur is different, and so is each country. Therefore, on any level, the focus should not be on success as the destination. What is more important, is the journey.

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Materials in the author's possession:

Notes from three months of fieldwork at the incubator

Notes from informal conversations with informants D and E

Interviews:

Informant A (2017, October 24). Personal communication.

Informant B (2017, September 26). Personal communication.

Informant C (2017, October 25). Personal communication