

Cultural Entrepreneurship Special Issue in International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing (IJEV)

Title

Cultural Entrepreneurs: Identity and ‘becoming’ a cultural entrepreneur

Dr Annette Naudin

annette.naudin@bcu.ac.uk

Biography

Annette completed a Ph.D. (2015) at the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies, at the University of Warwick, exploring the cultural and media worker’s experience of entrepreneurship. Annette’s current research is concerned with gender and BAME cultural workers as a focus for an interrogation of current practices and the nature of entrepreneurial practice in the cultural industries.

Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the cultural entrepreneur’s identity in relation to popular notions of the entrepreneur by focusing on the lived experience of cultural entrepreneurship. The interplay and contradictions between different values and identities revealed in this study challenge narrow definitions of the entrepreneur. The cultural entrepreneurs’ stories reveal means of subverting or re-interpreting identities within an urban milieu in which the cultural entrepreneur operates in a social milieu. Some of the tensions described are linked to the specificity of cultural work but other challenges have more universal implications for entrepreneurship studies. Beyond the caricatures usually associated with western traditions, this study explores entrepreneurial identities and characteristics from a broader range of experiences, re-imagining the hero entrepreneur.

Keywords: identities; cultural entrepreneur; stereotypes; networks; cultural policy.

Introduction

This paper seeks to explore the notion of ‘becoming’ (Ashton, 2011) a cultural entrepreneur by investigating the lived experience of entrepreneurship and the possibility for ‘rethinking cultural entrepreneurship’ (Oakley, 2014). The cultural entrepreneur’s agentic actions emerge as a means of potentially subverting or re-interpreting entrepreneurial identities. An exploration of cultural entrepreneurship opens up opportunities to review entrepreneurial identities from a broader range of experiences, re-imagining the myth of the entrepreneur (Shane, 2007) beyond the caricatures usually associated with western traditions (Rae, 2007).

So, how do individuals contest, reject or adopt identities and characteristics associated with normative behaviour as a means of ‘becoming’ a cultural entrepreneur? A distinctive feature of cultural entrepreneurs are the many other identities to be negotiated alongside their entrepreneurial practice; these include the bohemian artist, the digital geek and the socially engaged citizen. These identities are not static and there can be a sense of ongoing negotiation or tension between the values associated with different identities.

To investigate the experience of cultural entrepreneurs I engage with a literature which seeks to re-invigorate entrepreneurship by emphasising the importance of social, economic and political contexts to reveal new entrepreneurial models and fluid identities (Chell and Karataş-Özkan, 2010, Steyaert and Hjorth, 2006). The notion of ‘becoming’ a cultural entrepreneur is explored within a dynamic social context in which the accounts of cultural entrepreneurs reflect tensions and contradictions in negotiating both their ‘cultural’ and ‘entrepreneurial’ identities. The focus of this study reveals insights into the specificity of entrepreneurial cultural work but it is likely that some of the issues explored have implications for other professional identities linked to small enterprises.

As Jones and Spicer (2009) discuss in their book *‘Unmasking the Entrepreneur’*, there has been a tendency, both in entrepreneurship studies and popular discourse, to see the entrepreneur as having a fixed identity. I aim to ‘unmask’ the cultural entrepreneur by revealing identities as unstable, based on personal circumstances within a relational environment. I draw on stereotypical characteristics associated with the cultural worker (Taylor and Littleton, 2008, 2013) and with the entrepreneur (Godelier, 2007) to reveal individuals negotiating their work identities. In an era of co-creativity and user-generated content, ‘professional identities’ (Banks and Deuze, 2009) are questioned as the notion of an ‘expert’ or ‘professional’ is weakened (Deuze, 2007). ‘Professional identities’ are difficult to

identify and generalise and, as du Gay (1996, 2007) argues, they are based on an ideological frame of reference carried by members of a community. In this case, the community is made up of individuals and structures within an urban cultural milieu, and the cultural workers present themselves as ‘professionals’ in the sense that they earn a living from their cultural work, and in relation to each other as a local network. The lived experience of cultural entrepreneurship examines a dynamic relationship between identities and values such as those associated with socially responsible work or with artistic concerns. This study focuses on the entrepreneurial practices of cultural workers, but there are lessons for entrepreneurship studies more generally. Sector-specific research can enrich and challenge our understanding of entrepreneurial identities by combining different academic disciplines and presenting new positions.

Defining the cultural entrepreneur is challenging but for the purposes of this paper I suggest that both the ‘cultural’ and the ‘entrepreneur’ are important in this study. The cultural element draws on ‘cultural industries’ literature, as rooted in a critical tradition which seeks to demonstrate contradiction and complexity and which rejects the label ‘creative industries’ (Hesmondhalgh, 2008). Following from that the ‘cultural’ activity described in this study includes work across the arts, media and design and roles such as promotion, consultancy, production, curation and project management. Often cultural entrepreneurs do not fit into neat categories but have a tendency to undertake a range of activities (Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999). As entrepreneurs they run small businesses with a few employees or are self-employed, sometimes working freelance or selling their services or products but they can also act as ‘intermediaries’ involved in project management, fundraising and marketing cultural activities (Davies and Ford, 1998). Cultural entrepreneurs can broadly be described as self-employed and enterprising, although this does not always result in economic capital (Banks, 2006; Scott, 2012).

Enterprise culture, identity and cultural policy

The entrepreneurial spirit of cultural workers exists within a social, cultural and political landscape. Firstly, I explore the entrepreneur and the notion of an enterprise culture within UK cultural policies. Secondly, I draw on a critique of entrepreneurial modes of work to consider the challenges associated with cultural labour as a framework for my empirical study.

When discussing entrepreneurs, it is common to focus on personality traits exhibited by celebrity entrepreneurs and supported by trait psychology which tends to assume that certain individuals will behave in particular ways (Chell, 2008, p.82). The identity of the entrepreneur as the risk-taking, passionate, uber-confident and innovative individual is persistent in popular discourse and in certain academic studies of entrepreneurship (Shane, 2007, p.42). This is popularised through programmes such as *The Apprentice*, which tend towards seeing the entrepreneur as having a fixed identity, perceived as a set of attributes defined by the narratives associated with celebrity entrepreneurs such as Richard Branson and characterised by internationally-recognised individuals (Boyle and Magor, 2008; Couldry and Littler, 2011, Shane, 2007). The identity of the entrepreneur is described as an individual's life story, often achieving entrepreneurial success in the face of adversity, thus creating a strong association with the innate attributes of the entrepreneur acting as an autonomous 'free agent', achieving success against all the odds.

In his study of identity, Paul du Gay proposes that individuals acquire entrepreneurial traits as a result of being immersed and subjected to 'particular normative and technical regimes of conduct' (2007, p.11). This suggests that identities are reliant on both relational dynamics and societal expectations, which might be dictated by a specific job role or typical characteristics associated with a work-related context. However, although powerful social and ideological structures play a part in shaping who we are, within a specific context, the agentic actions of individuals can construct 'specific articulations of subjectivity and identity' (Gray 2003, p.32). As Hall (1996) emphasises, identity is constructed across different contexts, positions and discourses, and presents itself as unstable. The notion of 'performance' allows individuals to 'masquerade' by acting out certain identities in public spaces, but also subverting normative behaviours (Donald, 1996; Bureau and Zander, 2014). By acting out the role of an entrepreneur or a bohemian artist, complex narratives are performed rather than a true or fixed identity. The language and characteristics associated with the entrepreneur can be adopted as a means of presenting a version of oneself, to subvert norms or to explore new territories. The notion of subversion is not unfamiliar within cultural contexts in which artistic practices are defined as subversive due to their potential for producing changes in society (Bureau and Zander, 2014). The artist can be viewed as part activist, employing strategies to subvert the status quo which sometimes leads to resistance and hostility from the general public and experts (Bureau and Zander, 2014). Within artistic communities, Taylor and Littleton (2013) find that an acceptable form of identity can

paradoxically, be that of the unsuccessful artist, in financial terms. Taylor and Littleton's (2013) research reveals that some of the participants in their study, over time, became relatively successful artists, and found it difficult to claim an artistic identity. In some context, 'performing' the artist is integral to a person's professional and personal identity, creating a tension between seeking some level of success and the milieu in which an artist works. Individuals negotiate these conflicting values in diverse ways, displaying different levels of recognition and acceptance of their entrepreneurial identity.

Thatcher's enterprise culture in the 1980s and 90s, encouraged an acceptance of entrepreneurial modes of work as part of normative practices, reflecting neo-liberal values and naturalizing certain behaviours in the workplace (du Gay, 2007, p.165). This was further encouraged by the politics of New Labour and the creation of the DCMS, led by Chris Smith. A significant result of Smith's mixed funding model was that the cultural sector started to enjoy unprecedented funding, increasing opportunities for cultural entrepreneurship for the next 15 years (Smith, 2013). In his analysis of the DCMS *Creative Industries Mapping Document* published (1998), Banks (2007) argues that the rationale for supporting the sector was focused on the economic significance of the creative industries. Entrepreneurial modes of work were celebrated (Banks, 2007), typified by a language of opportunity, creativity, flexibility, self-reliance and risk-taking which subsequently fuelled a critique of neo-liberalism in cultural policies (see Ellmeier, 2003; Oakley, 2014; McRobbie, 2002a). Furthermore, from a regional or city perspective, cultural entrepreneurs became an integral part of the 'creative city' project, a concept developed from the idea of 'cultural quarters' (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2008), connecting creativity and cultural activities to opportunities for city regeneration (Stephenson, 2003). Cultural entrepreneurs were perceived as playing an important role in developing the image of UK cities, particularly at a regional level, supported through policies which encouraged cultural quarters or clusters (Landry, 2000; Lee, 2015, Stevenson, 2003). Organisations such as Arts Council England, Business Links and Regional Development Agencies formed part of an infrastructure focused on delivering cultural policies to maximise the economic benefits of the cultural sector, partly through the activities of entrepreneurial individuals. The 'culturepreneur', as described by Loaker (2013, p. 130), conveniently draws together the notion of the autonomous, creative and free artist with the market-orientated entrepreneur.

Scholars from cultural and cultural policy studies have described the link between entrepreneurship and neo-liberalism in New Labour cultural policies as a utopian view of

cultural labour, encouraging individualism, self-reliance and overlooking the difficulties and insecurities of freelance work (see Ellmeier, 2003; Gill, 2002, Gill and Pratt, 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011, McRobbie, 1999; 2002a, 2002b; Oakley, 2014). For scholars such as McRobbie, this is epitomised in the work of Charles Leadbeater, who ‘wants to make entrepreneurs of us all’ (McRobbie, 2002b, p.106), suggesting that the blurred lines between work and home life are depicted as examples of the breakdown of society. McRobbie argues that individuals are coerced into thinking that this is the nature of work, making the case that since Margaret Thatcher’s government, the devaluing of the public sector and social services have contributed to individualized lifestyles, focused on self-advancement (2002b). Embedded in this critique of entrepreneurial modes of work is the idea that cultural workers are pressured into adopting a fixed entrepreneurial model, one associated with neo-liberal politics. I argue that, whilst acknowledging the challenges of cultural work, by exploring the cultural entrepreneurs’ identity and lived experience, assumptions can be tested, contributing alternative positions.

Alternative perspectives

As Steyeart and Hjorth (2006) argue in their series of books *Movements in Entrepreneurship*, a consideration of alternative identities for the entrepreneur challenges existing discourses, including the entrepreneurial identity. This approach is supported by feminist scholars who have called for an engagement with theories of gender and the diversity of women entrepreneurs from different global contexts (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009; Eddleston and Powell, 2012; de Bruin et al., 2007; Ahl, 2006; Hurley, 1999; Mirchandani, 1999; Tedmanson et al., 2012). Furthermore, Chell and Karataş-Özkan (2010) argue that the relational and societal aspects in entrepreneurship formation offer alternative entrepreneurial identities and new role models. In this study, the cultural entrepreneur’s ability to contest, reject or adopt identities and characteristics associated with normative entrepreneurial behaviours is contextualised through local relationships and structures. As Banks observes, cultural entrepreneurs present the potential for ‘progressive, liberal-democratic possibilities of individualization in cultural work’ (2006 p.122) rather than a reinforcement of neo-liberal values. Instead of competition and rivalry between cultural entrepreneurs, is it possible to find a version of ‘mutual aid’ as discussed, by de Peuter and Cohen (2015); evidence of solidarity and support between workers. Banks argues that investigating the embedded experience of individuals and taking note of the potential for self-reflexivity challenges our assumptions beyond the ‘caricature’ of the entrepreneur (2006, p.466). In the next section I

describe processes for motivating individuals to explore their story and disclose their experience of becoming a cultural entrepreneur.

Method and sample

Following an approach developed by Chell and Karataş-Özkan (2010), I interpret Bourdieu's concept of capital, habitus and field to study individuals and their actions within a relational space. Briefly, the three elements are interpreted in the following manner:

- Capital: Micro-level details about the individual's entrepreneurial motivations and biography including family contexts.
- Habitus: Meso-relational level including the local community or 'milieu' in which cultural entrepreneurs operate including physical spaces but also their networks.
- Field: Macro-level offers a broader context and language including the popular image of the entrepreneur, and national policies as interpreted by key players such as the Arts Council England and a post-Thatcher enterprise culture.

Bourdieu's conceptual framework, initially adapted from Chell and Karataş-Özkan and reworked for this research (2010, p.87).

The sample includes fourteen cultural entrepreneurs working across art, design, media and film in a variety of different roles including those involved directly in the creative process and those in more administrative tasks such as curators or film producers. In this study, the relevance of contextual elements emerges through the interviewee's narrative, leading the researcher to policy documentation, networks, events and individuals.

Individuals within the sample present themselves as small enterprises, developing their own products and services rather than as a freelancer available for work within an organisation. Of the fourteen participants, nine are women and five are men, and all are between the ages of 25 and 50 years old (see table A for a full list of participants). Whilst the age, gender and education was noted it was not a defining factor in selecting the sample which was determined by my relationship to the participant. Before each interview I explained the purpose of the study clearly and made individuals aware that I would be using pseudonyms throughout. All interviewees were based in Birmingham, the UK's second largest city after London and situated in the heart of England. As interviewees are part of my network, the opportunity for individuals to know others in the sample was increased, enabling me to have a better overview of Birmingham's cultural milieu and relational dynamics. Given my

relationship to the individuals being interviewed, the participants' anonymity has been carefully managed throughout the process.

In exploring lived experience and day-to-day practices, I focus on the cultural workers' stories, the narratives they tell themselves and others. Having been immersed in the milieu I am researching, I do not attempt to be an objective researcher, rather, I have empathy with the environment and the participants' stories. My position as a researcher is close to Skeggs, who in her ethnographic work with young women has looked for 'the view from below' (cited in Gray, 2003, p.64). I am not a researcher parachuting into a context that I have no experience of, yet considering my closeness to the subject, I have had to make the familiar strange again (Gray, 2003, p.64), through the process of engaging with academic literature, enabling me to approach the subject anew. As Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) suggest, a level of immersion in the subject being studied over a period of time enables the researcher to use their judgement in response to the interviews.

Interviewees discussed their views of Birmingham's cultural milieu, including local policies, details about their financial circumstances and the challenges of balancing family life with self-employment. The aim was to unearth the complexities of cultural work and the lived experience of entrepreneurship, within a relational context.

The 'gossipy' nature of the interview invites value judgements, with participants revealing as much about themselves as they do about others as a means of expressing their preferences and reflecting on personal motivations. The outcome is a narrative which is candid, self-reflexive and particularly focused on a 'mechanism for producing the experience of self' (du Gay, 2007, p.27). In articulating their sense of self, cultural entrepreneurs draw on a range of possible characteristics associated with their professional milieu and by comparing themselves to others within the network, they reveal or reject certain identities. Although there is an emphasis on the individual story, Bourdieu's concepts of fields, habitus and individual capital enabled each narrative to be analysed within a broader context. The milieu consists of formal structures, such as Birmingham's cultural policies and infrastructure, along with informal relationships with peers which shape individual identities.

Findings

The cultural and entrepreneurial identity

Cultural entrepreneurs interviewed in this study seemed very aware of the idea that certain traits are typically associated with entrepreneurial cultural workers and in some cases, this offered an opportunity to disassociate oneself from entrepreneurial characteristics. As others have found (Loaker, 2013; Oakley, 2014; Poettschacher, 2005), there is a tension between what is perceived as commercially-driven work and cultural or artistic practices which are often associated with non-economic values. One of the interviewees, Jack, makes fun of a particularly active local cultural entrepreneur by stating:

‘Yeah, he would have a badge with it [cultural entrepreneur] on. A badge that tweets! Dave is brilliant! (Jack, 2011).

The idea of visual images such as ‘a badge’ or ‘tweet’ draws on the idea of a space in which one can act the role of the cultural entrepreneur through one’s public actions. In this instance, Jack is suggesting that Dave is an individual keen to broadcast his credentials as a cultural entrepreneur. In contrast, Jack rejects the idea of being associated with the notion of the cultural entrepreneur although he states that of his company ‘well I know that we tick all the criteria’ (2011). The use of the term ‘criteria’ indicates that for Jack, there is a recognisable set of behaviours, a check list perhaps, associated with being a cultural entrepreneur. However, Jack distances himself from individuals such as Dave, and asserts his identity through a description of his design work.

‘...the actual rigorous application of trying to do something creative, on time, on budget, to meet client expectation... I think it is far more like an engineering process than an art related one. Art being at the opposite end. Art being a pure form of creative personal expression. (Jack, 2011).

In this case, Jack draws attention to what he feels is the serious practice of engineering versus the less business-like identity of the artist or ‘creative’ individual. By focusing on someone else, Jack reveals his distaste for the image of the flexible, autonomous, creative worker so revered by both local and national cultural policymakers (Banks, 2007; McRobbie, 2011; Parrish, 2008).

In contrast, Luca’s work can be described as that of a fine artist yet he embraces entrepreneurial traits explaining his position from a very different perspective. When I ask Luca if he is a cultural entrepreneur, he states ‘That’s what I am. That’s how I describe myself’ (2013). For Luca, this is associated with a sense of the entrepreneur as a self-reliant individual and in particular one who achieves a lot with few resources.

Minimum resources, maximum output. That's what I'm interested in. Anyone that's worked with me will tell you how much you get from working with me, and what I would generate as an output... So for me, entrepreneurship is about looking at maximising resources, and I think I do that really well. (Luca, 2013)

Luca is critical of artists' reliance on public funding, enjoying the narrative associated with being a 'doer', although this is only possible because of the support he has from his partner. Through the interview I find that Luca has benefitted from public funding for much of his work, a contradiction which he chooses to ignore. The identity that Luca seeks to portray, is relevant to his current narrative, a sense of himself at that point in his career. As a means of distancing himself from the identity of the poor artist, Luca states that for him it is 'the DIY culture approach to the entrepreneurial that interests [him]' (Luca, 2013). This is echoed by another artist, Alison who is equally positive about the idea of being a cultural entrepreneur.

...that's the way the cultural industries have got to move in their thinking. In an entrepreneurial way. About looking outwards into the world rather than looking inwards. So I think it is actually quite healthy to think of culture as being enterprising and all the things that they bring to our world and our communities. (Alison, 2013)

Alison's work is not commercially driven, relying mostly on heritage and arts funding for socially-engaged projects in non-conventional settings. Alison embraces the idea of connecting enterprise to change and new ideas, yet she also acknowledges that she makes use of different titles for different circumstances. Although the concept of being enterprising is attractive to Alison, she is also willing to wear many hats including the community worker, the curator or artist, depending on which one seems most appropriate or helpful at the time. For both participants, the entrepreneurial identity does not describe a profession but a mind-set that embraces change and independence.

Yet, Alison expresses a sense of conflict between producing her art work and earning a living as an artist. As Taylor and Littleton (2013) argue, there is a dilemma between being the kind of artist who sells and the type of artist who is making something different, interesting or alternative.

Umm, I mean, there are loads of problems with it, I don't know, I think it's really difficult the whole question of money and art... Because I think that a lot of people make work because it sells and then just keep making the same work because it keeps

selling but then are you really an artist who is making something that is experimental and different? (Alison, 2013)

As we see from Alison's reflections, different identities offer the space to explore conflicting narratives and complexity. As Taylor and Littleton suggest, it is always an 'incomplete project of identification as a constrained and negotiated ongoing process involving conflicts and dilemmas around the multiple sites and meanings in play (2013, p. 158).

This is echoed in Liz's experience. She describes herself as a curator, although her initial experiences as a fine art student reflect a pull towards 'acting' like an artist, twenty years after graduating. Liz continues this narrative even as her work evolves and includes new responsibilities and dimensions. Here, Liz describes taking up some teaching shortly after her MA in Fine Art and the challenges of *not* being an artist:

... I think the habit of having a studio, you've graduated from art school, you go with other artists, you join a studio. That is what you do. It takes a long time to actually pull away from that... (Liz, 2013)

A shift away from the ritual of going to a studio and the notion of being an artist is also a separation from a specific community. An ongoing closeness to that community is crucial to Liz and the idea that she is involved with a particular group of professional artists who, like her, enjoy a level of autonomy. Despite the precariousness of her work, Liz states that it is important for her 'to do what I want to do; so I'd rather have that freedom' (2013). Being enterprising is not enough in itself, entrepreneurial activities must resonate with an identity connected to a wider artistic network which for Liz, might include audiences, peers and funders.

As Eikhof and Haunschild's (2006) suggest, many cultural entrepreneurs have to create that bridge between the bohemian and the entrepreneur.

We argue that in order to understand how artists perceive themselves as involved in the production of art for art's sake and at the same time manage themselves as market subjects, the phenomenon of lifestyle has to be considered. (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2006, p.234)

Indeed, artistic identities tend to be bound up with ideas of the romantic bohemian character who is thought to be a critic of society, an image which still prevails, at least in the west (McGuigan, 2009, p. 49). An alternative lifestyle is associated with what McGuigan describes

as ‘that of a bohemian, an autonomous rebel living in a space separate from mainstream’ (2009, p.49). Even in non-artistic practices, such as Emma’s experimental work in new media, there is an attraction to being ‘alternative’.

They all have normal jobs. Teachers, working in banks, you know that traditional job. And I like that I can sit down with someone and have an interesting conversation with someone about the death of myspace etc. [laughs] I like that. (Emma, 2012)

Performing an identity can be done by presenting oneself as ‘other’ than the norm or by identifying with the qualities of a certain community, such as the impoverished artist. Cultural entrepreneurs navigate this complex space in a pragmatic manner, validating their sense of self through interactions within a milieu by comparing themselves with others.

The excitement of experimenting and of being involved in non-conventional practices is an important part of Emma’s narrative. For instance, Emma describes how she is keen to work with Dave because she wants to belong to a community of practice who indulge in ‘crazy ideas’.

I like people like [Dave] because [Dave] has these big ideas and he’s got the skills to do it. ‘Let’s have this thing and there’s a video you can go to’ and these crazy [ideas]! And you think how’s that going to happen, and he manages to make it happen! (Emma, 2012)

At one point in the interview, Emma describes herself as having always been a ‘geek’, enjoying the idea of combining technology and creativity. As someone involved in a relatively new area of work, aspects of new media, Emma is negotiating a difficult space in which there are few practitioners such as herself. In the process of inventing her job, she is inspired by characters such as the aforementioned Dave, a significant figure in local networks. As with the idea of co-creators discussed by Banks and Deuze, Emma’s work is in an emerging field which ‘sits uncomfortably with our current understanding and theories of work and labour’ (2009, p. 419). In that sense it is important for Emma to connect to others in Birmingham’s cultural milieu, in order to collectively establish ways of working.

But despite her enthusiasm for Dave’s ad-hoc projects, Emma is not naïve and in our conversation she identifies Paul (another interviewee) as influential, describing him as working ‘on a more sensible level’. For Emma, the collegiate atmosphere is clearly important.

[Paul] is doing really good things. So yeah people like that. I like the fact that people like that exist in Birmingham and it is small enough to know them all. (Emma, 2012)

In this study I have found that the cultural entrepreneur's narrative and identity is complex and not stable. There appears to be an awareness of what it means to be an entrepreneurial individual but this is interpreted in many different ways and sometimes rejected by cultural workers. An important factor in cultural entrepreneurs' experience is how they relate to others within a cultural milieu as a means of defining themselves and their work, whether it be through rejecting others as Tim does or by positively connecting to their peers as described by Emma.

Cultural entrepreneurs and their values

In his Manchester-based study, Banks (2007) finds that cultural entrepreneurs seek to combine different motivations, beyond the individualistic and growth orientated entrepreneur. Drawing on Keats, Banks articulates the tension between cultural practice and making money:

... firms and organisations may well act as profit-satisfiers rather than profit maximizers, and entrepreneurs and workers may be more strongly motivated by internal rather than external rewards, not least by the love of the practice, respect for others and the concomitant sense of well-being and security that practice-like activities can potentially generate. (Banks, 2007, p.113)

The diverse rationales for undertaking certain kinds of activities offer insights which broaden our understanding of entrepreneurialism, combining artistic autonomy with 'A freedom that seeks to moderate or challenge market culture rather than simply reinforce it? (Banks, 2007, p.95). In other words, by evaluating the nature of cultural entrepreneurship in the everyday experience of cultural workers, we might be presented with a range of motivations.

Socially-engaged activities were common in my sample, including in the manner in which cultural entrepreneurs set about presenting themselves. For instance, Tom states that 'an element of goodness through the relationships we have with other people' as being critical to the way in which he works. In his story and actions, Tom performs the 'good guy' as he states, a person who should be perceived as the antithesis of the money-grabbing entrepreneur. In the interview, Tom refers to a successful local cultural entrepreneur (in this case, Richard) as a means of disassociating himself from what he perceives as 'a serial,

power-hungry person' (2012). Tom's dramatic language, 'power hungry' ensures that he is positioning himself in direct opposition to Richard within Birmingham's cultural milieu, and identifying with the idea of supporting others and as being unmotivated by power. This is in contrast to critical views of entrepreneurship associated with neo-liberalism and a tendency to focus on individualism and business growth over and above other objectives (McRobbie, 2011). Indeed, part of Tom's work includes running a supportive network for local producers, encouraging collaboration and sharing industry knowledge.

Another interviewee, Paul, presents his work as socially responsible through his Social Media activities, which facilitate the sharing of technical knowledge with people in the voluntary sector. Paul's project encourages communities to network and learn from each other for the wider social good. For this work, Paul has received many awards including recognition from the Prime minister as an example of The Big Society. This project is run alongside other commercial work, ensuring the sustainability of Paul's media enterprise which includes 2-3 full time employees and several freelance associates. Paul represents a socially-responsible cultural entrepreneur, whose sense of achievement is measured in relation to being a good citizen and undertaking work which makes a difference.

Media making is about relationships and what you can use those relationships to make happen, not about the media itself. So I was out using the channel to create relationships between me and active citizens. (Paul, 2013)

But Paul does not describe himself as a social entrepreneur; rather, his approach to work is motivated by certain social interactions and outcomes. In contrast, identifying with the title 'social entrepreneur' is important to Sadie, whose narrative is tied to her personal background. As a young black women, who turned her life around after being involved with gangs and crime, she is very conscious of her position as a potential role model for others.

Social entrepreneur... Yes, because I do more than one thing. So, obviously the magazine takes up quite a lot of my time, but because I'm still doing public speaking, I still do some of the training stuff, it just all depends what day it is, so it all comes under social entrepreneur. (Sadie, 2013)

As well as acting as a role model, Sadie is a media entrepreneur, publishing a glamorous lifestyle magazine which she uses to encourage others to work in the media and cultural sector. Sadie refers to her personal story as a means of engaging with diverse groups of young people; more recently, she has worked strategically with organisations such as the

police. Depending on an individual's story, a cultural entrepreneur incorporates different qualities based on circumstances, personal motivations and opportunities. The cultural entrepreneurs I identify demonstrate social responsibility through diverse activities, determined partly by the individual's own moral compass.

Gender, family and entrepreneurship

Despite appearing to be 'cool, creative and egalitarian' (Gill, 2002), gender and ethnic inequalities are entrenched in cultural industry work (Conor et al, 2015). Taylor and Littleton suggest that women experience a 'deficit identity' (2012, p.140), a process in which as women, their position as cultural workers is likely to be challenged and which requires ongoing negotiation. Smith's (2009) analysis of 'Diva' storylines in newspapers, provides some evidence of the vilification of women's enterprising behaviours in the media, suggesting a broader issue with accepting women in a world dominated by male role models. Female entrepreneurs are perceived as 'other' from the male 'norm' (Adkins, 1999). So how do women react to the idea of being an entrepreneurial cultural worker?

In my research, Hannah has chosen self-employment as a means of balancing work and family life, something she has decided with her husband, in order to have a family and to develop her website design company.

I suppose so, it's not a word I'd use to describe myself because I think, for me, there are connotations around it, the sort of people you'd see on TV who are like that tend to be male, they tend to be quite pushy... And I don't see myself as somebody who is going to build up a string of businesses, that sort of thing. I mean I am somebody who comes up with a lot of ideas and tries lots of different things... (Hannah, 2013)

As a designer, Hannah seems to have no problems with aspects of entrepreneurship such as coming up with ideas, but the 'pushy' characteristics depicted on television shows deter Hannah from identifying with the entrepreneur. In explorations of the entrepreneurial identity, gender can leave many female entrepreneurs either as 'divas' or not able to relate to the macho-style entrepreneur depicted in Alan Sugar's role in *The Apprentice*, for example. As Verduijn et al. argue, entrepreneurship is a 'two-headed phenomenon, comprising emancipation and oppression as forces which stand in a relationship of constant tension' (Verduijn et al., 2014 p. 100).

When I ask Sadie if she associates any negative connotations with being an entrepreneur, she explains that along with describing herself as a social entrepreneur, for her, it is about emancipation. However, as a single mum working from home, she does point out some problems with the idea of being a ‘mumpreneur’.

I think when the negative has been around, words like mumpreneur and there’s been a debate around that. So I’m quite friendly with the girls that run Mumpreneur in the UK but I’ve also read a lot of magazine articles about women who are female social entrepreneurs who don’t like the term mumpreneur because they’re saying that being a mum doesn’t define me as a business woman. So there’s been quite a bit of a debate around that, why would you call yourself a mumpreneur? (Sadie, 2013)

As Mattis’ research suggests, self-employed women are not necessarily looking to reduce their hours; rather, ‘they are seeking more control over the hours they work’ (2004, p. 159), particularly when they have a family. Some of the issues associated with motherhood and work will be common to most entrepreneurial women but the experience of a few interviewees does suggest some possible distinctions specific to those involved in cultural activities. For instance, Liz considers her experience as a mother and cultural entrepreneur, discussing the importance of her personal vision as a driving force despite the lack of financial reward.

But I know in terms of, I’ve always had a very clear idea of my vision as a, you know, artistic producer, curator, whatever, and I know, you know, my terms are *the* terms. So I would rather take the lack of financial security on board rather than just to carry somebody else’s vision out. I mean I think I’m probably not someone that can go and work for somebody else at this stage in my career. (Liz, 2013)

Liz’s account is not that of a naïve recent graduate, given that Liz is a mature working mother, with a mortgage to pay and a partner whose work is also relatively precarious as a freelance film director. From our discussion, it becomes clear that Liz and her partner have jointly decided to pursue their personal and professional interests, cutting back on costs where possible (for instance, they don’t own a car) in order to not compromise on the nature of their work.

Roger describes a similar situation in which he has a family and a mortgage and is frustrated by his ongoing financial instability, yet he is determined to keep developing his festival on

his terms. Roger's partner worked with him for many years and although this situation has changed recently, Roger acknowledges his partner's support.

I do think I'm sick of being bloody skint sometimes but I'm not looking at somebody else and thinking... I think that's a kind of disease really across the board really, the "Why haven't I got as much as that person? I want their iPad," or whatever, you know, that kind of evil eye envy is something I try and avoid really. But I do get annoyed with having such a tight margin on everything and having done it for so many years and to quite a high standard I do sort of think... You know, there was a period when I thought I would just cash in eventually. All this great reputation that we've built up, I'm bound to find a really interesting job that I can walk into, and I've sort of less belief in that happening now in a way. (Roger, 2012)

Like Liz, Roger has been building up a strong brand for his cultural activity and both have gained much recognition for their work (locally and nationally), yet this is clearly at a cost. Despite expressing strong concerns with regards to financial issues, they disregard alternatives as hindering their ambitions as cultural workers. Along with other small cultural enterprises, Liz and Roger are part of a collective who join forces regularly to market events and support each other. They describe this as an important mechanism for their cultural activities and for the individuals involved who benefit greatly from the support, giving each other advice and friendship.

The insecurities of entrepreneurship are challenging for individuals with a family but in the cultural sector there also are aesthetic priorities which some individuals do not wish to compromise over. The women I interviewed have ambiguous feelings about identifying as an entrepreneur or a 'mumpreneur', preferring to focus on their identities as cultural workers, who happen to be entrepreneurial.

Conclusion

Oakley suggests that in rethinking cultural entrepreneurship, 'forced or adaptive models of entrepreneurship' (2014, p. 156) might help us question whether there is 'entrepreneurship' in cultural work at all. In this paper, I argue that the experience of cultural entrepreneurs has little in common with the driven and competitive individual often associated with popular notions of the entrepreneur. Yet, I find the use of terms 'entrepreneur' and 'entrepreneurship' are appropriate *because* of the connotations they contain. I find that cultural workers demonstrate an awareness of the pitfalls of entrepreneurship but are able to appropriate ideas

from entrepreneurial practice without compromising other ethical, artistic or creative objectives (Banks, 2007). This study suggests that cultural entrepreneurs negotiate the contradictions that form part of their professional identities. I argue that cultural entrepreneurs manage the tensions between their entrepreneurial practices and other identities, which I characterise as: cultural or artistic; socially driven rather than competitive; and the private versus the professional presented from a gendered perspective.

The 'cultural' aspect of the individuals' identity is a significant factor in adopting certain narratives associated with engaging in 'experimental' or 'bohemian' activities. I find stereotypical identities act as anchors for specific attributes which the cultural entrepreneur can manipulate; almost a menu from which one can choose or reject a set of behaviours. Multiple roles are acted out, to suit specific circumstances and to project an image appropriate to a particular circumstance: for instance, 'community worker' if that fits a particular opportunity. Cultural workers adapt to diverse circumstances, milieus, funding opportunities and policy environments, hence the usefulness of Beaven (2012) and Ashton's (2011) idea of 'becoming' a cultural entrepreneur: an ongoing process rather than a fixed identity. The significant issue is the cultural activity and the entrepreneurial aspect is secondary in terms of the individual's sense of identity (Beaven, 2012). The cultural entrepreneurs' experience reflect an ongoing tension between various values or identities as they negotiate a sense of themselves as professional cultural workers. As Bureau and Zander (2014) have discussed it is relatively common to associate cultural practices with subversion yet entrepreneurship studies has rarely explored this. Here it is the stereotypical entrepreneur who is subverted, not necessarily by being rejected but rather by being reinterpreted and merged with other values.

Exploring the lived experience suggests that one cannot easily reduce cultural entrepreneurship to one way of working, to a set of motivations or to a fixed identity. The field of entrepreneurship might benefit from embracing Jones and Spicer's (2009) notion of 'unmasking' to explore what lies beyond the entrepreneur. In this case I suggest that the 'cultural' element is a significant aspect of the workers' identities. Individual narratives and the contextual experience of cultural entrepreneurs challenge the mythical figures of both the cultural worker and of the entrepreneur, presenting new identities in social contexts (Chell and Karataş-Özkan, 2010). In this study, the 'cultural' element adds certain characteristics associated with artistic practices, a bohemian identity which is either rejected or embraced. This suggests that an exploration of various relevant contexts, social or industry-specific

contribute to our understanding of entrepreneurship and to the entrepreneurial identity. For instance, a relationship to others in a network can inform one's sense of belonging, motivation and identity as an entrepreneurial cultural worker. I find a recognition of the precarious nature of cultural work, but rather than being coerced into entrepreneurship, workers are positive about the opportunity to have some autonomy (Banks, 2007; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011), to experiment and to balance a range of priorities. Diverse contexts might offer new insights, presenting entrepreneurship studies with a range of attributes, qualities and motivations from specific industry perspectives. Furthermore, by combining academic literature from entrepreneurship studies with cultural and cultural policy studies, I present an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship. Each discipline contributes to knowledge by informing cultural entrepreneurship studies; one tends to embrace entrepreneurial practices, while the other is inclined to reject it as an aspect of neo-liberal capitalism (Banks, 2007, Oakley, 2011 and 2014), introducing a different understanding of cultural work.

By employing a relatively intimate 'gossip-style' method for interviewing participants, I found cultural entrepreneurs to be reflexive about their practice and to consider their experience within the milieu in which they work; both in terms of the city and local relationships. Critical studies have rightly highlighted the precariousness of cultural labour and potential pitfalls of policies which endorse entrepreneurial modes of work in the cultural industries. However, narrow definitions of entrepreneurial practices and neoliberalism in the cultural industries are not necessarily reflected in the lived experience of cultural entrepreneurs. The language of entrepreneurship appears to be accepted, even embraced, but an intimate study also reveals that despite the challenges of self-employment, individuals are not adopting pre-fixed entrepreneurial identities. The identities constructed by cultural entrepreneurs take varying forms. Identities are negotiated in relation to others within the milieu and with respect to notions of being a 'cultural' worker. I argue that in the interplay between personal agency and structures such as those presented in cultural policies, actors shape their environment and have the opportunity to challenge narrow definitions of the entrepreneur. Cultural entrepreneurship presents the field of entrepreneurship studies with new discourses for imagining and re-negotiating identities.

Table A

List of participants interviewed for this study

			or MA)		
Alison	F	Artists and social entrepreneur	Yes	Late 20s'	none
Elise	F	Freelance creative industries consultant	Yes	Mid 30s'	none
Emma	F	Digital media consultant	Yes	Mid 30s'	none
Hannah	F	Web designer	Yes	Late 30s'	none
Isabella	F	Publisher and events co-ordinator	Yes	Late 30s'	none
Jack	M	Digital media designer and consultant	Yes	Early 40s'	20 employees
Jackie	F	Jewellery designer-maker	Yes	Mid 30s'	None
Joanna	F	Freelance arts project manager	Yes	Early 30s'	None
Liz	F	Curator	Yes	Mid 40s'	none
Luca	M	Artist and curator	Yes	Early 50s'	none
Paul	M	Digital media consultant	Yes	Late 40s'	1 employee
Roger	M	Film and arts festival organiser	Yes	Late 30s'	none
Sadie	F	Magazine publisher, enterprise consultant and social entrepreneur	No HE qualification	Early 30s'	none
Tom	M	Film producer	No HE Qualification	Early 50s'	1 employee and 1 business partner

References

- Adkins, L. (1999). Community and Economy A Retraditionalization of Gender? *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16(1), 119-139.
- Ahl, H. (2006) 'Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5): 595-621.
- Al-Dajani, H. and Carter, S. L. (2010) 'Women empowering women: female entrepreneurs and home-based producers in Jordan', in Brush, C., de Bruin, A., Gatewood, E. J. and Henry, C. (eds.) *Women entrepreneurs and the global environment for growth* (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar): 118-137.
- Ashton, D. (2011) 'Media work and the creative industries: Identity work, professionalism and employability', *Education and Training*, 53 (6): 546-560.
- Banks, J. & Deuze, M. (2009) 'Co-creative labour', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 12 (5): 419-431.
- Banks, M. (2006) 'Moral Economy and Cultural Work', *Sociology*, 40 (3): 455-472.
- Banks, M. (2007) *The Politics of Cultural Work*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Beaven, Z. (2012) 'Complex Entrepreneurial Journeys: 'Pragmatic' and 'Tactical' Nascent Musician-Entrepreneurs', in Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 7-8th January 2012 2012 Dublin, Ireland.
- Berglund, K. (2006) Discursive diversity in fashioning entrepreneurial identity, in Steyaert, C. and Hjorth, D. (eds.) *Entrepreneurship as Social Change*. (Cheltenham: Edward Edgar): 231-250.
- Bjursell, C. and Melin, L. (2011) 'Proactive and reactive plots: Narratives in entrepreneurship identity construction', *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 3, (3), 218-235.
- Boyle, R. and Magor, M. (2008) 'A nation od entrepreneurs? Television, social change and the rise of the entrepreneur', *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 4, (2), 125-144.
- De Bruin, A. Brush, C. and Welter, F. (2007) 'Advancing a framework for coherent research on Women's entrepreneurship', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 31(3): 323-339.
- Bureau, S. and Zander, I. (2014) 'Entrepreneurship as an art of subversion', *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 30 (1): 124-133.
- Chell, E. (2008) *The entrepreneurial personality: a social construct*, (Sussex: Routledge).
- Chell, E. and Karataş-Özkan, M. (2010) *Nascent entrepreneurship and learning*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited).
- Conor, B., Gill, R., & Taylor, S. (2015). Gender and creative labour. *The Sociological Review*, 63(S1), 1-22.

- Couldry, N. and Littler, J. (2011) 'Work, power and performance: analysing the 'reality' game of *The Apprentice*', *Cultural Sociology*, 5, (2): 263-280.
- Davies, A. and Ford, S. (1998) Art Capital, *Art Monthly* 213(1): 12-20.
- Deuze, M. (2007) *Media Work*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Donald, J. (1996) 'The Citizen and the Man About Town', in Du Gay, P. and Hall, S. (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*, (London: Sage): 170-190.
- Eikhof, R. and Haunschild, A. (2006) 'Lifestyle meets market: bohemian entrepreneurs in creative industries', *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 15(3): 234-241.
- Du Gay, P. (2007) *Organising identity*, (London: Sage).
- Du Gay, P. and Hall, S. (eds.) (1996) *Questions of Cultural Identity*, (London: Sage).
- Gray, A. (2003) *Research Practice for Cultural Studies*, (London: Sage).
- Gill, R. (2002) Cool, creative and egalitarian? Exploring gender in project-based new media work in Euro. *Information, communication & society*, 5(1), 70-89.
- Gill, R. & Pratt, A. (2008) 'In the Social Factory?: Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 25, (7-8), 1-30.
- Godelier, E. (2007) 'Do You Have a Garage?' Discussion of Some Myths about Entrepreneurship. Business and Economic History Online accessed 6th February 2016 at <http://www.thebhc.org/node/1166>
- Hall, S. (1996) 'Introduction: who needs 'identity'?', in Du Gay, P. and Hall, S. (eds) *Questions of cultural identity*, (London: Sage): 1-17.
- Hesmondhalgh, D. (2008) Cultural and Creative Industries, in Bennett, T. and Frow, J. (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis* (London and Los Angeles: Sage): 552-569.
- Hesmondhalgh, D. and Baker, S. (2011) *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries* (London: Routledge).
- Imas, M. J., Wilson, N. and Weston, A. (2012) 'Barefoot Entrepreneurs', *Organization*, 19 (5): 563-585.
- Jones, C. and Spicer, A. (2009) *Unmasking the Entrepreneur*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar).
- Lange, B. (2006) From Cool Britannia to Generation Berlin? Geographies of Culturepreneurs and their Creative Milieus, in Berlin, in Eisenberg, C., Gerlich, R. and Handke, C. (eds.) *Cultural Industries: The British Experience in International Perspectives*, (Humboldt Universitat zu Berlin.):145-172.
- Leadbeater, C. and Oakley, K. (1999) *The Independents*, (London: Demos).
- Lee, M. (2015) Fostering connectivity: a social network analysis of entrepreneurs in creative industries, *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21(2) p.139-152.
- Lindgren, M. and Packendorf, J. (2005) Entrepreneurship as boundary work: deviating from belonging to community, in Steyaert, C. and Hjorth, D. (eds.) *Entrepreneurship as Social Change*. (Cheltenham: Edward Edgar): 210-230.

- Loaker, B. (2013) Becoming 'culturepreneur': How the neoliberal regime of truth affects and redefines artistic subject positions, *Culture and Organisation*, 19(2):124-145.
- Mattis, M. (2004) Women entrepreneurs: Out from under the glass ceiling *Women in Management Review* 19 (3): 154-163.
- Mazzucato, M. (2013) *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs Private Sector Myths* (Anthem Press).
- McGuigan, J. (2004) *Rethinking Cultural Policy*, (Berkshire: Open University Press).
- McRobbie, A. (1999) *In the Culture Society: Art, Fashion and Popular Music*, (London: Routledge).
- McRobbie, A. (2002a) 'Clubs to companies: notes on the decline of political culture in speeded up creative worlds', *Cultural Studies*, 16(4): 516-531.
- McRobbie, A. (2002b) 'From Holloway to Hollywood: Happiness at work in the new cultural economy', in Du Gay, P. and Pryke, M. (eds) *Cultural Economy* (London: Sage): 97-115
- McRobbie, A. (2011) 'Re-Thinking Creative Economy as Radical Social Enterprise', Online. Available at: <http://www.variant.org.uk/> (Accessed: 20 March 2012).
- Mirchadani, K. (1999) 'Feminist Insight on Gendered Work: New Directions in Research on Women and Entrepreneurship', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 6(4): 224-232.
- Naudin, A. (2013) 'Media enterprise in higher education: a laboratory for learning' in Ashton, D. and Noonan, C. (eds.) *Cultural Work and Higher Education*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Oakley, K. (2011) 'In its own image: New Labour and the cultural workforce', *Cultural Trends*, 20(3-4): 281-289.
- Oakley, K. (2014) Good work? Rethinking cultural entrepreneurship in Bilton, C. and Cummings, S. (2014) *Handbook of Management and Creativity* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar): 145-159.
- Parrish, D. (2008) *Creative, Cultural and Digital Industries Guide for the West Midlands*, (Birmingham: Business Link).
- Rae, D. (2007) *Entrepreneurship: From opportunity to action*, (London: Palgrave).
- Scott, M. (2012) 'Cultural entrepreneurs, cultural entrepreneurship: Music producers mobilising and converting Bourdieu's alternative capitals', *Poetics*, 40 (3): 237-255.
- Shane, S. (2008) *The Illusions of Entrepreneurship: The costly myths that entrepreneurs, investors and policy makers live by*, (New Haven: Yale University Press).
- Smith, R. (2009) 'The Diva storyline: an alternative social construction of female entrepreneurship', *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 1 (2): 148-163.
- Stevenson, D. (2003) *Cities and Urban Cultures*, (Berkshire: Open University Press).
- Steyaert, C. and Hjorth, D. (eds.) (2006) *Entrepreneurship as social change*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar).

Taylor, S. and Littleton, K. (2008) Art work or Money: Conflicts in the construction of a creative identity, *Sociology Review*, 56 (2): 275-292.

Taylor, S. and Littleton, K. (2012) *Contemporary Identities of Creativity and Creative Work*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Taylor, S. and Littleton, K. (2013) Negotiating a contemporary creative identity in Ashton, D. and Noonan, C. (eds) *Cultural work and higher education* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Mcmillian): 154-171.

Tedmanson, D., Verduijn, K., Essers, C. and Gartner, W.B. (2012) 'Critical perspectives in Entrepreneurship Research', *Organization*, 19, (5): 531-560.