



Liberty Matters :

**Emergent theories towards expanding the
potential for personal and social emancipation
through female entrepreneurship.**

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the preface and specified in the text.

Dedication

This PhD is dedicated to my daughters Eleanor, Philippa, and Liberty who I hope observe me as a mother modelling a stance of continuous learning and polite challenge as a way for a woman to face the world. To boldly go and never demur. I would further like to pay tribute to my parents, Terence and June Whitfield who were passionate about education and modelled a life of constant learning and curious enquiry. I hope you would have been proud of me following and living your principles of an intrepid life. Lastly, I have sincere and profound thanks to my supervisors Professor Sarah Dodd and Dr. Paul Lasalle who nudged but also let me fly. They knew. They read me well. They trusted and for that I am most grateful.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	13
Introduction.....	13
Chapter 2	22
Methodology	22
2.1 Introduction	22
2.2 Answering to research question	24
2.3 Why a multi-methodology approach?	25
2.4 Why use grounded theory and does it need any adaptation as a methodology.	26
2.5 What is the overall methodological structure?	26
2.6 How else might this research gap bring up issues that should be considered in research design?	28
2.7 How is Grounded Theory conceived in this thesis?	33
2.8 What is beyond the normative applications of Grounded Theory?	34
2.9 What original conceptualisation of Grounded Theory is being used?.....	35
2.10 How is the need for detailed “thick description” in the findings met?	36
2.11 How has Charmaz’s (2006) constructivist approach been applied?	37
2.12 How might Informed Grounded Theory advance Charmaz as variation?	39
2.13 How might a touch of Symbolic Interactionism and Pierce assist interpretation?.....	40
2.14 What are the limitations of using grounded methodology in this thesis?	41
2.15 How was sampling for grounded theory decided?	42
2.16 What tools were required for this research?.....	43
2.17 What role did memos play in enhancing grounded theory data collection?	43
2.18 How was Gioia analysis and coding undertaken?.....	44
2.19 How were methods from visual anthropology incorporated into the research?.....	45
2.20 How were the principles of abduction applied in the grounded theory analysis?	50
2.21 How was a Critical Process Approach applied?	54
2.23 Conclusion: A nuanced bridge between the theoretical worlds	56
Chapter 3	58
When liberatory narratives collide: Nordicity and Gender in the Shetland Islands.	58
3.1 Introduction	58
3.2 Literature Review	60
3.3 Methodology.....	62
3.4 Antecedents: The dramatic nature of wild places	64
3.5 Antecedents: Powers behind the foregrounded institutional players	65

3.6	Antecedents: The Institutional Structure and Community Context of Up Helly Aa ...	66
3.7	Antecedents: Historical female economic agency and emancipation.....	69
3.8	The Debate: Triggering of Public Institutional Contestation	74
3.9	The Debate: Localism and Institutional legitimacy	75
3.10	The Debate: Contesting Gendered Roles.....	77
3.11	The Debate: The Rise of Female Collective Action and Male Allies.....	79
3.12	Debate: Female Activism for Continuity	82
3.13	The Debate: Navigating the conflation of tradition and identity.	86
3.15	The Debate: Reclaiming Nordic History as Female and the Shame of Marginalisation	89
3.16	The Debate: Liberty breaks the deadlock.	91
3.17	Discussion.....	92
Chapter 4		100
“We are Free”: How Entrepreneurialism by the Kalash Women of Northern Pakistan furthers female agency and group ethnicity.....		100
4.1	Introduction	100
4.2	Literature review.....	101
4.3	The uniqueness of the place	105
4.4	Forming the research question.....	110
4.6	Methods of research.....	113
4.7	Framing of place: Findings on the socio-spatial context of Kalasha	116
4.8	Nature of businesses within Kalasha and role of women.....	124
4.9	Socio-Economic Context of Pakistan for Women	125
4.10	Key Findings	128
4.11	Origin of Female Agency as a Practice	129
4.12	Embedding Female Agency in Beliefs about Nature.....	136
7.13	Educational Advancement and Female Enterprise are Intertwined.....	138
4.14	How Venturing Practices are Manifest.	139
4.15	Government Support for Female entrepreneurship	142
4.16	Role of Venturing in Cultural Differentiation.	143
4.17	Looking to the Future.....	145
4.18	Gioia Analysis of Themes	148
4.19	Discussion.....	150
4.20	Conclusion and Contribution to the Entrepreneurship Literature	156
Chapter 5		162

Ripples across the divine: empowering women and sustainability through creating socio-spatial space centred on the shared ontological principles of Karmic exchange in Jaipur, India. 162

8.1	Introduction	162
5.2	Literature on Entrepreneurship and the socially constructed characteristics of place	164
5.3	Methods	166
5.4	The venture	167
5.5	Impact of Wider Female Entrepreneurship and Empowerment	173
5.6	Beyond economics: the power of recognition	179
5.7	Family context and early influences	182
5.8	The creation of a boundaried feminised world	187
5.9	Interface with the masculine	188
5.10	Credibility through borrowed agency	189
5.11	Karma and Spiritual Space	191
5.12	The power of Recognition in enhancing Empowerment	194
5.13	Discussion	197
5.13.1	Female reputation versus economic value.	197
5.13.2	Synopsis of the Mechanism of Impact	201
5.13.3	The power of imaginary new worlds	202
5.13.4	Values and emotions: binding forces within the new world.	205
5.13.5	The epistemology of origin.	208
5.13.6	Reconnecting the wider purpose of entrepreneurship as a motor of social change.	209
5.13.7	Dispersed gains model	211
5.13.8	Liberation Theology	212
5.13.9	Concepts of empowerment	212
5.13.10	Concepts of time	213
5.14	Conclusion	214
5.14.1	Contributions to the literature	216
5.14.2	Contributions to the direction of Entrepreneurship Literature	217

Chapter 6 220

Liberty Matters: A reflection on the current literature of the role of entrepreneurship in advancing female emancipation. 220

6.1	Purpose	220
6.2	The conundrum around emancipation	221
6.3	Financial versus social value risks and returns.	222

6.4	Evidence of agentic expansion.....	223
6.5	The feminist gaze.	224
6.6	Empowerment through economic advancement.....	226
6.7	Global South and the Global North.....	228
6.8	How Academic Literature Embraces Female Entrepreneurship and Emancipation.	230
6.9	How Context is Explored	233
6.10	Considerations of Freedom.....	234
6.11	Do we see the starling but miss the murmuration?	236
6.12	Wanting different freedoms at different times	238
6.13	Finding her voice	239
6.14	“Please sir”: Access to financial capital.....	241
6.15	Empowerment in practice.....	243
6.16	Practical research pathways on which to build.	245
6.17	Final words	245
Chapter 7		248
Freedom matters: On the Potential for a deeper theoretical conceptualisation of “freedom” within emancipatory female entrepreneurship.....		248
7.1	Introduction	248
7.2	Reflections on the limited theorisation of freedom in the current literature	249
7.3	Puncturing the acceptability of “cum permissio”	249
7.4	In the shadows of the social	255
7.5	Structuration: the view of Giddens.....	256
7.6	Stepping Away from Methodological Individualism: freedom entwined with responsibility.....	258
7.8	Looking to Capabilities to build the Capacity for Exercising Freedom.....	265
7.9	Antecedents to Nussbaum (and Sen).....	266
7.10	On the axiology of freedom – what goal do we value?	268
7.11	The Capabilities Framework.....	273
7.12	Priority freedoms	274
7.13	Control over environment	275
7.14	Confronting informal social norms through a capabilities approach	277
7.15	Applied to research.....	278
7.16	Applying the Human Capabilities approach to Female Emancipation through Entrepreneurship	279
7.17	Conclusion.....	281
Chapter 8		283

Challenging the orthodoxy of power dynamics in the epistemology of informal norms within Institutional Theory	283
8.1 Purpose and Structure	283
8.2 An introduction (to contrarian thinking).	284
8.3 Brief reprise of Informal Norms in Institutional theory	287
8.3.1 Social norms and the market	287
8.3.3 Social relationships as the purpose of exchange are underweighted.	289
8.4.1 Beyond the power narrative	290
8.4.2 Entrepreneurship for female emancipation from social norms	291
8.4.3 Limited understanding of the interplay between formal and informal norms	292
8.4.4 Understanding social context to understand informal norms.....	293
8.4.5 Time is an under researched factor on norm adherence.	295
8.4.6 Interim conclusion	295
8.5 Constructing a journey.....	296
8.6 Expanded Perspectives beyond Power	297
8.6.1 The language of politics: from one strand into three	297
8.6.2 Concealed preferences of norms	300
8.6.3 What determines the punishment of dissent?	301
8.6.4 Bicchieri and a Schemata of informal norm change	303
8.6.5 The steps taken when introducing a new norm. Ref “Norms in the Wild” (Bicchieri, 2017)	304
8.7 Models of cooperation rather than competition.....	306
8.8 Exposure to the Market and Morality.....	308
8.9 Morality as Cooperation	308
8.10 Discussion.....	309
8.11 Conclusion.....	311
Chapter 9	313
Grounded Theory Outputs.....	313
9.1 Researcher’s Diary on how this Thesis can Be Read	313
9.2 Body of Literature	314
9.3 Coding the Material	315
9.4 Outputs from Grounded Theory Coding and Abstraction	318
9.5 Meta Theory 1: Norms pathway to Female emancipation.....	319
9.7 Meta Theory 3 Moral Structuration: Adding Intent to the principles of structuration. 327	
9.8 New Research Developments emerging from Thesis.	331

Chapter 10: Conclusion.....	334
10.1 Conclusion.....	334
10.2 Limitations.....	339
10.3 Future Research Directions.....	339

References.....	343

Additional Appendices

1. August 2022 while travelling, as reflections on layers of power behind the scenes.....	391
2. Researcher's Reflexive Journal Entry: Sampling.....	393
3. Reflexive Researcher Diary extract: Coding Shetland visuals.....	394
4. Researcher's Reflexivity Diary extract: A critical process approach.....	398
5. Inspired by Goffman: Structuring Institutional Components as Players upon the Shetland Stage.....	400
6. Kalash Material.....	429
7. Ripples across the Divine: Additional Material.....	430

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List of Figures

1.1	Journey Map of Thesis	20
2.1	Primary Gap is lack of a collective perspective on what is a group and socially contextualized phenomenon	33
2.2	Kalash girl singing	49
2.3	Budapest Airport Costa still life: Plane doodle, coffee, and apple cake.	53
3.1	Photo Courtesy of Gaarda: Early Shetland Up Helly Aa	59
3.2	Nature as an uncontrollable force: The Sea and the Wind	65
3.3	Traditional open and sea going yawl boat.	67
3.4	Female economic agent in training	71
3.5	Knitting as a contemporaneous action within other economic and household activity	72
3.6	Norgay and Hillary wearing Shetland jumpers on Everest	73
3.7	Shetland Dialect: showing general bemusement over the dispute.	74
3.8	South mainland First Female Squad on Shetland 2015	77
3.9	Junior Jarl Squad boys	78
3.10	Satire squared: Feminist Satirical Bill to Rival the Official Satirical Bill	81
3.11	Women Dancing in Halls during Up Helly AA	84
3.12	Viking Woman reimagined	90
3.13	Jarls Squad Lerwick 2018.	93
3.14	Up Helly Aa Squad Procession 2018.	95
4.1	Kalash Women at Chalmos Spring Festival	100
4.2	Men and women dancing together at festival time. 2018	104
4.3	Chitral Road to Kalasha 2022	106
4.4	Valley of Bumburet, Kalasha. Corn in fields with high yielding crops	109
4.5	Group Discussion with N1, M1 and their mother who runs 3 businesses	116
4.6	Road near Ayan	117
4.7	Maps of Shrinking range of Kalash territory	118
4.8	Seasonal calendar of Kalash year	119
4.9	Road from Chitral to Kalash with mountains of Hindu Kush	122
4.10	Note Low Score of Pakistan on Economic Participation and Opportunity	127
4.11	Enterprise Conditions in Pakistan	128
4.12	A2, 72. Family from Afghanistan 100+ years ago	129

4.13	Luc Rehmat, Ispata News with sister Z1. Ram's head protecting premises	133
4.14	Cross symbols in cap, braids. Note household keys around neck	135
4.15	Kalsh Girl in Cap – note cross pattern in beading as female symbol of courage	137
4.16	Kalasha Children in daily dress	139
4.17	Note shells, beading pattern design are heuristics for cultural narratives	141
4.18	Entrance to Anish, Kalash Valley	144
4.19	Women festival dancing. Cotton decoration and note patterns in caps	146
4.20	Contributing factors to Tight Loose Ranking	153
4.21	Tight Loose Ranking of Countries as measure of strict norm adherence	154
4.22	Bashali in Bumburet, Kalash	156
4.23	Womens dresses drying in the sun, Bumburet, Kalash	160
5.1	Founders on location at paper workshop	162
5.2	Workshop area, Jaipur.	166
5.3	Home packaging room	168
5.4	Variety of embossed papers made for gifts	175
5.5	Potli makers at home extended family team	176
5.6	Seed embedded paper gifts	178
5.7	Mother Shagda and daughter Pinky.	185
5.8	Pinky's Work Desk.	186
5.9	Two of packing staff in home sphere	186
5.10	Example of low-cost marketing advice given online to large numbers of women.	190
5.11	Example of seeded paper with plantable product for easy use.	192
5.12	Sharda shrine in house to Baby Krishna	192
5.13	Articulation of gift of energetic exchange	193
5.14	Ten Thousand Years of Patriarchy	199
5.15	Dominance of males in folklore	199
8.1	The steps taken when introducing a new norm	302
8.2	Elements of social schema for a “good wife” and their relations in a semantic network	303
9.1	Raw excel capture of material across all chapters and researcher diaries	314
9.2	Theory of Norms Pathway and Female Emancipation	318
9.3	Theoretical Model of Time vs Reputation	320

9.4	Classical structuration: structure and agency	326
9.5	Moral Structuration Theory	328

List of Tables

1.1	Timeline of research and thesis development	20
2.1	Methodological coherence of response to research question	32
4.1	Gioia Analysis of Practices and Abduction therefrom	151
5.1	Gioia Analysis final rounds	167
7.1	Adaptation of Capability Theory to Entrepreneurship	273
7.2	Applied example of capability theory on venture analysis	278
9.1	Origination of Cited Literature	312
9.2	Comparison of Moral Norms with Findings	329
9.3	New research streams emerging from thesis.	330
10.4	Contributions to Literature	335

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

Introduction

“Oppressive forces are known to precede emancipation because, without oppression, the need for emancipation would not exist.”

(Laclau, 1996)

Entrepreneurship is more than enterprise. Formation and development are socially contextualised and brings agency benefits to participants beyond the financial metrics of trade. Female entrepreneurship brings hope of increased personal empowerment to women. This is both through increasing financial capacity and by extending their social agency. Expectations are high that individual empowerment leads to wider emancipation of women within society (Rindova et al, 2009). The literature demonstrates the impact of female entrepreneurship on a country’s economic development (Hsieh, Hurst, Jones & Klenow, 2019). Women also hire other women (West & Sundaramurthy, 2019; Lenz & Aspan, 2018) within new ventures, leading to increased economic agency for both founders and staff. However, there is little evidence of a reliable pathway toward wider female emancipation. The aspiration is that women will use increased economic agency to shift the social norms that circumscribe their social agency. The literature offers little hope (Laine & Kibler, 2022). There is a gap in both empirics and theory to establish how increasing female entrepreneurship can advance female social emancipation (Berglund, Gaddefors & Lindgren, 2016). The rise of accessible digital trading opportunities, considered a breakthrough for women, is not enough to alleviate female precarity and constrained agency (Martinez, Martin & Marlow, 2018). It is not clear whether female entrepreneurship has an entourage effect that may bring forth a swathe of consequential norm changes. Alternatively, social agency effect might be minimal, limited to the individual, financial, and social impacts of participants. Institutional norms may remain relatively unchanged (UNDP, 2022).

Empirical studies may observe the journey of an organisation (Datta & Gailey, 2012), or compare contexts (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) or small groups (Zayadin, Zucchella & Anand, 2022). These consider how women see their own agency expand beyond their prior position. Occasionally, there is an indication of a diffusion effect of

entrepreneurship (Pampel, 2011). The literature is sceptical as to whether embracing entrepreneurship leads to a sustained expansion of agency and a positive social change in women's lives (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). Scholars draw attention to pervasive informal social norms restricting agency (Anderson & Ojediran, 2021) that are deeply embedded in place (Steyaert & Katz, 2004). Gender relations and opportunities appear shaped by history, spatial context, and socio-cultural factors (Welter, Baker & Wirsching, 2018). This leads to the research question:

“Can new theory advance our understanding of how informal social norms modulate the expansion of female agency in places of female entrepreneurship?”

This thesis develops new theory in response to the research question. It does so by inverting the level of analysis from the individual entrepreneur to the level of observing the collective: women embedded with each other and within their wider society. It explores informal social norms relating to female agency created within a specific socio-spatial context. Female entrepreneurship is the vehicle for achieving a collective social goal of increased individual empowerment and shared emancipation. This builds on the work of Redhead and Bika (2018), McKeever et al. (2015) and Korsgaard et al. (2015) who examine the influence of spatial contextual factors, either of fixed location or a fluid conceptualization of place upon entrepreneurship.

Informed grounded theory (Thornberg, 2012) is adopted as a methodology to generate original theory from a combination of empirical data and additional theorisation about female freedom and group dynamics. The data source is this collection of related empirical data, literature and theoretical observations on the field. This is a novel method to develop theory from a heterogenous sampling of contexts, yet all within an interpretivist ontology. The first empirical study applies institutional theory in a 5-year longitudinal examination of the campaign for equal gender inclusion in the Up Helly Aa fire festivals in The Shetlands Islands of Scotland. This is a place of historically notable female enterprise activity typical of joint North Atlantic marine households (Byron, 1994). Here women have modernised their female collective agency through vigorous public discourse. The second empirical study applies practice theory within a bounded place (Trettina & Welter, 2019) to consider why the exceptionally high level of female entrepreneurship found within the Kalash group in northern Pakistan mountains exists.

This is in contrast to exceptionally low levels of collective personal agency and business formation by Sunni Muslim Pakistani women (Yunis, Hashim & Anderson, 2018; GEM, 2021). The third empirical study is a depth case study in Jaipur, India, a highly patriarchal society (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010; Shahriar, 2018; Barragan, Erogal & Essers, 2018) of a mother and daughter family business which has created a conceptual social-spatial place (Müller & Korsgaard, 2018) based on an understanding of Hindu collective spirituality. This is a new shared social context enabling the flourishing of female entrepreneurs and the empowerment of employed women working at home in rural India. This empirical research trio contributes to the literature of female emancipation through entrepreneurship.

Reviewing the literature reveals that agency in female entrepreneurship focuses on expression of personal and collective freedom to navigate embedded social norms. This is a nascent field revealing opportunity for more empirical contribution. There is also a gap in theory as analysis remains at the individual level and does not assess any collective valence of groups over individual agency. This is a material gap as agency is an embedded, relational concept of a person within a group and their scope for action therein. Expansion of agency can be expressed as being from one relational state to another (Berlin, 1969). The extant literature does not explore how social agency is advanced by female entrepreneurship from this group-level perspective of the position where norms aggregate and affect many. The current understanding of “freedom” (emancipation, empowerment, liberation, freedom) and how its boundaries may be shifted through female entrepreneurship suggests a research opportunity to build on some early theory (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) within the field of how female agency might be advanced. Two new theory contributions are included in this thesis to explore this point. One theory chapter seeks to deepen the conceptual framework of agentic freedom by reference both to classical Greek thought (Pettit, 2016) and the capability theory proposals of Nussbaum (2000). This advances a more robust model of individual and collective agency flowing from female entrepreneurship and the informal norms within institutional theory. The second theory chapter challenges the privileging of power struggles within institutional theory to propose a plurality of other motives. Group valence extends the perspective of individual agency. This explores collective groups acting to either advance or constrain female agency through entrepreneurship. This contribution draws on current thinking in other social science fields that consider how a female’s individual agency to expand

beyond the informal social norms in a context might be modulated by a group rationale (Bicchieri, 2017).

The empirical chapters are a synthesis of the body of material informed by anthropological methods: local field work, visual analysis, and textual discourse analysis. An important further source of data is an extensive literature review of emancipation as relates to female entrepreneurship setting out the dynamics between informal social norms, place, and agency. Further material is within the appendix to allow the reader to enter the immersive experience of being a female entrepreneur within three contexts: the fiery nocturnal experience of a Viking festival in an isolated island community in the North Atlantic, the bucolic valleys of the Hindu Kush surrounded by women walking around freely in traditional dress or the noisy, jostling, jasmine fragranced streets of a warm monsoon evening in Jaipur. This thesis answers the call for researchers to be defiant, bold, and provocative (Lefebvre & Hytti, 2022). It embraces the imaginative, the creative, the intuitive and indeed the feminine (Cunliffe, 2022). This should assist in the “creative production of hypotheses based on surprising evidence” (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 168).

This thesis contributes to the literature on female emancipation through entrepreneurship. It also addresses the overrepresentation of the heroic male individual as the dominant narrative. It redresses the underrepresentation of women venturing in diverse social contexts. Collective versus individual freedom is explored with reference to the literature of the entrepreneur as being socially embedded. The primary contribution of this thesis is to the literature regarding the socially embedded female entrepreneur who advances agency towards the empowerment of herself and the social liberation of other women.

The literature gap identified is that a collective level of analysis may better theorise a pathway through which social norms lead female entrepreneurs to greater empowerment and emancipation. Theory has been developed to answer the research question both in conceptually and in enhanced methodology. A norms pathway to female emancipation is proposed which considers the balance of social and economic production society seeks from women. It further explores concepts of religiosity, time, and values which enhance a woman’s reputation. The methodology contribution is that of moral structuration theory. The theory proposes that group-level agency often precedes and takes precedence over individual female choices and that informal norms are structured “top down” to

enforce group-level economic and social interests. The latter often outweighs the former in ways that privilege the social standing of the group over the woman's singular agentic freedom. This inverts the theory of bottom-up "structuring" of practices that create informal social norms. Giddens (1984), and other institutional thinkers such as North (1990) and Scott (2001), infer that if there is a change to the practices, then the aggregated norms will also shift. They recognize that resistance is related to entrenched informal norms that are difficult to shift but have not asked why there is such intransigence. Rather than following Giddens (1984), this thesis suggests that group valence dominates individual agency and offers a theory as to why resistance to extending female agency, and so entrepreneurship, is so deeply embedded within a place. It is theoretically concilient with other findings of group-level valence found within social psychology (Gelfand, 2018), anthropology (Henrich, 2017), behavioural economics (Khalifa, 2022) and gender scholars (Evans, 2020).

Informal norms that determine a woman's reputation emerge as a critical social asset that weigh upon women seeking to participate in economic and social production. Reputational concerns are also a factor weighing male social value within a fraternal group. Fears for reputation were found to be both a potential barrier and enabler of female economic participation, a factor largely absent in the literature to date. The value of the women to the group, be it within family, kin or wider society is weighed both as a potential economic and reputational asset and source of social production. The risks to the male group by women, as they would perceive it, to the social channels of generating and sharing in community cultural capital in Shetland were a similar example of reputational capital being a hidden factor to considerations of expanding female agency. Increasing female agency, and that of women more widely is theorised to occur when it is in the wider group's economic and social interests, not just her own. Social change is therefore found to advance when aligned with both wider group goals and specifically with male group self-interest. This subordination of interests can be circumvented by expanding the female realm of social production to include economic production. Entering the male realm of economic production poses significant social norm barriers based on fraternal capital groups resistant to female inclusion. Collective female action, institutional formation and role models in entrepreneurship can act as a counterweight to such male group primacy.

The canon of entrepreneurship literature has been parsed by Dey, Fletcher & Verduijn (2022) into four strands of critical theory which examine social transformation. This thesis sits within the epistemological tradition of interpretivist research and adopts an affirmative-foundational orientation. In this respect, entrepreneurship can be considered as a vehicle of female emancipation (Rindova et al., 2009) or a tool for creative world-making (Montessori, 2016). This illustrates the enhanced social roles that transcend economic rationality (Calás et al., 2009) into a force for societal production. This stance affirms a capitalist market condition from which a universal social good can be brought forth rather than other critical approaches which would seek to reduce the role of the market. This thesis explores how women may navigate and push aside social norms through entrepreneurship but are doing so within their existing social structures. It accepts the current economic paradigm yet theorizes imaginatively by “selectively borrowing theories from other disciplines, blending theories, and decision process models for elaborating theory” (Cunliffe, 2022). The charge is made that female entrepreneurship is a reification of social context and so reinforcing structural gender inequalities rather than changing them (Ahl, 2004; Calás et al., 2009). This assumes that access to entrepreneurship is related to the structural flaws of the economic system, which are in turn shaped by unequal social and gender relations. This thesis does not advance any preference for economic system change. It explores a capitalist economic system as a constant alongside the social norms system. It is this “norms system” that is theorised as constraining both female entrepreneurship and its emancipatory potential. The contexts selected are places where social forces still strongly influence the encompassed market (Polanyi, 1957) rather than society being dominated by the economy. This may offer greater clarity on how informal norms shape commercial outcomes form within specific social contexts.

A feminist epistemology (Kaufman, 2021) has been used to unify the orientation of interpretation in line with Marlow (2020) that female entrepreneurship is a separate social phenomenon. It is not a “plus one” addendum to male entrepreneurship. This thesis adds to the corpus of feminist literature that explores cross-cultural aspects of women as socially embedded within their culture, place, and wider social structures (Welter, 2011). It generates startling insights and theory that illuminate female entrepreneurship overall. The contribution of this thesis is to advance the discussions about expanding female entrepreneurship, particularly in economies still strongly modulated by particularly

constraining social factors. The proposed theories suggest how women may circumvent entrenched informal social norms that both inhibit venture participation and curtail female agency.

Reflection is given as to the telos of this research. The position taken is to adopt the principles of Nussbaum (2011). Gains of social change and enhanced emancipation should accrue to women because she is of value in herself. Empowerment leads her to expand the possibilities available to her within her own life. Care is taken that the focus on the female in her constrained historical position of being a conduit for social reproduction of value to others does not mutate into her becoming a conduit of economic or social production on behalf of the state. Economic development professionals seek to achieve a more advanced society through female venturing (World Bank, 2022). The recommendations of this thesis are to extend conceptualisation of entrepreneurship beyond novel social and economic production to consider venturing as the engine of human social potentiality and so to be reconsidered as generating a public good. This offers equal access for individuals to develop their full capacity through venturing. No one knows an individual's potential for creation, of ideas or assets or new social ways of being that may lead to potential social change. Given the success that women play in managing the public domain sustainably (Ostrom, Chang, Pennington & Tarko, 2012), it is proposed that entrepreneurship is seen as a public good for the benefit of collective agency development. This would progress society along the theorised emancipation pathway. Capability development of society could be managed and protected by the shared female and male collective. All members of a community managing their human assets for sustainable growth is discussed as a way forward giving an expanding role for entrepreneurship in society.

To aid the reader, this thesis is set out as a single monograph of a grounded theory approach which iterates between the examination of external data from the extant academic literature with novel empirical and theoretical contributions. These build toward to analysis of both internal and external data as a cumulative data set on which a grounded theory analysis is undertaken. This leads to several novel theories to address the core research question. This also opens up avenues of new research to interrogate and

apply this novel theorisation. This flow across the thesis is set out in Fig 1. / Table 1.

Fig. 1 Journey Map of Thesis

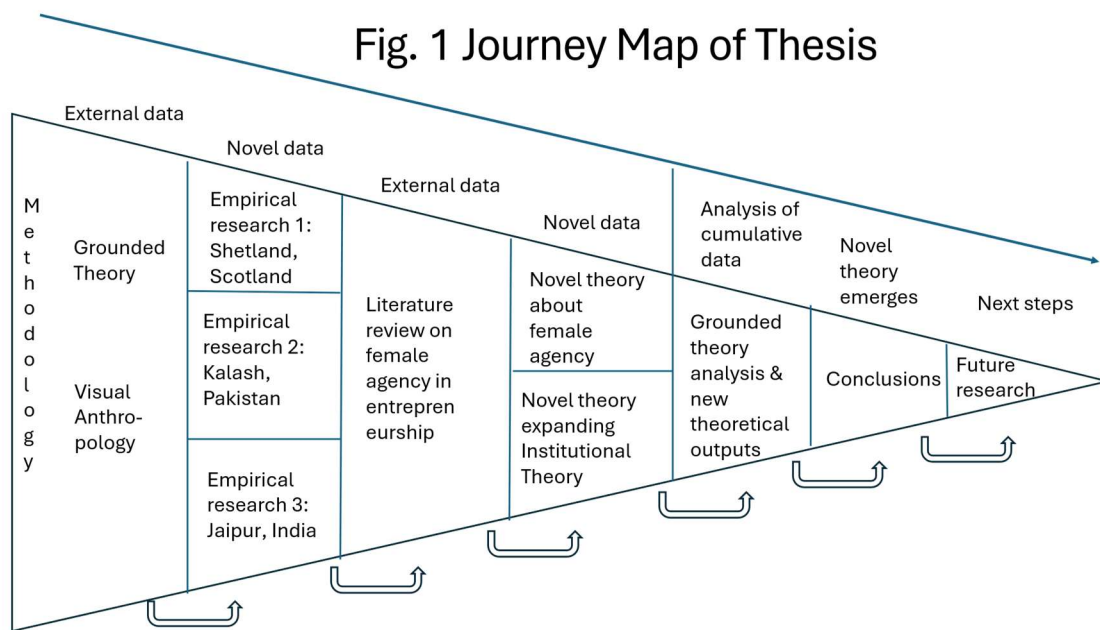


Table 1.1

Chapter Guidance		Purpose
Chapter	1 Introduction	Precis of purpose and contribution of thesis
Chapter	2 Methodology	Exploration of grounded theory and visual anthropology upon primary & secondary data
Chapter	3 Shetland empirical study	Meso field work: Institutional theory exploration of gender conflict within Up Helly Aa
Chapter	4 Pakistan empirical study	Macro field work: Practice theory analysis of female entrepreneurship embedded in wider social system
Chapter	5 India empirical case study	Micro field work: depth case study of female entrepreneur transforming belief systems into novel entrepreneurial space
Chapter	6 Literature review	Review of extant literature on female agency in entrepreneurship through lens of female epistemology
Chapter	7 Theory on Female agency	Expanding the scope of philosophy used in understanding female agency
Chapter	8 Expanding institutional theory	Expanding the scope of power within institutional theory to other explanatory variables
Chapter	9 Grounded theory analysis	Analysis and emerging theoretical outputs of all the data above through grounded theory methods
Chapter	10 Conclusions	Core contribution, limitations and areas for further research
References		Literature and sources used across the thesis
Appendix		Additional source material as examples of data scope within grouped theory analysis

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

“Entrepreneurship scholarship needs to continue to develop new theories and elaborate on existing theories to best explain entrepreneurial phenomena” . (Shepherd & Williams, 2022).

As a response to the research question, grounded theory methodology is chosen. The data set used is a curation of novel contributions that include both empirical research and pure theoretical exposition. This allows for the core action at the heart of grounded theory to be realised by interaction between observations and reflection. A dialectic forms between coding of data and abduction of thought. Alongside the chapters sits an appendix of material which gives "thick" descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the three places of empirical research. Extracts of voice memos, reflections, and questions as they emerge are also in the archive along with secondary material that informed thematic analysis. This thesis sits as a standalone finished artefact, complete in itself.

This thesis has layers. There is an exterior grounded theory structure (Thornberg, 2012; Status & Glaser, 1994; Charmaz, 2006) for all the material contained therein. The next layer is different genres of interpretivist ontology. Each chapter then has a further consideration of the principles of feminist epistemology (Kauffman, 2021). All the chapters then have a bespoke interpretivist methodology to match the research objectives but are synergistic. The first empirical study employs practice theory, the second institutional theory, and the third is a depth case study. The two theory chapters are both pure expressions of abductive exploration using extant literature. Extensive and unusually detailed Gioia techniques (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2013) were used within each empirical study. Capturing abductive ideas was taken after several rounds of coding on the material comprising the first eight chapters of this thesis. Up to eight rounds of coding were conducted post-transcription. Mind mapping techniques were applied to initially structure the copious amounts of field material generated.

The research question also implies looking at places as a whole. This is to view the context in which female entrepreneurship sits and then observe how women shape, navigate, and create ventures from within that context. In one case, it is observing the creation a new form of shared socio-spatial context for venturing. This is an inversion of perspective from a sole entrepreneur to the shared collective space. The focus on the group in which the women are embedded is an unusual approach within entrepreneurship, but novel spatial dynamics of entrepreneurship have been explored by Redhead and Bilka (2022) in a coastal setting and McKeever et al. (2015) in a rural community. However, only limited attention has been given to female entrepreneurship interacting with their socio-spatial context. Informal social norms therein may operate at the individual level of expression, one-on-one, but have group characteristics that transcend the individual member. A consideration for methodology, beyond observing that grounded theory might be best to beget novel theory, was how to conduct research at the collective rather than individual level of analysis.

For this, inspiration was taken from the field of anthropology where the emphasis is on group-level perspectives by investigating the lived experience or reporting of individuals within a specific place. Ethnographic techniques were adapted with the express intention of understanding the group-level dynamics of societal norms that shape the context in which a female entrepreneur operates. Such an examination of their social worlds would also identify how agency was perceived and expressed through entrepreneurship, enabled, and constrained within context. One weakness recognized in such observational research (Banks, 2018) is that in an ocular-centric world of visual meaning, academic researchers privilege the verbal over the visible. Words are the coin of the academic realm. This can lead to blindness to observable symbolism and group social dynamics. There are hidden meanings in interactions that might be observed but not overtly spoken. The three contexts also feature a high degree of visual meaning, expressed in festivals and clothing that embody identity and collective expression. For these reasons, visual anthropology techniques of coding image data are included to ensure these are weighted within the analysis. In line with grounded theory approaches, a researcher diary was also included and extracts of this are woven into the thesis as exemplary practice as a reflexive researcher (Baker & Welter, 2020).

2.2 Answering to research question

“Can new theory advance our understanding of how informal norms modulate the expansion of female agency in places of female entrepreneurship”

By looking at a single piece of research in one place, insights can be drawn, but can the findings be applied to another place? Baker and Welter (2020) warn of the risk that research contributes to empirical evidence from novel contexts but does not necessarily contribute to wider theory development or cross-context understanding. This research thesis develops a theoretical response derived from three diverse contexts. Related phenomena may be seen without compromising the analysis of each context. Each study can stand alone, but when combined generate novel theoretical insights. Three contexts, a triangulation of places, should be sufficient for providing time and depth for each contribution. They are contiguous in sharing the challenge of extending personal agency through entrepreneurship.

Two theoretical chapters enhance theory development beyond the novel contextual evidence. Innovative ideas from scholars in related fields also explore gendered social group dynamics and group versus individual agency. This expands the available options for conceptual analysis as delving into multidisciplinary might accelerate new thinking. It is possible to observe novel contexts, but without original theoretical contributions from the wider social sciences the risk is that the research question remains inadequately answered. A theoretical starting point within each chapter is given as “without a point of origin in a body of theory and intellectual abstraction (even if located there after the event), the findings and output of any particular study are difficult to take further or generalize” (Banks, 2018, p. 11). Such a result may be confirmatory of past research findings but fall below the expectation of new theory development.

There are indications that entrepreneurship may advance female agentic scope but enhanced conceptual formulation is required to deepen the empirical analysis. There is also a theoretical gap to expand theory regarding social norms as applied within institutional theory. There is a stream of institutional research following North (1990) and Scott (2001) but newer research in parallel fields challenge prior suppositions. Knowledge of informal social norms in philosophy (Bicchieri, 2017) and social psychology (Gelfand, 2018) counter theoretical assumptions about the primacy of power

as a motive force for norm change. Novel thinking about informal social norms might contribute to applications of institutional theory in entrepreneurship and refresh the field's assumptions.

Welter and Baker (2021) discuss the need to extend context and theorizing beyond the local. Socio-spatial research using narrative inquiry that includes spatial elements can deftly be coupled with multiple historical structures and memories that are still resonant in places. Narratives may assist in understanding the complexities of multi-embeddedness and move scholars beyond monocausal factors or the privileging of venture outcomes over contextual influences:

“Drawing on theories from outside the entrepreneurship field in this manner provides an avenue to overcome the shortages of the preoccupation with macrolevel outcomes”.

(Welter, Baker & Wirsching, 2019, p. 329)

A component of this thesis is a conceptual expansion of theories of emancipation and the social norms that influence female agency. For consistency, agency is herein defined as “the capacity of one person to act upon another, or to influence a set of social relations as a result of such action” (Banks, 2018, p. 12). The theoretical concepts of agency used in the literature on female emancipation is shown to still be at the formative stage. The literature is unclear about how, if at all, consent can be withdrawn or transitioned into full autonomy of action without requiring approval from another (Anderson & Ojediran, 2021). Diverse types of agency remain underexplored, be they religious, affiliative, financial, deal making or matters of bodily autonomy. There are indications of how entrepreneurship may advance the scope of agency for women, but additional theoretical formulation would deepen empirical analysis.

2.3 Why a multi-methodology approach?

In each chapter, different interpretivist methodologies correspond with observed entrepreneurial and social dynamics. Each context has distinctive characteristics: group-level interaction in a venturing context differs, as does the expression of agency. Tailoring of methodology to the research question in place is required. To answer the overall research question, was to “consider the most suitable subject or empirical context

for investigation and then consider which methods within that context are most likely to yield data that will address the problem” (Banks, 2018, p. 10).

2.4 Why use grounded theory and does it need any adaptation as a methodology.

Besides the capability of grounded theory to generate original theory, there are two other reasons why it is the unifying methodology. The first reason is its applicability to social movements (Mattoni, 2014). A search for female emancipation is akin to an analysis of social movements, and the methodology can bring unity to disparate data. As a collection of activist voices and in capturing the discourse of public debate about societal change (Mattoni, 2014), media practices as a data source are especially well-suited to grounded theory. This can help overcome comparative coding and the “methodological and measurement problems with regard to identity, emotions and culture” that “may frustrate the development of this cultural perspective into a new paradigm” (Klandermans & Staggenborg 2002, p. 12).

Symbolic interactionism explores how meaning is created and coalesces across social actors and so how female agency is negotiated. How this illuminates venturing, and agency, can be explored beyond the few pre-constituted and power-dominated hypotheses for the operationalization of informal social norms. Here also "definitive concepts provide prescriptions for what to see, while sensitizing concepts suggest ways of looking" (Mattoni, 2014, p. 2). Looking at content and manner of changes in female agency is analogous to observing conceptually-framed social mobilizations, particularly how female emancipation might arise.

2.5 What is the overall methodological structure?

To reiterate, the methodological approach within this thesis operates on two levels. The first is informed grounded theory from a feminist symbolic interactionist perspective, detailed below. This is the underlying approach to gaining insights and conclusions from all the standalone research chapters used as data sources.

The second level is that of the empirical and theoretical chapters themselves. Methods differ but all sit within interpretivism. Their ontologies, axiologies, and epistemologies

are synergistic and well-known. One common set of interpretivist roots three locations. There were several considerations on the selection of these three locations:

- a) Level of analysis: one study a macro society level understanding (Kalash), one meso level institutional level (Shetland) and one micro level case study (India)
- b) Liminal places: the search for the distant and liminal was to find places still with vestiges of older ways to better see the relationship between female agency and deep socio0historical context.. This aligns with calls in the literature to do so.
- c) Different religions: the desire was to seek a variety of influences within the social-cultural spaces so religion varied . The richness of three traditions that shape values could emerge alongside each other: Christianity, Hinduism and a version of shamanism within a Sunni Muslim location.
- d) Outlier places of exceptional female entrepreneurship: Shetland offers a Joint Marine Household tradition of active economic parity with men historically, the Kalash are an exceptionally high level of entrepreneurship compared to its wider cultural context and Pinky in her self and the female ecosystem of 500 founders was a exceptional example of success in a fraternal based society. Exceptional
- e) Variety of theoretical lens apt per context: Shetland offered institutional theory, kalash practice theory and India and depth case study. This brought a wider set of potential theoretical insights by expanding beyond one lens.
- f) English accessible: each site is either accessible to me as an English speaker or had translation available to complement this when needed.

The methodologies for each are detailed within each empirical chapter but to summarise:

Shetland – An exploration of the clash of liberatory narratives between liberal, “Nordic” social democratic principles and a historically strong feminism enabling high economic participation. This illuminates concerns about cultural identity and emancipation within a community. Institutional theory and netnography methods explore how these two sets of social norms negotiate uncomfortably around female access to the inner structures of Up Helly Aa festival as women. Women agitate for inclusion in this 5-year longitudinal

study, observing how norms of societal contribution to the community are reinterpreted through a clash crossing both informal and formal institutional norms.

Kalash Valley - This chapter presents a unique counterfactual of a world in which women are seen largely as equals, assume a dominant role in leading businesses, and whose cultural identity is reenforced through entrepreneurship as a contrast to the surrounding Sunni Muslim women in Northern Pakistan. These women express high agency in both life decisions and commercial acts. Practice theory helps explain how group and individual practices shape expectations about women's roles, and how this manifests as female entrepreneurship.

Pinky Maheshwari – This is a depth case study in Jaipur, India using a mixture of life narrative and visual anthropology methods to understand the manner in which her freedom as a female entrepreneur is structured, expressed, and yet her agency constrained. Social norms frame her actions yet her creation of a separate spiritual context that fits within the Hindu tradition allows wider emancipation of others through a spiritual ecosystem of entrepreneurship.

As the analysis unfolds, the questions arises of whether entrepreneurship is the end or is a powerful means of women progressing from subordination to enhanced empowerment (Akehlad & Berglund, 2018) within a bounded space. In each chapter, there is a sense of peering over the edge of the field with a view to gathering and reintegrating back insights from other disciplines. This enables an extended theoretical response to the overall research question.

2.6 How else might this research gap bring up issues that should be considered in research design?

Observing the literature through the perspective of entrepreneurship as a collective rather than individual phenomenon brings up three further sub-themes. One is how female freedom and scope of agency are conceptualised within a place. Another is how informal norms in a place are understood to be shaped within the institutional theory literature. How norms shift over time in a location reflect its unique mix of formal institutions and informal social structures. Lastly, time is under researched in the socio-spatial context in dimensions other than the linear.

Female emancipation through entrepreneurship still undertheorizes the issue of freedom and why it matters, particularly as to how it affects a group of women within a given context. This is addressed by a theoretical chapter advancing concepts of freedom. This chapter delineates the remit of personal agency by referring to moving from requiring permission from another, tacitly or overtly, to having fuller autonomy as a woman in a venturing capacity. The chapter builds on the work of Ahehlad & Berglund (2018) by integrating the classical philosophical concepts of *cum permissio* and *libertas* (Pettit, 2016) into their original tripartite definition of subordination, empowerment to emancipation, placing their work within the historical context of theories of autonomous agency. This enhanced theoretical view is then applied upon the prior chapters for a sharper analysis of female agency in entrepreneurship. By adopting a group perspective, the undertheorizing of the formulation and mechanisms of change of informal norms in institutional theory becomes more apparent. In comparison to the level of delineation and debate on group agency in parallel social sciences literature, entrepreneurship literature could be further enriched.

Addressing this gap at the collective level is also to build on the original work on institutional theory of North (1990) and Scott (2005) in a second conceptual chapter. This incorporates the philosophical work of Bicchieri (2016) on informal norms, complemented by more practical case-based theory from recent anthropology and social psychology literature. This theoretical chapter explores the dynamics of collective self-interest of the group in which entrepreneurship is embedded and how this may shape female choices to pursue entrepreneurship. Structural barriers surrounding female entrepreneurship may rise and fall and it is clearer why they are formed with group-wide intent.

Considering the development of female agency can imply that it will change over time. Action today may lead to betterment tomorrow. However, this view of temporality is limiting. Conditions can also regress; progress is not an inevitability. Female agency for entrepreneurship may change over time: expand, contract, or shift within a socially embedded context. The dynamics on this flow is under researched with limited empirical studies exploring how place and time fluidly shape the context for female entrepreneurship. This relates to an underdetermination of temporality in place, as identified by Welter and Baker (2021) across the entrepreneurship field. This gap on

temporality is considered in how time shapes the venturing conditions of a place and how fixed space interacts with time. The Kalash chapter examines the emergence of female venturing community using a spiritually based and ancient conceptualizations of freedom based on circular conceptions of time and nature. The Shetland chapter looks at the pre-existing culturally empowering narratives within a place and how conflicting mythologies of freedom drawn from the past have influenced the last one hundred years in which the historical expansion of female economic agency was felt to have now stagnated. The depth study chapter of a female entrepreneur in Jaipur, India looks at how ancient Hindu concepts of Karmic time shape a modern business and support the founders' expanded female agency. These considerations of circular time and universal rather than the linear time frames can enhance, sustain, or curtail female entrepreneurship.. There is a further sub-area to note which is that there is an underrepresentation of rural contexts of places existing within a slower time (Müller & Korsgaard, 2018; Bosworth, 2012). The empirical chapters are added to the corpus of knowledge on female entrepreneurship within a socio-spatial context and with subtle appreciations of time.

The literature gap identified is a limitation of theory on the expansion of agency from female entrepreneurship within a place and the absence of research on collective levels of intent within the social context. This builds on the work of Redhead and Bika (2018), McKeever et al. (2015) and Korsgaard et al. (2015). These scholars have developed literature on how spatial contextual factors, either of fixed location or a fluid conceptualization of place, influence entrepreneurship through deeply embedded social networks within local communities. Yet, community level purpose driving entrepreneurship is absent. The authors may use place as part of a mixed embeddedness response (Redhead & Bika, 2018), whereas this thesis focuses on place of embeddedness as the unifying theme. The context changes, the ventures differ but the exploration of entrepreneurialism and agency in place pervades.

A wider question emerges in this exploration. What difference does expanding female agency through entrepreneurship makes to society? Rather than seeing it as an adjunct to male enterprise (Marlow, 2020), female entrepreneurship may make unique commercial and social contributions to the collective. Rather than examining the differences in outcomes or processes, this fundamental question floats unbidden. Without female

entrepreneurship, what would society look like? How would agentic scope, commercial profile, and economic capability differ? With more of it? In what forms? Within discussions of agency in female entrepreneurship, the viewpoints are varied or even contradictory, ranging from affirmations such as "surely it must" make a difference to some observations that women create different businesses. As well as additional economic growth (Duflo, 2015) there are also gains in diversification of the economy that differ from men (Bandiera et al., 2022). Women do it differently.

The contrary view is that there are limited impacts on society as other normative constraints remain in place (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). The UN ranking for levels of gender equality (UN, 2022) is roughly mirrored by the ranking for female entrepreneurship (GEM, 2021). There is nothing to indicate that culture and place are not still the most influential factors rather than the inverse: that female entrepreneurship increases female agency. That is the critical test. Indeed, what advancement is there besides, though not limited to, economic improvements? The field does not need to justify itself but being able to advance an understanding of social impacts beyond individual or collective economic wellbeing is sought across scholars in the field as first proposed by Rindova et al. (2009). Does a woman engaging in female entrepreneurship see her agency expanded in other ways? If not for herself, as a role model to other women? This is the harshness of the "but for" test, adopted from jurisprudential thinking. "But for" her participation, what would be the scope of her, or other women's agency? A contribution to discussion is also made at the micro level: what difference has being an entrepreneur made to these women, in this place, during this time and to their community? Observations can also be made across the three empirical chapters from specific lives. The tight theoretical framing of freedom helps pinpoint where their agency has been extended through entrepreneurship.

To aid the reader, a synopsis of the overall approach to grounded theory is given and the role of each individual chapter is set out in the introduction and the contribution each chapter makes to the whole as a response to the research question. This output is then the basis of the second stage: grounded theory methodology applied to the data. For the purposes of this thesis, the three empirical studies constitute mutual "primas inter pares."

As well as the synopsis in Table 2.1, Fig 2.1 also displays how this thesis fits into the literature on female emancipation through ventures in spatial contexts and the new collective perspective. The gaps within subthemes are also identified. The outside circles are all primary sources in other disciplines that contribute insight into the collective nature of female and group agency. These are selectively brought into the field.

Table 2.1: Methodological coherence of response to research question

Methodological Coherence of Response to Research Question						
Papers >>>>		Theory chapter on Agency	Theory chapter Collectivity	Liberatory clash Shetland	Kalash women	Jaipur India Depth Case study
Rationale for paper within female e-ship		What is the? Scope for individual increase in agency	What is the? Balance of individual versus group agency	What is the? Way women advance social agency	What is the? Reason for such e-ship levels there	What is the? Scope to make a parallel female world
Methodology		Direct Theoretical enquiry	Direct Theoretical enquiry	Institutional theory /longitudinal case study	Practice theory/ case study	Depth case study
Sources		Secondary material from wider social sciences	Secondary material from wider social sciences	Five year longitudinal review using secondary material	Primary field visit plus secondary material	Primary field visit plus secondary material
Primary Gap	Collective perspective female e-ship in context	Scholarship on theories of freedom	Scholarship on theories of collectivity	Uses group level phenomenon	Uses group level phenomenon	Observes created spatial context
Sub-gap 1	Freedom matters in female emancipation venturing	Libertas: cum permissio	Minor theme	Minor theme	Major theme	Major theme
Sub Gap 2	Informal social norms in institutional theory in female e-ship	Support theme	Group perspective to complement	Shifts in female norms through collective action & if in male interest	Major theme	Major theme
Sub Gap 3	Time as an influencing factor on female venturing agency in context	Included historical arc of how agency changed	Long versus short terms rationale for group level influence	Observing development of agency over time	Transmogrify long standing social and cultural values of female agency into ventures	Limits of place and culture yet emancipation through e-ship emerges, defy time
		Overall research question: <i>"Can new theory advance our understanding of how informal social norms modulate the expansion of female agency in places of female entrepreneurship?"</i>				
		All inputs used as data sources for application of overarching grounded theory methodology				
		Overall meta theory generated through informed grounded theory				

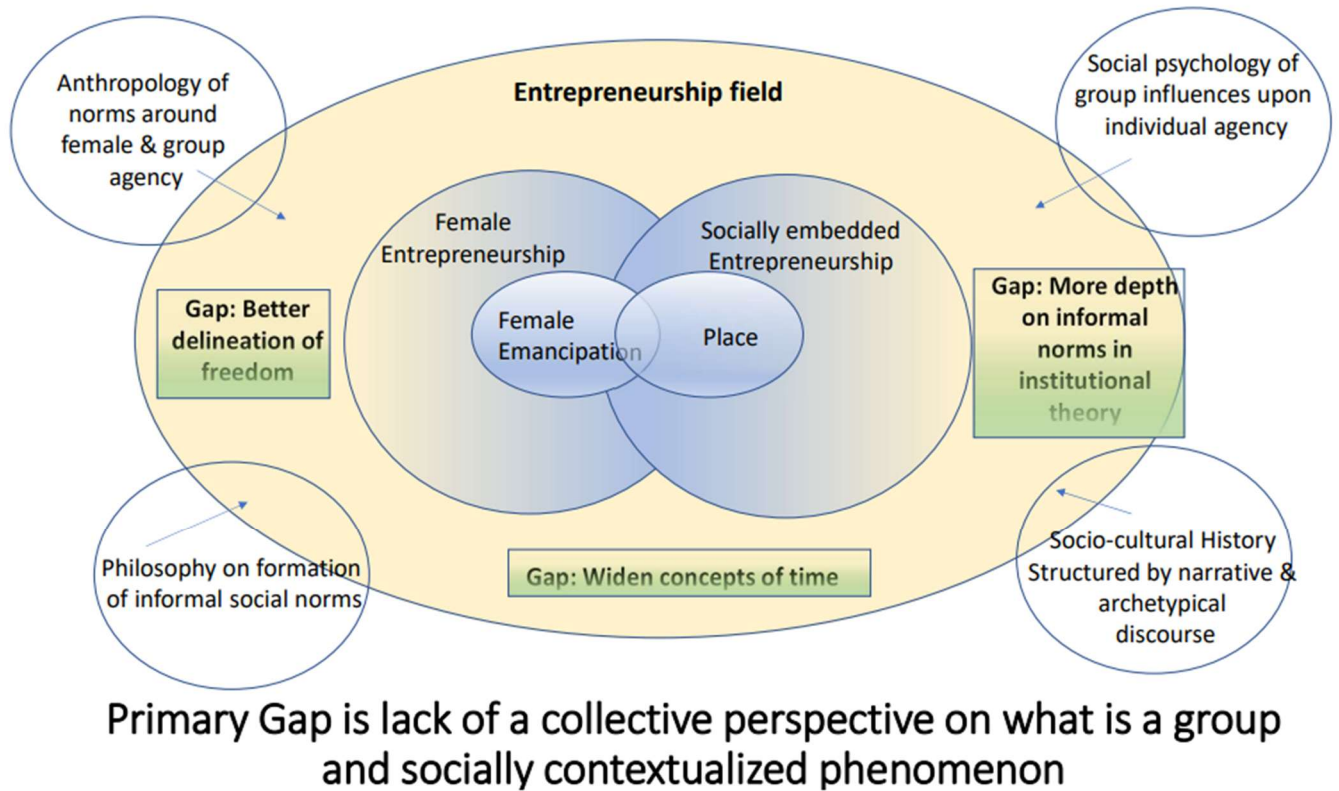


Figure 2.1: Primary Gap is lack of a collective perspective on what is a group and socially contextualized phenomenon

2.7 How is Grounded Theory conceived in this thesis?

The research question is:

“Can new theory advance our understanding of how informal social norms modulate the expansion of female agency in places of female entrepreneurship?”

Informed grounded theory (Thornberg, 2012) as a qualitative research approach is helpful for theory generation, often with data drawn from a single data set and a single knowledge field where prior understanding is inevitable and helpful. Grounded theory thrives when it attempts to develop a new theory to form a new distinct boundary around interrelated concepts. This results from a focus on the generation of novel concepts inductively rather than testing existing theories deductively. One novelty in this thesis is to apply grounded theory at an aggregated level of several data sets. The “data” is not single site but drawn from the earlier thesis portion (the first eight chapters) plus other memoing data. Thoughtful adaptation to the existing methods of grounded theory is required to do this.

Feminist epistemology is also considered in that it offers female voices across the chapters as themselves. Many of the incorporated academic sources are by women: Bicchieri, Evans, Gelfand, Kauffman, Gelfand, McCloskey, Nussbaum, Ostrom, Raihani and Raworth. This cumulative data is the raw material to which grounded theory methodology is applied.

In this way, chapters are compared to grounded theory memos, writing outputs now viewed with a new level of circumspection and distance. Detailed researcher reflection memos were created enroute about what it all might mean, and shards of sharp insight are captured on the way. Theoretical chapters on agency and collectivity along with three new empirical research studies, and a literature review should generate enough raw data to provide theoretical insights that address the research question.

2.8 What is beyond the normative applications of Grounded Theory?

Using data drawn from written chapters then also incorporates extant research on place, agency, gender, and entrepreneurship. The intellectual tentacles of knowledge thus extend beyond the empirical results into the entire body of supporting literature. Nothing is “off the shelf,” but is generated or “grounded” in data from the records of others who have also experienced the process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) within the literature or as a researcher. Reading the PhD thesis of Wynne Maggi (2001) on the Kalash women is also to step into her own prior experience as a researcher in an identical location, often interviewing the same people, eating the same home-made food, hearing the same call to prayer at 5am. There are layers to research sensitivity: personal reflections and deeper reflections on parallels in other research experiences. This adds further depth to the analysis of others who have observed interactions using a similar interpretivist ontology and feminist epistemology, albeit for different research objectives. An application of grounded theory seeks a general explanation or more, a theory that goes beyond the directly observed interactions, carries across the different contexts, and provides new theoretical insights into the way entrepreneurship affects women's agency. This requires many participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and here the participants total thirty female voices. There are voices from many places: Shetland twelve voices (via secondary material), India six, and Kalash twelve. Beyond the direct articulation of these women, further voices of women emerge both through the material informing the literature review

and the theoretical pieces. These frame the experiences of those heard directly rather than adding direct testimony to them.

2.9 What original conceptualisation of Grounded Theory is used?

Grounded theory was set out in 1967 by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss then developed in iterations (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Interest grew in this less “a priori” methodology. Concentrating on the processes, interactions between people, and individual actions allows reflection on what might be a novel explanation and allows the inclusion of other material to that end. The research opportunity is to generate theory beyond the facts. Grounding theory in more fluid and novel ways requires a more flexible approach, thus the “2.0” version of Strauss & Corbin’s 1967 “1.0” is adopted. One evolution is (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) opening up the research analysis to include wider observations and documents as part of the data set. There are typically 20 to 30 interviews recorded (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) based on multiple visits “to the field”. This is reached here but in different fields on the same core topic. Rather than reverting back to the same field, reflections and theorisation occurred between visits or analysis. This is not a summing up exercise but a process of abduction to look beyond. Adapting grounded theory methods is not novel and there is a stream of derivations that have emerged as practitioners have treated the concepts as if grounded theory were “open-source software.” This amending allowed research to refine its utility. In this thesis, the challenge is not only to abstract from the data of experiences but also to abstract from the set of ideas that emerge from each chapter. This is the substrate for generating substantial original theory.

Glaser disagreed with Strauss’s earlier thinking and sought a less prescribed approach (Glaser, 1992). Charmaz (2006) has pushed further, proposing a constructivist grounded approach with “positivist underpinnings”. Clarke’s (2005) consideration of situations as units of analysis coincides with the empirical studies’ three contrasting situations. Each offers a different socio-spatial location with distinct social features. Clarke’s (2005) model of considering conditions, social worlds, and positional mappings also fits this at a meta level. It allows both abstracted theories and experiences within each social world to be mapped. Charmaz (2006) uses a post-modernist interpretation, building upon “the postmodern turn” (Charmaz, 2006, p. xxiv). However, post modernism does not concur with the critical research strand that unifies these chapters of affirmative-foundational

epistemologies (Dey et al., 2022). The focus of Charmaz (2006) is on the representation of information. Her concerns about legitimacy and authority are not adopted to the thesis material beyond an awareness of her warning against becoming the "all-knowing analyst.". In being an "acknowledged participant" (Charmaz, 2006, p. xxvii) the engagement level per context varies. It ranges from one-on-one depth research via zoom interviews to being embedded with a family in a remote location. Some occasions were highly personal and fluid in its interactions, as in Jaipur speaking extensively to mother and daughter. Others involve reading secondary material about interactions between deceased individuals who were expressing informal norms popular at the time (Robinson, 1896 in Pakistan).

2.10 How is the need for detailed “thick description” in findings met?

The condition of generating sufficient insight from grounded theory is that the data itself is of sufficient volume, time span and reflecting the breadth of material needed for axial & thematic coding and higher order abduction. One measure is if there is sufficient “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) within the data. From a field perspective, this requires broad and detailed descriptions of social interactions reported by participants that are also weighted with cultural and symbolic implications. Patterns should be apparent rather than sporadic such that coding reveals frequency and breadth of meaning. This method is especially suited to contexts that have structured, formal interactions and rituals. They are "the stories that societies tell themselves about themselves" (Geertz, 1973, p. 448).

The task is not to find facts but the conceptual underpinnings and meaning that construct the culture in which those facts are presented. Factual data is thin data whereas interpretations from a narrow slice of data from a specific time and place are infused with symbolic meaning. This is found by careful coding and analysis to reveal underlying social interactions and purpose. Each research piece reflects the principles of Geertz by following an interpretivist methodology recording the flow of social events and discourse. The information presented is "extravert", an external expression of cultural meaning and events. The focus on the deeply local phenomenon is conducive to studying female entrepreneurship within a bounded geographical location. Details are extracted to construct meaning that is context driven and interpretable through the codes and symbolisms present. The meaning of participants' actions and agency will be woven by them in place and meticulous recording and coding to reveal this.

The source material for each location is extensive. There are over 200 individual reports used in the Shetland analysis, ranging from press reports to radio and television coverage of Up Helly Aa and the debate about female involvement. Access was also given to 120 years of feminist archive material held by Gaarda.corg. The Kalash visit generated 40 hours of video and audio recordings, multiple photographs and are complemented by 6 hours of secondary documentary footage. The Indian depth study also has over 40 hours of video and audio recordings, a photographic record and a cache of 40 Instagram reels that are a projection of the marketing and personal views of the founders. This allows an entry into their social worlds. Profile of female entrepreneurs were developed from twelve one-hour interviews that span a life history arc to explain how she sees herself within her social circle. There were also 6 profiles drawn from secondary material. In addition to capturing impressions of place and social dynamics, a reflexive researcher journal supported the analysis. The journal consists of about 22,000 words, a 2,000-word expedition report and a 1500 work reflection piece on Shetland (see appendix)..

2.11 How has Charmaz's (2006) constructivist approach been applied?

A related variant of grounded theory is outlined by Charmaz (2005, 2006), who advocates for the inclusion of multiple realities and complexity in action and views. Rather than a singular process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), Charmaz embraces the diversity of topics in data. This interpretivist ontology shows an understanding of the role of embedded networks, beliefs, and discourse in shaping meaning. Charmaz more openly incorporates researcher perspectives into the selection and analysis process, making clear the values they bring. This surfaces what was previously hidden both in the data and in the researcher approach. One solution is to accept that “empirical observation could never be totally free from theoretical influence because seeing is already a theory-laden undertaking” (Thornberg, 2012). This explicitly sets out the theoretical influences that are in one's mind. The new theory chapters critically examine one's own influences from a range of theories from adjacent fields and allowed the thesis to explicitly engage with the material rather than remain hidden influences listed as references. There is an acknowledgement in Charmaz (2006), as with Thornberg (2012) that the researcher is also socially constructed and has prior knowledge of both empirical methods and theory.

Conclusions from the process are accepted as being incomplete, a wisp in the wind that can only be suggestive (Charmaz, 2005). This openness allows a researcher to explore at

the edges of the unknown when a theory is not adequate to explain a process. Asking how and why female agency expands or contracts through entrepreneurship makes constructivist grounded theory a suitable methodology. The data set for coding is therefore the first eight chapters of this thesis. Conceptual labels were attached per paragraph and per line, but the constant refrain was “what is this telling me? What assumption is being made here? What is being affirmed and what is being challenged?” These were the initial “sensitising questions” used to look at the material afresh (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) alongside the more established question of: “Who are the actors involved?”. “What are the actors’ definitions and meaning of these phenomena or situations?” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 77). Focused or selective coding seeks exemplars of the key concepts followed by axial coding at the next level of aggregation to relate “categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 1123). This reassembles inherent meanings from different codes (Charmaz, 2006). It informs theoretical coding and builds a bridge between the data set as an interpretation of recorded reality, and the researchers view of its meaning and theoretical consequences. A central theme should emerge as an analytical frame for further analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

Charmaz (2006) fully embraces a social construction ontology, a social relativist position that knowledge generated is based on participants' experience and how they create or construct their own view of reality. This will be observed through value-laden eyes (Quine, 1963) as researchers use their own axiology to weigh what is meaningful in their own lives: their beliefs, acceptable social norms, and values. This contrasts with the original grounded theory which followed a more positivist (Bryant, 2003; Charmaz, 2006) objectivist paradigm (Clarke, 2005) of “let the data emerge”. This assumed that findings would emerge from the field unsullied by interpretation and that all would see and judge it equally. This positioned the data as a common, fertile substrate from which insight would predictably emerge. Charmaz (2006) also acknowledged the influence of an intermediate step in methodological development in the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) to make analysis an active process. Theory requires active extraction with skill and reflection. In a social constructionist perspective, both participants view of reality and researcher’s interpretation of that view of reality converge. Together they suggest the lived reality of participant, or multiple lived realities across many participants, here female entrepreneurs in varying social contexts. Using multiple social

contexts, building upon different but conciliant interpretive methodologies, creates a melody of voices heard through different methodologies: institutional theory, practice theory, depth case study, and life narrative enquiry. Findings should emerge that stand alongside these methodologies generating an “informed pluralism of approach (Wilmott, 2008). Such reflexivity through grounded theory has "a capacity to recognize the inescapable, partial and constructed foundation of all knowledge claims about management and/or organization" (Wilmott, 2008, p. 83).

2.12 How might Informed Grounded Theory advance Charmaz?

“To be informed or not to be informed, that is the question.”

In the original view of Glaser (1978), a literature review should follow rather than precede data collection. This best ensured a “blank mind” when facing the research field. Yet, Glaser also recommended reading in unrelated fields to enhance theoretical sensitivity (Thornberg, 2012). This seems a most childlike exhortation to make to curious researchers, as if they had not read within the field before choosing to research it more deeply. Intentional naiveté seems somewhat ideological in its call for purity of mind, a policing of knowledge boundaries that is not in the spirit of open enquiry. It also risks “an innovative breakthrough” being an exercise in reductive ignorance of the field (Lempert, 2007). Besides prior knowledge, there is also the cultural context of the researcher and those “who investigate a different form of life bring with them their own lenses and conceptual networks” (Kelle, 1995, p. 38). Researchers are able to assess the origin of their inevitable subjectivity by outlining their own positioning and "full disclosure" as a reflective practice.

This pre-informed state indeed occurred through extensive reading both within entrepreneurship and in adjacent fields. This was at the level of notes, insights gleaned and awareness of the lived experiences of other women who had started businesses. A written review of the existing literature helped identify the gap for refining the analysis: that of a better understanding of the formal and informal norms influencing female emancipation. This lens emerged directly from the field work and only subsequently shaped the literature review and theoretical chapters on agentic freedom and informal institutional norms. This largely accords with Charmaz’s (2006) suggestion to conduct

an initial literature review before data collection and within Thunberg's (2012) fluid approach to prior knowledge and how to maximise the output from abductive thinking.

Although open and informal, the Charmaz (2006) approach is strict in its evidentiary steps. This is appropriate for an inductive / deductive process but relying on abduction can mean that a small morsel of information, a passing word or a single photo can set off a leap of insight that does not follow a formal data pathway. Caution was taken to err on the side of being inclusive of data in analysis rather than seek peremptory exclusion. Charmaz's (2006) criteria were therefore taken as guidance rather than as theological directives. Credibility of data, its sufficiency, breadth of observations, and linkage between data and argument were stressed with the caveat that abductive insight is not the result of paint-by-numbers reasoning. Her other stress on originality is an easier benchmark to enquire of data: what does this add, is it repetitive or additive to extant theory? Additionally, do the new insights challenge what is known or flounder to the side without bite or impact? Charmaz's (2006, p. 182) other challenges to theory include resonance and usefulness. Can the new theory be applied elsewhere? This is a test of ecological validity. The selection of three highly contrasting contexts plus wider supporting information and research should mitigate any challenge of "but this is constrained by its cultural context." The utility of the new theory for the wider social sciences is for evaluation by other scholars. However, where structuration is applied, which is a wide terrain, this thesis may be of interest to many more researchers.

2.13 How might a touch of Symbolic Interactionism and Pierce assist interpretation?

In an abductive approach that relies upon leaps of imagination and the interaction between data and theory, there will be abstraction based on meanings that are symbolic. This is both to interpret symbolic data and to apply a symbolic meaning to the dry. This brings materiality to the non-material (Appadurai, 2013) and illustrates how physical, material items have meaning within their contexts. This requires an understanding, even an indulgence, on the part of the reader. It is hard for the researcher to carry the reader with them in a crisp chain of logic. The work of Charles Pierce (1958) and Charmaz (2006) on integrating symbolic interactionism within grounded theory is most helpful. People ascribe meaning to their actions that are beyond our ken, particularly when the

action is directed to other member or groups within their social context. A researcher is therefore watching an interplay, a dynamic between individuals that has meaning to both parties and to the wider groups. Grounded theory can capture “the subjective experience of someone’s social experience as a source of knowledge” (Wuest, 1995, p. 128) particularly in the context of a feminist epistemology.

Charmaz (2006) adopts symbolic interactionism to deepen her understanding of how people create meaning, recognizing that “this assumes people can and will think about their actions rather than respond mechanically to stimuli” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7) as individuals are “creative and reflective” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 189). George Mead's (1934) interpretivism methods support Charmaz but the focus here is less on the individual than on the interactions between people being observed. This considers how someone imagines the meaning of their actions upon another alongside their anticipated meaning and response. It is to ask, “how people construct their reality” (Charmaz, p. 127) and act on that view. Symbols are “abstract representations of social objects” (Milliken & Schreiber, 2012) that aid our understanding of how such meaning is encapsulated and shared. Similarly, it may also reflect the way people wish to see themselves. An embodiment of that identity that might be evident in visual analysis and be symbolic in representation (Banks, 2015). The chapters contain visual elements, symbolism, and the relational process of a woman with her social context.

2.14 What are the limitations of using grounded methodology?

Aside from the task complexity of coding and analysis, the consideration of applying grounded methodology is the prospect of jumping into the unknown. What if no theory emerges? What if it all looks the same as prior knowledge? Any new theory has its own gradations of impact, credibility, and impact. However, tackling a mix of social fields with an iPhone, a laptop, and transcription software is based partly on blind hope and methodological confidence. Other methodologies, such as ethnography, at least will generate insights based on a novel context. Any recorded phenomenon might be less contested as ethnography as the researcher’s observations should be robust in context. To adopt grounded theory is to throw the dice and bet on one’s abductive reasoning abilities, the variety of experiences recorded and a brisk following wind. There is a chance however that “by abductive reasoning, theoretical playfulness and staying grounded, the researcher will think beyond the box of extant theories and function as ‘the dwarf who

stands on the giants' shoulders to see further than the giants" (Thornberg, 2012, p. 254). Outside of all safe zones exists the true unknown, and for those who are intrepid, grounded theory methodology is a calling. Where theory is needed, grounded theorists will venture forth.

2.15 How was sampling for grounded theory decided?

Each chapter was viewed with the others to consider how they might contribute to the research goal. In Harsh's (2011) synthesis sampling approach, the original principles of Patton (1990) are expanded by considering how the aggregate sample interacts with the individual elements to enhance the overall response to the research problem. Diversity of place and culture would therefore offer a strong grounding for theory development. Saturation was found when moving between contexts and the coding across all the chapters. There was no further need to gain extra information on the points when no further insights were being generated (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The relationship between variables then appeared to be constant (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Extensive voice memos were taken in an iPhone to both capture ideas at the time and to record overarching theoretical ideas as they emerged from each subsequent phase of research.

The juxtaposition of contrasting chapters is intentional. They aim collectively to reveal insights about social norms modulating the female entrepreneurs journey from sublimation to empowerment to emancipation. The set of contrasting social contexts generates sharp differences which would force observation of common patterns across the three places. Rather than seeking commonality across geography or sector or business challenge, they are intentionally heterogeneous. This draws contrast yet commonality around a pathway to female emancipation through entrepreneurship. All three are social contexts that are not at the apex of modernity. Indeed, all have vestiges of the world articulated by Polanyi (1958), where the social mediates the market rather than the market mediating social transactions within society. This is partly in response to Dodd et al.'s (2021) call to extend the liminality of context. It is also a search for depth, of the identification of norms and patterns beyond the froth of transience. It is to seek the long *durée* of history (Braudel, 1958) and see past patterns that linger on today and still have weight upon women's lives. See Appendix 3 for a reflexive journal entry on sampling.

2.16 What tools were required for this research?

The physical tools required across the research pieces were a laptop, iPhone for recording of pictures, videos, and voice memos plus a GoPro for video recordings. Additional requirements were local mobile sim cards procured through friends and a variety of charging adapters / power banks given the intermittent power supply. Transcriptions were through the Descript App when connected to Wi-Fi and recordings were backed up onto Drop Box, iCloud, and the Microsoft cloud, given the risks of equipment loss or damage. Communication was conducted almost exclusively through WhatsApp, which included the dissemination of consent forms. A further language review of transcripts was conducted, and the Hindi portions were cross checked by a recent master's graduate in sociology in Delhi. Academic references were sourced through the Strathclyde University online library, plus supplementary sources of Google Scholar, www.Scribd.com and the Academic.com App. Visas were required for both India and Pakistan and travel between the two was conducted through Dubai. Much chai was consumed.

Using secondary written, visual, and audio sources, the Shetland study is a netnography. This study examines contestations by women for equality of standing in local Up Helly Aa squads between 2016 and 2022. A laptop was required for the collection of public sources on the debate which were largely confined to local Shetland communication platforms, Shetland News and BBC Radio Shetland. There was also occasional coverage in the mainland Scottish press. All textual and oral records were transcribed into digital word from through the Descript App. Audio records were transcribed, as were the records of video news pieces. Images were analysed using Banks and Zeitlyn's (2018) principles of visual ethnography and were coded according to economic activity, social structures / networks, cooperation, and culturally symbolic artefacts.

2.17 What role did memos play in enhancing grounded theory data collection?

As part of the recording process, an iPhone was used to record memos to be uploaded and transcribed. From waking in the middle of the night to being stuck behind a camel, every idea that would aid theory development was recorded. There are 104 such audio records from which written reflections were generated in a separate electronic file of 22,000 words. Speaking allowed a glimmer of an idea to expand into an intense shaft of

light. By articulating the observation and then raising questions around it in a solo Socratic dialogue with the self, thoughts were recorded for later transcription. There is a fresh directness to such an approach. This enabled immediate capture of passing thoughts about formal recording of interviews, videos of a situational context or the coding of secondary material. These memos were reviewed when chapters were being drafted and included in the coded data for later analysis.

Other memos contained records of economic and social data from the World Bank, United Nations and Ourworldindata.com on gender statistics. These gave insights as to the formal institutional conditions framing women's lives and a cross comparison in different countries. Notes from attending pertinent webinars were also included, as well as previewing analyses of cultural and gender using world values survey data. Also included were the ongoing Twitter conversations of Dr. Pippa Norris at Harvard and Dr. Alice Evans at Kings College. Additionally, these memos provided early observations that led to a conceptualisation of "data in narrative form" (Lempert 2010, 245). In this sense, memos constitute the space for theoretical reflections on the data being analysed: "the memo hints at how sensitizing concepts, long left silent, may murmur during coding and analysis" (Charmaz 2006, p. 76).

2.18 How was Gioia analysis and coding undertaken?

Coding of the core phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), of how women experienced or expanded their empowerment through entrepreneurship, was then abstracted around the themes of conditions shaping their freedom, their strategies in response, other situational factors of importance to them and a variety of material and non-material outcomes. These were placed in an axial coding structure from which novel insights were generated and then finally several possible novel theoretical directions ranging from a substantive, low-level theory to abstract, grand theory (Creswell & Brown, 1992).

The coding for each chapter follows a similar approach despite the differences in the interpretivist lenses used. A mind map was used to structure the first reading of the transcripts to generate an overview of emerging themes. This was followed by detailed coding of the transcripts, but some interplay of codes and themes was evident. First order axial coding then emerged, which represented social constructs at a higher level of abstraction than the empirical data. Further rounds of abstraction continued with the level

of conceptualisation sharpening at each stage. Between 7-9 abduction rounds were used on each of the three empirical studies to reach the proposed conclusions.

As set out in Chapter 9, the full suite of previous chapters, memos and secondary data were also then subjected to a first order data review and notation before coding. Chapters were treated as if they were the original transcripts. Then axial coding was generated and a further level of thematic groupings (Gioia et al., 2013) until, through abductive leaps, a set of emerging theories was generated. These provide the raw response to the research question. In this step-by-step approach of creating new possible meanings, a set of theories is derived from the synthesis of the thesis as a whole. This is a result beyond findings in the individual chapters and beyond what might be found in a comparative contextual analysis.

Three major theories are presented, two specific to the question and one a more substantive overarching theoretical proposal for consideration in the wider social sciences. The latter challenges the very socially constructed relativist ontology on which this thesis is based. This was a paradigm shift of one's prior assumptions in a comprehensive manner. However, it does answer the call for a better theory as to how informal norms may shift to expand female emancipation through entrepreneurship. It is also the desired result of a proposed paradigm shift as identified by Kuhn (1962). Rather than further developing a field by the accumulation of more research, anomalies suggest a new paradigm of understanding beyond what has come before. It is both continuity and revolution, building upon yet shifting perspectives of the past.

2.19 How were methods from visual anthropology incorporated into the research?

Given language barriers and cultural distance between the researcher and subjects, a primary research risk is that an affluent, urban Western framework of norms or understanding would lead to errors in interpretation. The other linguistic aspect is that two of the studies are in non-English speaking contexts and where English is of limited fluency in rural areas. The depth case study in Jaipur, India features a fluent English speaker but many of the associated interviews and video dialogue are in Hindi. The dialogue in Pakistan is occasionally in English, but the local languages are fast-diminishing minority languages of Kholwar and Kalasha, rather than in Urdu.

Comprehension was dependent upon translation quality through a guide and on wider visual interpretations. The nature of trade in all three contexts had not linguistic but visual similarity. In all, entrepreneurial ventures involves the commodification of image, tradition, and projection of cultural identity in place. To appreciate both the phenomena and to create data on the symbolic meaning of these representations to themselves and to outsiders, more than textual discourse is needed. Visual anthropology techniques are apt.

The second risk was that crucial information would be missed either because it was not asked or because its importance was not understood. In visual anthropology, the methods developed for analysing visual materials - films, photographs – are to enter the visual by identifying signs of symbolic representation to show how social networks and dynamics function. This uncovers what has been latent rather than manifest in social life. It is to be "prepared for the unexpected" (Banks, 2018, p. 137). Visual images are ubiquitous and saturate society. People project and assess information as ocular-centric consumers of meaning but academics privilege words, the erudite over the visually artistic.

Banks and Zeitlyn (2015) considered this paucity of visual knowledge within social sciences research to be an ontological black hole and developed a method that included its evaluation and conceptual abstraction. Such visual analysis offers an insight into social dynamics, including minor acts of social agency, not available through direct textual discourse analysis. This approach is particularly suited to exploratory rather than confirmatory work (Banks, 2018, p. 12) so is well suited to this research. By coding visual material, some balance is given to textual analysis of transcripts and symbolic narratives within each cultural context then emerge.

Visual coding is one of the novel and distinctive methods proposed, in which data is evaluated along three axes. The first axis is seeing repeated patterns within the visual representation and to consider what this may reveal about social structure. To see interrelationships and how they operate as a dynamic of relationships between individuals. The second axis consists of observing what societal roles are being displayed. Lastly, and pertinent to the study of social-spatial context, is to look for environmental constraints either symbolically or practically. This approach is illustrated through two curated sets of pictures presented as extracts from the researcher's reflexive diary in Appendix 4. These are abridged versions of material also shown at an internal doctoral

research seminar. These insights are then incorporated into the coding process alongside textual analysis to achieve a synthesis of visual and textual meaning.

Two other reasons call for more visual analysis. The first is that aspects of gender performativity are better understood as a visual representation rather than by descriptive text. In all three locations there is a public consumption of spectacle and design embodied in either performance or product. The living Kalash feminine and the living Shetlandic masculine both use cultural codes and symbolic power conveyed through costume and movement. This symbolic power helps to share symbolic meaning to outsiders, and to each other, as an ongoing affirmation of identity. The commodification encompasses the entire visual feast. In Jaipur there is a commodification of traditional and modern designs from the region plus the founders are extensive users of the visual tools of social media. Design is their visual language of sale and communication. The Indian context is also replete with visuals showing hidden cultural symbolism. The assorted colours and styles of saris in the Rajasthan region denote a membership of place. Much would be missed if this visual dimension of self-representation was excluded from the data (Pink, 2014).

Lastly, the cultures themselves rely heavily on oral and visual transmission and less on written texts that can be decoded. The Kalash is an exceptionally old culture within a bounded place yet with no written tradition. There are no religious texts, and cultural codes are passed on by oral narrative and song. Embodied symbolism is woven into the daily outfits worn by the women. This is a design rich, symbolism-encoded environment. Women's caps show symbols of female power and beaded headpieces contain multiple visually coded narratives as do their woollen belts. In contrast, the Shetland Viking image is invented each year, replicated in practice, and affirmed by the year-round social arrangements that structure group preparation for the festival. Despite its roots in Norse migratory veracity, Up Helly Aa and its associated imagery were conjured during the late 18th century to relieve male boredom and channel playful energies (Brown, 1998). Possible inspiration might also have been lingering practices of fire festivals in the north of Scotland such as Burghead. This does not conceal that this frothy visual confection is adhered onto the place rather than being an ancient tradition grown from within. Nevertheless, it conveys great shared symbolic meaning to participants and to visitors.

Visual analysis is a methodology within social anthropology, thus serving as an interpretivist humanities subject that is able to be reconciled with other ethnographic

approaches used in the entrepreneurship literature. Banks, who was a preeminent visual anthropologist, shaped most of the field's methodology. He is referred to by Welter & Baker (2020) but the potential applications within a socially embedded context for entrepreneurship are hitherto underappreciated. Due to the highly visual nature of the three sites, the research focuses on this method more vigorously than in most entrepreneurship literature. Similar coding and analysis were also undertaken on moving video. In many cases, the analysis revealed historical details about the place and what was of cultural importance to the women. An example of this as an applied method is the coding of a video from Kalasha as below:

Researcher Diary: Notes on Musical Clip of Ariana (Kalash Girl)

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/TjbbgPWYK6Y>. *A short recording taken of a young Kalash girl singing a local song as she mended her dress. No interview took place, but I was invited to watch this clip of five years ago shared by a local female guide. Such a clip would not normally be included as pertinent material using the standard methods for transcript analysis, thematic grouping, and further analysis. The video reveals much of the relevant social context. The Taj Mahal sewing machine from the pre-Partition era is equally common in India and Pakistan. It is hand-powered and portable, so it is not dependent on an intermittent power supply. The array behind is of an outdoor kitchen, the brazier from wood cut from the oak forests on the valley sides, the oil made from butter from the girl's family cow that is kept on the hills in the summer. The location is up in the summer pastures which is rare for a female to visit. Therefore, she is there with a wider family group staying in a shepherd's hut. The appearance of privation is deceptive. This is analogous to thinking the Inuit live in Igloos when it is a location of transition, a temporary spot for looking after animals. Unlike the regular, more substantial residences in the valley, this is not a permanent residence This is a typical Kalash dress for daily wear.*

It is the embodiment of Kalash cultural identity but one that she will also sell tourists for income.



. Her hair is braided in a traditional pattern, and the cap is replete with symbols that indicate cooperation, the sign of the cross in a repeated pattern running around the edge. The song's cadence is also quite different to what you would hear in traditional Pakistani or Indian songs and is a story of a man's love for a girl who chose another man and is sung by most of the women in the main winter spiritual festival in December. It is resonant with melodies heard in central Europe played in a minor key, a slow ballad of longing. This is a picture of a girl living her identity and generating income for herself. Yet when asked about this clip, the three people asked (to triangulate responses) all first commented that she is no longer Kalash. She chose a love marriage with a local Muslim boy who is ethnically Kalash but whose family converted to Islam. This means she can no longer sing this song, no longer wear the emblems of kalash

womanhood and is, in effect, excommunicated Kalash. This one clip reflects cultural codes of female choice, economic power, micro entrepreneurship, autarky, Polanyi's (1958) model of the shift from socially embedded commercial transactions to modernity and the slow demise of what was. This visual analysis is true to the principles of visual anthropology as set out by Marcus Banks (2015), illustrating richer socio-cultural contextual understanding beyond the transcripts.

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2.20 How were the principles of abduction applied in the grounded theory analysis?

It would be misleading to suggest that the theory development has been inductive or deductive. It has followed the injunction to use abduction as set out by Anderson to go:

"Beyond data as well as the pre-existing theory or theories. It is an innovative process because every new insight is a result of modifying and elaborating prior knowledge or putting old ideas together in new ways as the researcher explores and tries to explain the new data. Abduction is hence the source of scientific creativity" (Anderson, 1987).

By enriching the empirical with additional theory chapters, there is an interplay between the new empirical findings and novel theoretical ideas. These are additional sources of abductive inspiration, a Sherlock Holmes-like toolkit to find patterns others might not otherwise see (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2017). This recognises that prior knowledge might be an asset for the quality of abduction required. It also requires fellow passengers of an open mind and a rejection of dogmatism, the "difference between an open mind and empty head" (Dey, 1993, p. 63). This realism was furthered by Timmermans and Tavory (2007) who suggested that knowledge of wider theory does not mean one subscribes to it. One may know the principles of Marxist theory but not subscribe to its tenets. With this research consciously seeking out remote locations, understudied cultures, and contrasting belief systems, it is anticipated that novel findings will be found both within and across the data. This would sum up the spirit of Pierce (1958) of abduction being the ability to recognize a finding as novel and a leap above existing theories. The additional theory chapters are also a match to the exhortation for additional stimulus to

generate innovative insights. Theoretical agnosticism (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003, p. 138) provides a framework for circumspection relating to a broad range of theories and data presented within Thornburg's (2012) informed grounded theory. Creativity and playfulness or the “whimsy and wonder” of Charmaz (2006, p. 136) is encouraged:

“To help the researcher to break through assumptions and to create new order out of the old. Creativity manifests itself in the ability of the researcher to aptly name categories... to let the mind wander and make the free associations that are necessary for generating stimulating questions and for coming up with a comparison that led to discovery”

(Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 27).

The grounded theory premise is that theory emerges from the data. This is the phraseology predominating as researchers analyse, code, seek higher order categorisations and then reflect upon theory. However, this phraseology is inherently passive. Human minds, with their differing cognitive schemas, are active agents in the consideration of material. The leap is from data to code, from code to aggregates and thence the theory. If only the data mattered as it was, then researchers would look at the same data and emerge with identical results and similar theory. Yet they do not. Variance also lies in the rich diversity of minds of those who gaze upon the data. The process of abduction or leaps of imagination which people take in multiple ways, is a fitting ontological match for this process. Literature does discuss the abductive branch of grounded theory, but it is, like imaginative leaps themselves, not well suited to a linear logical interpretation. Rather, it finds a home with Jung (1951), who sympathized with the chaotic creativity originating from the subconscious and for which we have limited comprehension. We witness creative flourishes expressed through words, brushes, and clay. Below evidences my apex experience of abductive flow in grounded theory.

Researchers Diary Extract: Abduction at 30,000 Feet

I am absolutely shattered, on two hours sleep only gained by lying down in the seats on the night plane from Abu Dhabi to Aqaba, Jordan. I have been in Salalah, Oman for a couple of weeks to do final notes and also to immerse myself in a highly patriarchal Muslim society to improve my

understanding of such places. There are no Omani women working anywhere. The space for women is taken by men as airplane hosts, servers, or cleaners. They are Bangladeshi men in the main who are also Muslim. Some Nepalese. The Omani men, young, old, and pretty much without exception wear traditional Omani robes and caps every day. The women, when apparent, likewise but in black. Many are fully veiled. I am 90% complete on the coding and there is a sense of saturation as the same themes keep emerging around reputation, mutualism, how economic incentives are not enough yet also signs of change. The past need not be deterministic. I was sitting in my airplane seat; laptop balanced with coffee travelling from Aqaba to Budapest. I then had one of those moments when I saw a chart forming in front of my eyes. It is maybe a bit like the cage of norms one of authorities vs societies. Definitely a two-by-two x: y axis but vague. I keep coding as I am determined to get it all done before I land in Budapest. It is a pure abductive moment of a leap happening. It is close to that scene in the Queen's Gambit where she looks up at the ceilings at night and sees the figures move in a coordinated fashion working out the moves, but it just happens intuitively. Hallucinating, rationality, or intuition – it's unclear in either case. I close the laptop, take out my notebook, and start scrawling lines and just see where it goes. It comes out as the economic value and social reputation tradeoff, and I see the point. This is the feminist version of the cage of norms (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2019). They see a pathway between formal institutional norms versus the informal social structures and a balance between the two generates a growth pathway towards liberty. China veers too much away towards state control with local groups unable to control the excess power of the state. Pakistan falls out on the other side with local societies norms too strong for a precarious state and local norms prevail. The UK and USA come through the middle as a balance between the two pressures. One is the

[illegible]

My further observation is that formal norms or institutions might be slow to be adopted by recalcitrant countries with a different tradition. However, they are coming. The UNSDGs, the Woman and Law entrepreneurship project from the UN are both bringing a best practice approach to most countries. There is general convergence of view that this should and is happening to enhance female rates of entrepreneurship. Better bank access, property laws, inheritance to daughters as well as sons. What I had missed was the concept of time and the valence of the people in each society. This chart suggests staged bands or pathways for female emancipation through venturing. It was not an application at one point in time, a “do this” policy change but like other social changes. It needs a possible pathway to the end goal of greater female emancipation. How could this approach be evaluated? Maybe a chat with my new friends doing social attitude value survey stuff would help. This also links to Pippa

Norris' ideas on credulous trust as those that fall out on either side are credulous. They are overly trusting in general. They have too much unwarranted trust in either the government to protect them or that their social group will protect them. They are prey to both.

2.21 How was a Critical Process Approach applied?

The Critical Process Approach, as proposed by Baker and Welter (2020), calls for researchers to reflect upon how they are conceptualising context, perhaps unwittingly, and to explore the boundaries of their own standpoint epistemology. This is not to discredit oneself but to reflect upon the limitations and opportunities a researcher may bring. The triangulation of research into three unusual places may additionally reduce potential bias. Still, some may wonder how anyone could provide valid insights when they are from a culture so different from the research subjects. The sensitive, reflective response is to seek universality in experiences and to be conscious of one's origins and mindset. Equally, one should not paralyse oneself into fits of cultural apologia.

A female entrepreneur with children researching female entrepreneurs with children or a female entrepreneur who is looking at the collective social position of women in a place where she also used to be known and ran a Shetland business? This positionality will require some deep epistemic consideration and reflection. Part of the task will require leaving a transparent trail of engagement with subjects and place, a dolly mixture trail of a definitive path, an intrepid Hansel and Gretel in the field. The ideas will emerge as rapid contrails in the sky, swirl and mix then coalesce. Abductive leaps occur between cloud and earth. How detached can one be? Or rather does attachment lend itself to access to narratives and insights not available to the detached? As a woman interviewing other women's experiences or evaluating them from textual discourse & visuals, there is a risk of excessive identification. However, the literature needs to accurately convey the female experience. A concern about "distance" and prioritising rationality may stem from a historically androcentric perspective and a conscious avoidance of the "feminine". When meeting other women, it would be more likely to be a natural and unforced experience because of rapid inter-female connection and identifying familiarity. Building in extra emotional distance may also have epistemic defects, as personal understanding and appreciation is required. This brings feeling for the humanity in the research subject and

so help may sensitize the researcher to critical data (Ruetsche, 2004) within this highly feminised context.

Given that the locations and cultural context in two of the three locations were sharply different to my own native context, critical reviews of individual chapters from a selected number of people were sought. On the Indian study, reviews were sought and received from a research collaborator in Dubai who is a female Indian national and business academic to check that the understanding of the religious and cultural context was correctly represented in the study. Feedback was also given from an internal academic colleague as to the novelty of identifying the spiritual nature of the socio-spiritual context as a shared space of entrepreneurship. This was a finding that he considered to be exciting and accurate, albeit absent hitherto from the academic literature and a significant novel contribution.

On the Kalash study, reviews were sought from academics at Chitral University, Pakistan (two) and from the two world leading experts on Kalash culture, Dr, Brigitte Sperber at University of Southern Denmark, and Dr. Tom Crowley (Cambridge). Dr. Crowley in particular gave very detailed feedback and also confirmed the central observation that female venturing was a new form of cultural differentiation by the local community and that this was consistent with previous scholarship of the role of female liberty within Kalash culture. At his suggestion, a review of the chapter was undertaken by a research collaborator of his, Adil Iqbal, with a subsequent three-hour discussion. This was specifically to give a balancing viewpoint of the Sunni Muslim community given his close working relationship with women from this community as emerging entrepreneurs and his parallel familiarity with the Kalash. This did not change the findings but did ensure that there was a sensitivity to the perspective of both communities of women.

2.22 Permissions

Participants were all recorded, in which ever language was most comfortable, their permission for recording of voice and pictures. This was confirmed by translators to ensure all permissions were given. This was post an explanation of the research scope and purpose. Additional visual records were granted by the Gaarda to 100 years of archive material about the history of Up Helly AA recording female participation.

Other permissions were granted by The Shetland Times archive as well the local folk lore museum in Kalash, Pakistan.

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2.23 Conclusion: A nuanced bridge between the theoretical worlds

The methodological question is how to abridge the literature on female emancipation through entrepreneurship with concepts emerging in the adjacent fields used within two new theoretical chapters. Sources are works by scholars who look at humanity at a group-level of existence: philosophy, economic history, sociology, social psychology and anthropology. The material broadens and deepens the range of theory around female agency and so assist abduction and theory formulation. The thesis contains novel, standalone empirical studies which answer the call for a third wave of socially embedded approaches within the field (Welter, Baker & Wirsching, 2018). But beyond this, the “data” set includes reflections on the existing literature on female emancipation through entrepreneurship which might deepen theoretical foundations within that literature. These are, namely, what is meant by freedom and how social norms and informal institutions in these women’s lives are structured. Another data set is a theoretical exercise considering the emerging research found in the adjacent fields on group collectivity and agency, particularly as a counterpoise to institutional theory.

Grounded theory principles dictate that continuous notes and observations, including ideas captured en route as acoustic or written memos, should also inform the data set. From these five categories - studies, theoretical pieces, literature analysis, reflection memos and extra pertinent material – the discipline of extracting coding and then higher order categorisation to generate theory, was conducted. The style of analysis and writing raises questions on anything, and everything found pertinent. This is intentional and is meant directly to question the strength of the foundational sources behind an academic stance. To adopt a Socratic approach to enquiry is to constantly question what one finds, to evaluate its boundaries, and to assess the internal coherence of one's argument. It is not to discredit the scholarship, but to keep oneself and the analysis on one’s toes, searching, probing, and reflecting. This is consistent with Glaser’s (1967) original conceptualisation of reflection and is made particularly explicit by using a Socratic method with oneself, the mental “me and I” in healthy debate (Mead, 1934). Through fearless enquiry, of self and others, might the abductive leaps be found to answer the research question and new substantive theory be imagined.

CHAPTER 3

**WHEN LIBERATORY NARRATIVES COLLIDE:
NORDICITY AND GENDER IN THE SHETLAND
ISLANDS.**

Chapter 3

When liberatory narratives collide: Nordicity and Gender in the Shetland Islands.

Q: “Voo ist du?”

A: “Nae sae bad”

Erving Goffman, recorded on Unst, Shetland in 1953

3.1 Introduction

It is rare to observe public contestation over how a gendered institution might adapt to changing social norms. Between 2018 to 2022, a public debate occurred through multiple institutions on Shetland over the ongoing exclusion of women from participating in the Jarls Squad in Lerwick’s annual Viking themed fire festival, Up Helly. This is the “biggest procession of its kind in Europe” (BBC, 2017). Dissonance over female exclusion led the community to publicly explore how inclusion into male and female social realms are negotiated and how shifting social norms require institutional responses. Although based within islands, this study is not set within island scholarship (Grydehøj, 2008). Rather it contributes to explorations of socially embedded factors which influence a woman's agency and scope for entrepreneurship (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018; Rindova et al., 2009). Institutional theory is applied to the formal and informal social norms that structure this debate. Resolution occurred in June 2022, when the Up Helly Aa committee announced that after two years of cancelled festivals during Covid, the Jarl Squad would invite applications regardless of gender for January 2023. This study peers into the historical antecedents to the schisms of view and debates that lead to reconciliation and discusses how institutional norms within a socio-economic context can become more accommodating to women.



Figure 3.1: Photo Courtesy of Gaarda: Early Shetland Up Helly Aa

“Up-Helly-Aa is a man's event. There is a virility and defiance in the night's proceedings, with man and fire pitted against the dark and the winter elements. Women are excluded from direct participation [...] without apparent equivocation, Up-Helly-Aa reveres male strength, bonding, and ability to organize. In celebrating the community, the event seems to celebrate man alone. The core images of the festival are of supreme masculinity.” (Brown, 1998, p. 17)

It is a disservice to Shetlanders to characterise these events as challenges to patriarchy, the rise of oppressed women within a remote inward culture. This is simply not the case. Their public discourse reflects a society bounded by its coasts: a modern outward-looking culture of inclusion combined with deep community relationships (Abrams, 2012) and welcoming of newcomers. Voices cut across gender boundaries. Some men advocated for Jarlquad inclusion and some women against. The largest and urban festival in Lerwick is anomalous given that rural events have long been gender neutral in boatsquads and in guising (Brown, 1998; Ferrari-Nunes, 2016; King, 2010).

Two contrasting cultural streams flow through this place. One is the gender liberatory narrative of equality of opportunity with strong Nordic roots. The other is an equally fierce liberatory narrative of a desire for emancipation from external dominance

embedded within Viking iconography. Both traditions combine into a Shetlandic identity with Nordic roots of egalitarianism and community cohesion in a place with a long history of defying nature, external social forces, and powers. The “other” who is being resisted has varied over time, but the community's practiced Viking-inspired Shetlandic identity has been a coalescing factor in seeking maximum subsidiarity. They wish to differentiate their identity (Graeber, 2013) to advance self-rule. Resolving the gender debate in favour of inclusion of women reunited these two strands of liberatory thinking. Shetland restores a gender positioning beside its Nordic neighbours and in compliance with Scottish Equalities law. It maintains a contemporary Nordicity and rejects some of the gendered and socially stratifying Scottish models that emerged in the late 19th C. The power of women's art and poetry, along with the emergence of prominent male activist allies, were pivotal in shifting informal institutional barriers to inclusion.

After placing this study with the literature and a precis of methodology applies, the antecedents that are prior social-spatial influences on this context are explored. The location, overreach by external powers and the historical hinterland to Up Helly Aa as a primary cultural institutional influence are set out. This is balanced by the antecedents of female economic and social agency, also strongly influenced by the maritime economy and Nordic egalitarian values. Additional materials on the origins of Nordicity and pertinent history are found within the Appendix. The chapter then moves to the institutional debate itself on both progressive and conservative perspectives and how questions of legitimacy influence participation. The emergence of collective institutional sorority structures to advance female activism are reviewed. The historical narrative repurposed for identity formation is shown along with arguments that led to resolution and change. The discussion that follows builds upon King (2010) suggesting fraternal capital networks lead to an excess conflation between traditional masculine practices and local identity. Lastly, contributions to the entrepreneurship literature are discussed with prospective routes for further research.

3.2 Literature Review

Welter et al. (2018) called for research which illustrates the contextualisation of entrepreneurship, of multiple factors within socio-spatial places (Kibler et al., 2015; Korsgaard et al., 2018; McKeever et al., 2015). The female experience of entrepreneurship is embedded within the institutional structures framing her life more

broadly (Marlow, 2020) influencing her personal agency. A woman's role in society shapes her scope for entrepreneurship (Marlow, 2020; Welter, 2011). Informal norms (Bicchieri, 2017) shape both.

A sense of belonging to a place is also a modulator of entrepreneurship (Redhead & Bika, 2022). People's historical and current experience of their spatial context emerges as an expression of enterprise (Kibler et al., 2015). Situated in a land & seascape noted for both resource paucity (soil, shelter, fuel) and abundance (fish, oil, wind), people responded entrepreneurially (Korsgaard et al., 2015). Economic activity is a creative entrepreneurial act towards survival within this challenging, bounded space. Exploring Shetland adds to the literature on social embeddedness and entrepreneurship (Welter et al., 2018). It engages with the interaction of the spatial, the social and institutional (Lang et al., 2014). These "spatial effects of entrepreneurial embeddedness" (McKeever et al., 2015, p. 50) help explain the formation of local enterprises (Lang & Fink, 2019). Nuance is required to uncover historical and current influences within this complex site of enculturated community formation. It is here that creative collective organizing (or 'entrepreneurializing') (Drakopoulou-Dodd et al., 2014, p. 167) occurs. Policy creation towards Up Helly Aa through multiple institutional forms (Kalantaridis et al., 2019) has reverberated for 150 years across this sea-bounded context. A shift in community consensus has emerged by external scrutiny of the place as press commented upon the gender exclusion. Other egregious practices emerged, notably "blackface" in guising squads at the festival. This led to questions of the festival committee, and islanders, capacity for institutional self-governance, striking a bow to their abiding goal for cultural differentiation and autonomy for centuries.

Shetland as a place has influence upon its people but not even the dominance of the North Sea is deterministic of social outcomes. (Müller & Korsgaard, 2018). This study is focused less on the economic effects of Up Helly Aa than it is to contribute to the macro understanding of the preceding socio-cultural complex that determines economic embeddedness (McKelvie & Wiklund, 2010). This enters the liminal, the remote, and the exceptions (Dodd et al., 2021) that illuminate the breadth of human endeavour seen within unusual contexts. This avoids the valorising of wealth creation over other considerations (Welter et al., 2011) but identifies the values that galvanizes community entrepreneurship and non-material value (Korsgaard et al., 2015).

Given that “entrepreneurial activity is fundamentally conditioned by the dynamics of the entrepreneur and the social structure” (Jack & Anderson, 2002, p. 468), how do women express entrepreneurship within this context? Notwithstanding a long history of female economic agency, the debate reveals a potential dampening of aspiration in young Shetland girls. Progressive social conditions can also regress (Berglund et al., 2016) to reduce future options for women. This study also explores how gender norms, as part of the institutional framing of female entrepreneurship are shaped, challenged, and then reformulated as the enterprise context (Ahl & Marlow, 2021) for local women. Freedom as an underlying sense of belonging and equality both precedes and amplifies (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010; Rindova et al., 2009) female entrepreneurship and related activism (Evans, 2022a).

This study also contributes to scholarship evidencing the historically higher level of female agency and entrepreneurship in the marine households of the North Atlantic coasts (Abrams, 2012, Pye, 2015, Byron, 1994). This balances the previously androcentric perspective of writers seeing the realm of the regions’ institutional, political, and economic realms as a public sphere contested by men. This underplayed women’s contribution to Scottish economic and political development (Abrams et al., 2006). By adopting an institutional framing, this study contributes to the ongoing positive revaluation of the equal and ongoing role women have made to the entrepreneurial life of the Atlantic periphery and how female empowerment is expressed in 21st C voices.

3.3 Methodology

Following a multi-layered approach to understanding social contexts (Emirbayer & Johnson, 2008; Hirsh et al., 2003), institutional theory (Scott, 2001, North, 1990) is applied to the conflict between evolving institutional norms for women and the largely static traditions for men within a bounded geography. The dynamics of challenge are shown between the two mixed-gender protagonist social groups. Understanding the practices that constitute these norms (Warde, 2005) can help us understand the substrata of culture and accumulated “schemata” (Bicchieri, 2016). The pattern is of differential access by women to community prestige formation as a form of social capital creation. As part of this analysis, organisational insights, and their historical development help “unmask social reality” (Bourdieu, 1977). Evidence here indicates minimal evidence of class-based distinctions, but they do elicit an underlying accord for change. For both

sexes, there is a reluctance to express views that are too far away from the perceived norm Bicchieri's (2017) but there is a performativity in norms of discourse and culture as groups reshape institutional boundaries. Exploring overt and public theatrical performance of embedded culture is a novel application of gendered performativity theories of Butler (1990) and builds upon the legacy of Goffman (1953). Women rethink, then challenge, gender roles in light of a previous, and possibly more egalitarian, social heritage.

Following the interpretivist methodology, this study applies netnography (Kozinets, 2019) gathering material over four years using local Shetland social media forums and off-islands news reports. This parses discourse into two rival narratives. This is supplemented by a visual anthropology analysis of social interactions and informal institutional structures. Public reports of this visually spectacular often contain video or photographic content, as do the historical records. By blending insights from both visual and verbal records, a more complete understanding is given.

A search of published material on institutional influences was supplemented by literature on the sources of social power and origins of Nordicity and historic gender equality. A total of 300 sources were used generating 200,000 words of data. The Gaarda activist organisation also allowed access and usage for academic purposes of their extensive archive recording feminist protests about Up Helly Aa since 1900. Some 150 images were drawn from news reports, letters to the editor and social media posts. Opinions have names attached in public posts and interviews. Anonymity of views is rare. Neighbours are conducting open, respectful, though occasionally terse debate as to what is the right thing to do as a community. Letters to the editor remain a living tradition in the Shetland press. BBC Radio Shetlands' format remains immersive reporting amongst community voices. This was supplemented by ethnographic material giving direct witness to events. Analysis was a mixture of mind mapping, transcript coding and Excel synthesis matrix to elicit patterns. Coding and categorising the Shetland reported material was first organised to structure the different institutional influences. This allowed a coherent structure to the coding of 1000 pages of text and visual material.

The primary on-island news sources are Shetland Times, Shetland News and BBC Radio Scotland, "Good Evening Shetland." Off-island reporting included The Press and Journal, The Scotsman, The Herald Scotland, The National and BBC Scotland.

Occasionally coverage took place in *The Guardian*, *The Times*, and BBC Woman's Hour. Social media were found on Facebook and Twitter as well as Shetland.org and Uphellyaa.org.

3.4 Antecedents: The dramatic nature of wild places

Uncontrollable nature surrounds Shetland. The heavy pounding of the sea, immense winter storms, an ever-present strong wind flowing over a shallow layer of mossy peat on cold, rain-wracked granite at 60°N. A rare sunny day is “a day ‘tween weathers”. The sea's presence is felt even in sunshine as the “Haar” rolls in obscuring the light, a reminder of the sea's primal role. Human institutions have developed in response to this duality of marine connectivity and land-based isolation encompassed by turbulent seas. The volatile maritime environment predominates. Humans adapt.

The most northerly island of Unst, was the research location of Erving Goffman undertaking his PhD in 1953. What Goffman (1956) termed “dramaturgy” within the class structures of everyday life on the island reflected the social norms of a marine orientated economy (Byron, 1994). The ties of community belonging were conveyed in public through speech, dress, and public performance, including fire festivals. Tight community cohesion in the face of arduous seafaring conditions and poor subsistence crofting was captured by Cohen (1987) who noted how acts of symbolism shaped the male identity on Whalsay. The role of Up Helly Aa as being a projection of contemporary rather than historic identity, is explored by Brown (1998) building upon Mitchell (1948). The link has been identified between festivals as an ongoing collective creation and expressor of community capital generation (Callahan, 1998; Wilks & Quinn, 2016). Finkel (2010) identified Up Helly Aa as invented locally and an institutional anomaly of self-rule. An immersive study by Ferrari-Nunes (2016) of another conspicuous aspect of culture, its musical Shree and fiddle tradition, underscores the islander's community orientation. It remains a community where market and enterprise activities are still contained within local society. Remnant Nordic identity is within the dramatic visual material culture, verbal wit and egalitarian principles then reassembled (Lury, 2009) as “Shetlandic” identity.



Figure 3.2: Photo Courtesy Shetland Times: Nature as an uncontrollable force: The Sea and the Wind

Notwithstanding external influences, not least major oil companies, the rhythm of life remains community-centric. The market is still embedded within society, not the inverse (Polanyi, 1959). Its norms are a result of a Nordicity that combines both a progressive legacy (Browning, 2007) and masculine Viking iconography. Shetland has a connectivity to other parts of the North Atlantic periphery that continue a pattern of cultural osmosis keeping the culture contemporary. Ferrari-Nunes (2016) notes the irreverent, robust, and comedic elements of speech people use between each other and how this could be misunderstood by visitors of a delicate disposition. This culture is enacted daily at a community level. Locals reproduce and reinforce social boundaries within these dual strands of Norse & Scottish cultural inheritance to self-actualise their Shetlandic identity.

3.5 Antecedents: Powers behind the foregrounded institutional players

Whose interests is served by shaping a distinct Shetlandic identity? This is to explore as Gramsci (1971) might, if the agency of Shetlanders is fully liberated or if there are hidden mechanisms of control. Shetlandic identity might be a locally fermented creative refusal to be absorbed by others, notably Scottish powers (Graeber, 2013) or is it a more curated differentiation? A puzzle is who does it serve for the women of Shetland not to be included in the Lerwick Jarl squad? Is it seen as unacceptable imposition on Shetlandic

male identity or does a change have wider institutional consequences? How is group identity undermined by female inclusion? Media reports suggest it is a normative group aversion to changing the shema of male identity. This resistance narrative is inconsistent with Shetland as an open, egalitarian community. Perhaps maintaining exclusion of women had become a proxy for concerns about the long-term group differentiation of Shetland identity. But to what end?

Shetland has seen many waves of outside powers seek to control and exploit “their” local resources. This engendered a spirit of resistance and subversion. Canny deal making and a differentiated Shetlandic identity became tools for cultural and political resistance. Viking pirates arrived in the 790's, displaced the Picts, seized the land, and took control of rich pelagic fishing grounds. The islands were traded as part of a wedding dowry in 1472 to pass from one crown, Norway, to another, Scotland. The early Scottish Earls' tyranny was disliked by both Shetlanders and German merchants for the unfair attempts to change the weights to extract more tax revenue (Holterman, 2020, p. 196). Locals resented Scottish lairds arrival and their tyrannical reign led to further precarity of locals living off land or sea. The franchise post the merger of the Crowns in 1707 was restricted to members of the burgh council, normally Scottish landowners (Abrams et al., 2006). The Scottification of the institutions of power remains in Lerwick, the place from which locals interface with the other loci of power in Scotland and beyond. Independence of spirit also remains.

New institutional structures evolved as a protective response to external powers. Oil exploration companies in the 1970's was met with feisty local negotiators setting out the terms for exploration in “local” seas. Negotiations led to a local investment fund derived from a percentage per barrel processed at Sullom Voe, run by locals for future generations. Callahan (1998) suggested Viking identity was deliberately encouraged by the local council to facilitate tourism, a “bourgeoisie” initiative using culture to develop political autonomy. The rise of the Shetlandic identity was further promoted by the council to buttress arguments that Shetland was culturally distinct and could govern itself. This protected the community fund, worth appx £500m in 2022 from threats to transfer this off-island and absorbed into the Scottish government.

3.6 Antecedents: The Institutional Structure and Community Context of Up Helly Aa

Across Nordic and diaspora communities, there are residual elements left of Nordicity that are visible alongside stark modernity. The question of the strength of Nordicity on Shetland is a separate question from the socio-historical origin of Up Helly Aa. The former is a living culture artefact present in ongoing practices within the community. The latter festival is a confection created and envisaged locally by local officials in the 1870's that drew upon the location's mixed Nordic / Scottish origin, a superimposed event rather than reflect lingering fire traditions of Moray or Aberdeenshire (BBC, 2021). Yet there are identifiable traces of Norse sun worship in the carrying of peat fires through the dark winter nights of January in anticipation of Spring. (BBC Sounds archive, 1927). Festivals began across Scandinavia from the mid 1800's as a civic exercise in cultural reimagination. As in Shetland, they had historical antecedents, notably the "Nordic Feast, which was held on the same date (13 January) each year ... a Norwegian initiative... based on an older Norwegian tradition" (Hemstad, 2018, p. 14). The guising element of wearing straw costumes were "skelders" in medieval Shetland, the lampooning are reminiscent of the "sharp wit of the Norse skalds" (Visit Shetland, 2022) Given geographical proximity and sea-based trade across the region, it is unsurprising that a culturally embedded festival celebrating Norse heritage also arose on Shetland and with it came new neologisms: to be Nordic, to be Scandinavian, to be Shetlandic.



Figure 3.3: Photo Courtesy: Shetland Museum. Traditional open and sea going yawl boat.

Less apparent than the obvious pyrotechnics in January are layers of social connections that structure and weigh the creation of cultural capital. Throughout the year, shared

practices embody this heritage: building of boats by hand, assemblage of costume, passing on of songs and squad membership from father to son. The social community centred around the village boat sheds is the place where combined Norse and Scottish heritages converge to teach young men what it means to be Shetlandic. The female realm is the village halls in a broadly egalitarian balance within local communities although social capital and identity creation are more overtly found in the male realm. The social structure behind the fire festivals is pervasive formed by a stratified set of communal relations that uses symbolic power to negotiate personal position within the squad's membership and hierarchy.

Yet Up Helly Aa is primarily a narrative of this Norse influenced, male Shetlandic identity. Communal singing of lyrics evokes a spirit of masculine freedom. The Jarl Squad are the apex constitution of the collective habitus, an organisational representative of its own liberatory narrative of fierce independence and resilience to centuries of adversity. The torch-lit procession and firing of boats are a unifying affirmation of the collective independence as symbolically powerful as the New Zealand Haka or the Gurkha war cry.

“Our Galley is the People’s Right, the dragon of the free;

The Right, that rising in its might, brings tyrants to their knee;

The flag that flies above is the Love of Liberty;

The waves are rolling on.”

(J.J. Haldane Burgess song for marching guizers, 1897)

Up Helly Aa is a living representation of North's (1990) principles of structures, both formal and informal. By sticking tightly to a script of public and collective Viking re-enactment, it is also a community's refusal to absorb a Scottish identity (Graeber, 2013). This fends off an acute fear of potential loss of tribe (Maffesoli, 1996). Shared communal identity entwines place, and cultural legacy to be viscerally felt. The informal norms that shape Up Helly Aa as a prevailing cultural institution in local society have been largely stable. As an autonomously run cultural organisation detached from local government, Up Helly Aa has neither external funding nor formal public accountability. Its

institutional developments were shaped by its constituents seeking both community engagement and an expression of Shetlandic local identity which includes subversive wit and independent spirit.

3.7 Antecedents: Historical female economic agency and emancipation

Shetland has been a historical place of economic agency for women (Abrams, 2010): equal partners in oceanic households (Byron, 1994) producers of hand-knitted fine woollens and sellers to visiting sailors across the North Atlantic (Abrams & Gardner, 2021). While men were fishing at sea, women managed both croft and family to generate multiple streams of income through the sale of fish and woollens (Abrams, 2012).

“In the Shetlands, women are the best.”

(American journalist visiting Shetland 1927, Shetland .org, 2022)

We do not know as much as we might about women’s economic and entrepreneurial agency in Shetland or Scotland as both have received limited scholarly attention. Women made an unsung contribution to “capital accumulation, informal political engagement, and industrial production” (Abrams et al., 2006, p. 3) hidden behind a “privileging of masculinity in imagery and symbols of Scottish national identity” (ibid, p. 18). Women occupied subordinate roles that generated symbolic value for men (ibid p. 240). Crofting communities had gendered reciprocity and economic interdependence beyond that found in Scottish urban or semi-rural locations. This was supplemented by close communal bonds in a “dense network of community and neighbourhood organisations, institutions, and practice” (Abrams et al., 2006, p. 251).

On Shetland, the question of the role of women as equal economic agents is central to considering Up Helly Aa emerging from a previously gender balanced economic context. Some, but not all, of the reason for greater emancipation is a Norse heritage shared with Faroe, Iceland, Orkney and West Norway where trade links and genealogy overlapped. Locational serendipity is another factor. Up Helly Aa might be seen as a continuing dominance of patriarchal structures over female agency. Alternatively, the festival reflects gender equality formed in a prior era that needs updating to maintain its salience in this egalitarian socio-historical culture. Structures of oppression or a somewhat old-

fashioned expression of equal female agency expressed within a separate realm under the rubric of Up Helly Aa? Considering the Nordic identity and trading patterns shared by other maritime households around the North Atlantic, the evidence suggests the latter.

Shetland is an island economy where households were pluriactive, “earning income from a number of sources” (Abrams et al., 2006, p. 183). Fishing households gave women “at least equal status to men” (Abrams et al., 2006, p. 240). The structure of joint maritime households, as found across Shetland, the Faroes, Norway, and the Netherlands (Pye, 2015) “involved men and women in separate sets of collaborative activities” (Byron, 1994, p. 251). Men headed to sea and women managed the catch so “took a direct economic role in production and distribution that was complementary to that of their menfolk” (Byron, 1994, p. 247). In Shetland, the women were embedded in a complex social web of trade. Payment was by barter (particularly for woollens) so extensive female-led networks were created to trade “in their own right” (Abrams et al., 2006, p. 208). Men pooled resources through the ownership and operation of boats. Women pooled resources to maximise their returns in the marketplace for the sale of fish and woollens although the barter economy constrained commercial development.

With men frequently absent, the domain of women was both domestic and management of associated farming activity. Sorority appeared as women allied together as seen in Sweden (Byron, 1994) and coastal Friesland (Pye, 2015). Female involvement in the public sphere of marine-based commerce is apparent from the early medieval Hanseatic trade (Holterman, 2020) but rarely documented. They ran businesses after the death of their spouse “often in cooperation with his former trading partners” (Holterman, 2020, p. 383).

The more egalitarian structure of Shetland households where women had an active and equal role was in contrast to mainland Scotland where wives were considered more dominated by their husbands. The divergence stemmed from material reality, not ideological differences (Abrams, 2005). Lives were poor and although fully involved in household economies, financial contributions were less than the men returning with fish. Gender roles were fluid, taking on many land roles in public view. Elsewhere in Scotland, women remained within the male sphere (Abrams, 2005). Narratives depicted women as “brave, strong, stoic... bloody minded... the heroine of sea rescues... an autonomous and independent woman” (Abrams, 2005, p. 5). Women used storytelling as verbal

communication which affirmed "discursive formulations" to the listener (Abrams, 2005, p. 6). In a reflection of their self-perception of agency, oral history places women as the central subject within narratives of the heroic, tragic crofting woman.



Figure 3.4 : Female economic agent in training

(Image courtesy of Shetland Photo Archive)

Shetland woollen garments are fine knit, light, warm, and slightly less water absorbent so were sought by sailors crewing open boats in the cold North Atlantic, enhancing Shetland as a trading hub. The commercial structures of raising sheep, carding wool, spinning, knitting, and trading of finished items lay within the realm of Shetland's women (Abrams, 2012, p. 606). In 1901, two-thirds of households were still involved in woollen's trade, one-third in the 1950's (Abrams & Gardner, 2021). This reflects "a much longer tradition of entrepreneurial activity by Shetland knitters" (Abrams & Gardner, 2020, p. 220) selling hosiery to Dutch fishermen since the 17th C. When too constrained by the local barter system, women found new markets with cash buyers elsewhere and took control of retail sales. By collective agency, women broke the cycle of credit, indebtedness, and limited cash to move beyond the local feudal trading structures (Abrams, 2010). To upscale output and "create small businesses at all levels" (Abrams, 2021, p. 606), women also invested in hand-operated knitting machines.



Figure 3.5: Knitting as a contemporaneous action within other economic and household activity

Image courtesy of Shetland Photo Museum

This historical evidence indicates a shared egalitarianism in households in Shetland consistent with other Nordic and Atlantic periphery locations. As a Victorian creation, Up Helly Aa enacted women controlling the symbolically domestic, but with vigour and authority. Modernity in the 20th C brought new opportunities for the women in a service-based economy beyond domestic, croft or commercial roles. Men had new opportunities in oil or related services. The dominant iconography and culture of fishing remained as one of male pooled labour built upon strong ties of “kinship, affinity, and neighbourhood as economic and social resources” (Byron, 1994, p. 272). Modernity also brought a more industrialised approach but social structures (Byron, 1994, p. 273) such as a collective ownership model of the pelagic fishing boats on Whalsay, Shetland, remain. The criteria for recruitment into a pooled fishing boat was embedded into community norms of masculine confraternal structures. It showed “a willingness to work hard and absolute loyalty to the boat” (Byron, 1994, p. 287). These sentiments are consistent with the criteria for entry, advancement and ultimately leadership of an Up Helly Aa squad.

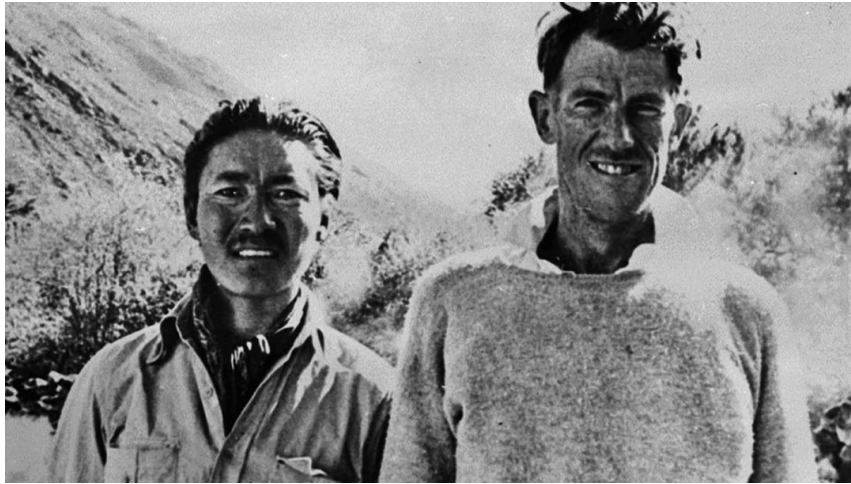


Figure 3.6: Norgay and Hillary wearing Shetland jumpers on Everest ©

Copyright Shetland Museum and Archive Photo Archive

The joint entrepreneurial model within households brought emancipatory effects for women. It required more “mutuality and negotiation than implied by the starkly patriarchal nature of the law, even if it did not confer equality of prestige and power upon women” and reduced “subordination to their husbands... undermining patriarchal relations and gender inequalities” (King, p. 240). Separation cases showed a degree of reciprocity and mutuality in pre-industrial marital relationships. However, competence was not equally recognized. “If work was interchangeable, ideas about it were not; a wife temporarily took on men's work, assisting him in ‘his business’” (King, 2010, p. 209). With multiple financial and practical roles, women in fishing families (Abrams, 2012) exhibit a prominent level of empowerment and capability. “The country folk are very smart in their bargains with the Dutch; they are now paid in money for everything” (Low, 1879, p. 67) refers to women acting as commercial agents. However, women’s commercial activities did not translate into female guilds or formal structures. When male weavers entered the industrialised woollen process, they “used skill and artisanal rituals, initiation fees and male posturing to create positions of exclusivity (King, 2010, p. 214).

Female empowerment remains domestically grounded in collaborative lateral networks of connected female households trading goods, labour, and services rather than the craftsman’s guild system that men created. Emancipation was a more collective action of women empowering each other through social and economic relationships (Abrams, 2012) conducting “complex negotiations needed to convert payments for goods into household necessities” (Abrams, 2012, p. 609). Abrams (2012) observes a loss of female agency, a

reversal in cultural capital and women's authority in society as their entrepreneurial scope diminished with industrial business models emerging in woollens and fishing. The separate economic and social spheres that had evolved in balance to enhance survival now needed to be renegotiated. Women entered wider fields of work that brought them economic freedom that was not dependent on a spouse or traditional industries, but informal social norms remained.

Shetland women faced harsh, exceptionally arduous lives, as did the men. However, this was lived out in conditions more akin to parity than subjugation. Male agency was expressed in hierarchical community structures and female agency in lateral community sorority. Rather than consider Up Helly Aa a subjugation from which women require relief and empowerment, we may see a structural continuation of equal and opposite roles now requiring reconsideration to allow equal access to community capital creation.

3.8 The Debate: Triggering of Public Institutional Contestation



Figure 3.7: Courtesy Shetland Time. Shetland Dialect: showing general bemusement over the dispute.

In 2018, women in Lerwick increasingly voiced that we too are part of Shetland's community with a common cultural heritage. They sought to be equal to men in status and squad participation. They did not want to be limited to village hall organisers as this limited access to meaningful and symbolic power emerging from squad participation. Like the voice of Hortensia in ancient Rome, (Beard, 2018) raising her right for her voice

to be heard on behalf of herself and others, the women of Shetland asserted their wish to contribute to the future shaping of a shared, gender inclusive community identity that protected them all. Key women through their voices attempted to shift the social boundaries (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 131). The Jarl squad leaders' hysteresis (Bourdieu & Sayed, 1964) cannot be dismissed as misogyny. Media questioning whether Shetlanders are gender equal also caused great disquiet locally. An intersectional clash emerged between two cries for freedom: one by women seeking gender parity in light of their equal cultural heritage, the other by men retaining distinctive Shetlandic practices used as a defence against external powers. Both strands considered themselves as pursuing good for others through collective activities (Nordstrom et al., 2020).

“Few people dared to speak up... it’s not worth the hassle...Then something inside of me snapped.”

(Woman on UHA4A, 2020)

3.9 The Debate: Localism and Institutional legitimacy

The norms around Up Helly Aa appeared to tighten an identity as the event came under scrutiny. On Shetland, informal social norms on identity construction and boundary setting involve residents and structures but questions have been raised about who is “allowed” within the community to speak of Up Helly Aa. To debate traditions may require a position in its genealogy (Grydehøj, 2010). Control of historical narrative or being a gatekeeper of which norms are acceptable “requires becoming part of the community of interlinked people that turns geography into place” (Grydehøj, 2010). To ask whose voice will be given weight is not as simple as to characterise men’s voices as dominant and women shouting to be heard (Beard, 2018; Manne, 2017). This occasionally happened as “women whittering on” (BBC Radio Shetland Speakeasy, June 2019) but rarely. Legitimacy here pivots around localism identified by speaking or writing in local dialect as a signifier of group belonging. “Peerie”, “wir”, “ye ken”, “bairns” and “fay” show a linguistic aspect to structural norms that, in combination with a distinctive accent, means that a non-Shetlandic contribution is easily discernible and questioned. Locals “knappin wi de,” switching into more formal English for outsiders and back into local dialect with “insiders,” reflects a lingering bidialectalism that was used as a strategic device to set boundaries of “legitimate” participation and locality.

There is subtle demarcation and defiance towards outsiders taking dominant cultural or jurisdictional influence over locals. Outsiders are called “soothmoothee” or a “jumped-up Lerwick Scottie” (Shetland News, Jan 2020) being a local urbanite with more Scottish than Shetland affiliations. Social media forums illustrate the primacy of Shetland agency: locals must be able to decide local matters with maximum local control. This attempt to curate “legitimacy” within is pervasive. References to true Shetlander has “implications that people who hold a certain view are less than full members of the community” (Hamilton, Shetland News Jan 2022) and “told to get back on the ferry where you can from for expressing an opinion”. Support for female exclusion from Up Helly AA mutated occasionally into an ideological purity test of socially embedded identity and legitimacy.

Lange’s (2008) work on the informal barriers to social inclusion on Orkney revealed as similar pattern as “folkloric performance theory.” Dialect, dress, and event participation within the “Baa” (Orkney News, March 2022) suffused through the dramaturgy of stories retold as internal group communication and boundaries. Newcomers attempts to get involved in Orcadian community life may be interpreted as being insensitive or pushy. Lange’s observation (2008) was that Orcadians wished to represent themselves to each other as humble and dismissive of hierarchical structures so policed individual contributions and each other. Shetland is similar culturally but more “Norse” and a more aggressive wit.

What is absent from both the literature and the media reporting is the this: what does exclusion of women mean to men as well as women in shaping the enterprise and social context? How does a diminution in relative female social capital within the structures of a 22,000 population on a rural island translate into differential access to entrepreneurial and social resources? It is unclear how rejection or exclusion women has unseen consequences on the wider enterprise environment.

3.10 The Debate: Contesting Gendered Roles



Figure 3.8: South mainland First Female Squad on Shetland 2015

Up Helly AA is aligned to gendered roles - men as Vikings and Guizers, women in the halls: “stag do meets hen do” (BBC, 2019). All but two (Nesting & Girlsta, Lerwick) of the festivals are mixed gender reflecting practical gender equality within dispersed rural crofting and maritime communities. The first female Jarl was appointed by South Mainland Up Helly Aa in 2015 and “did the sky fall in” (Man, UHA4A, May 2019). Four women were refused formation in Lerwick of a 2018 squad called “#metoo”. The group suspected limited capacity was “an excuse to exclude women” (BBC, 2018).

"There had been an advert posted in the Shetland Times asking for registration of squads. There was nothing clearly in the advert that restricted it to previous squads, so we thought it was an opportunity to see how the land lies for whether women would be accepted in squads in Up Helly Aa."

Zara Pennington, of the Shetland for Up Helly Aa equalities group, August 2018).

In Aug 2019, it was announced that boys outside Lerwick may join junior squads but not girls from Lerwick. The earliest memory of Helen Robertson (13), whose father was in a squad was of “a small replica wooden galley my dad made every year. We burned it in

the back garden” (Shetland News, Mar 2015). She wrote to Junior squads organiser asking why she was excluded from entering a girl’s squad. She was told it was just as she was a girl.

“I was 13, all hell broke loose. At least one member of the Up Helly Aa committee came to the school to complain and intervene”

(Shetland News, March 2015).



Figure 3.9: Photo Courtesy of Shetland Times: Junior Jarl Squad boys

Proposing a school debate on girls' inclusion, she faced significant social and community pressure. She "had created a societal threat." No explanation was offered (Shetland News, March 2015) other than gender. "It's tradition, you can't change tradition". She later, as a tomgirl, visited her brother and father's squad for lunch in the galley shed and their photos in Viking attire. One "Viking" turned to her and asked:

Q: "Whit wye is du no in da squad?" A: "Becis A'm a lass."

This exchange galvanised comments. Claiming exclusion was "because you're a girl" solidified public unease and discourse shifted to the importance of creating a society where girls shared the same aspiration and inclusion as boys. This young girl asserting herself through her voice was a powerful act of personal empowerment that resonated

across the islands. This contrasts to a boy, 13, who described being made Junior Jarl the “best day ... and most honourable day of his life” (Shetland News, Jan 2009). Such unequal treatment between boys and girls is very “un-Shetlandic.” The tradition of female assertion in Nordic society and Shetland faced resistance to any change to a core element of male Shetlandic identity.

Several women voiced support for the status quo: "let men be men and women be women" (BBC, 2019). They did not accept that adhering to gendered stereotypes was not suitable for all and a poor role model for the next generation. There is pride among women who value their power and autonomy in running the social halls where the festivals take place. These are central to the life of the community year-round, just as the galley sheds are for men. Both gendered locations are generators of community social capital. The extrapolation of centuries old maritime household binary gender roles continued into the gendered structure of the festivities. Female relations of those involved in the processions of Up Helly Aa are hostesses in the ha's (halls) where the all-night parties occur. There is a social stratification (King, 2010, p. 245) as to roles and responsibilities, a female collective at work with status sensitive and ritualized roles. Some 42 squads, including the Jarl's Squad, visit each of the 12 halls in turn, dancing to live bands, eating and drinking. The main attractions are male guising squads, reminiscent of the Mumming tradition or other door-to-door folk traditions of community entertainment. The ha's, run by female hostesses, are in schools, church halls and hotels, offering a variety of provisions and oversight of the activities in that locality, although they can be seen as “a slightly drunken version of Cinderella” (UHA4A, Feb 2022).

The debate then erupted with women and men both arguing both strands: the liberation from external others through a Shetlandic identity and the liberation of women to access society on equal terms to men.

3.11 The Debate: The Rise of Female Collective Action and Male Allies

Activism began early in 1902 with “an attempt by a woman to infiltrate one of the squads by disguising herself as a man” (King 2010, p. 257) met by a committee who “put their foot down on this experiment” (Huband, Sunday Times, August 2020). Demands for inclusion increased such as the production of an alternative satirical Bill (King, 2010). Structural changes developed through the creation and activation of new dedicated

organisations since 2018. Collective action was the mechanism to shift the debate to include the wider community. Up Helly Aa for Aa (UHA4A) introduced feminist discourse and iconography. They challenged exclusion and took testimony from women who wished to have been included but were not. These were strong, well-known local voices, “legitimate” and social media gave an alternative, feminine and inclusive narrative. Legitimacy was furthered by the voices of women who were daughters of past Jarls squad leaders. They asked why sons and brothers could participate but not daughters. Particular weight was placed on why the next generation of girls was being excluded based on gender. The Equalities 2010 Act legislation re-entered public debate having largely been brushed aside. The irony was Scottish legislation defending Shetland female rights from male “Vikings” in a place with historically higher levels of equality than the Scottish mainland.

Female groups emerged to seek inclusion in a spirit of verbal wit and challenge recognizable as Shetland culture. They “critique and subvert the patriarchal acquisition of authority and privilege and misused symbolism of an imagined Viking history” (Johnson2022). A parallel awareness of gender-based violence on the islands and challenging “blackface” adopted by guising squads converged as demands for change. Activists sought to link female squad exclusion to other misogynistic or ignorant behaviour by Shetland men during the festival. This questioned the legitimacy of Up Helly Aa to police itself in the interests of all Shetlanders.

Reclaim the Raven as an arts project sought to reclaim the iconography of the raven, a festival symbol of aggressive Viking masculinity. They generated a feminist satirical “Bill” protesting their exclusion. A Reclaim the Site event in the public play park used to burn the galley highlighted the discriminatory use of public assets for a “private party”(Shetland News, Jan 2022).

The Gaada Arts organisation collated 120 years of archive material of women agitating for squad inclusion. Evocative Viking inspired public art and poetry shared their wider message. This positioned women’s voices as not disruptive but as longstanding agents of place with a stature and longevity equal to men. Their display at Glasgow’s Women’s Library brought new media interest and Shetland women’s narratives contributes to expanded discourse on feminist issues within Scotland. To the unease of many locals on Shetland, the valence of debate shifted from the wondrous spectacle of living Viking

heritage to asking if the islands were a backwater of misogynistic activity. By possibly contravening equalities law, the Viking heroes were potentially shamed outlaws (Campbell, 1958). The artists' works championed a shared but forgotten female Nordic heritage of strong Viking women contributing to the creation of Shetland society. Older recordings of women revealed life at the beginning of Up Helly AA (Laurenson, BBC, 1967) when subversion of tradition and authority was part of Shetlands' festival culture and the fixed social relations within Scottish culture were a subject for rebellion. It took women to remind Shetland of their actual rather than invented heritage. This collective of female artists and activists showed how to be authentic Shetlandic: Up Helly Aa should be gender neutral and inclusive and that Lerwick was anomalous to the rest of Shetland and breaching the Equalities 2010 Act.

"No winder you canna catch fish."

Katie Laurenson, 1961

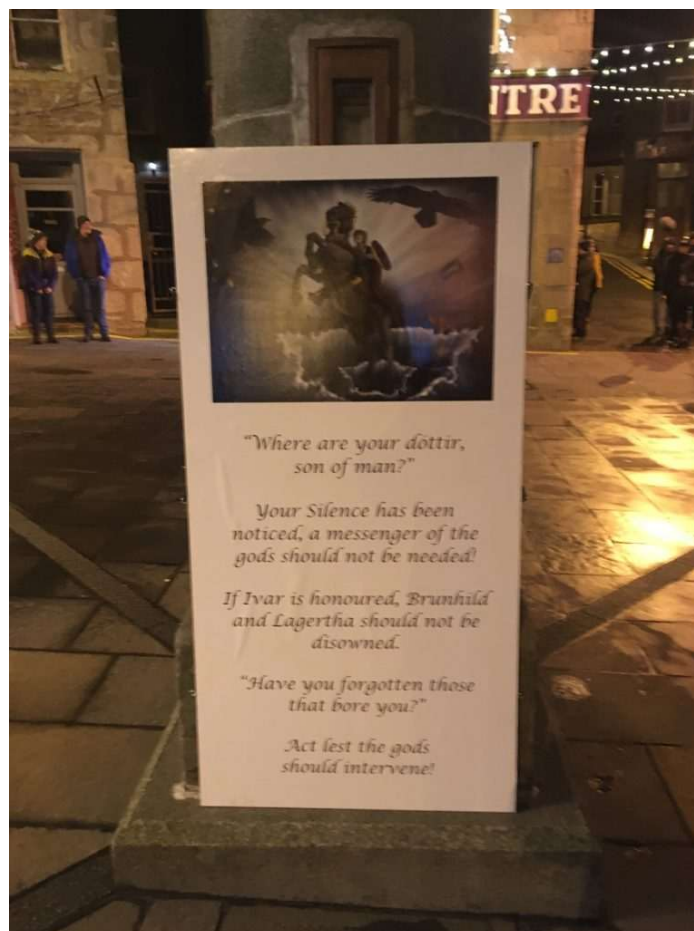


Figure 3.10: Satire squared: Feminist Satirical Bill to Rival the Official Satirical Bill.

Photo Courtesy Gaarda.Org. 2020

Men also stepped forward and broke whatever limited male consensus had been in place. This created a collaboration between men and women to shift public opinion. The views of fathers were influential.

The two most notable activists were Peter Hamilton, an incomer, whose public one-man protests raised searing questions as to the involvement of Shetland Islands Council in enabling the squads to not abide by the Equalities Act 2010 when using public space. Karl Johnson added a powerful local and academic voice of public sociology. He questioned the separation of public versus private realms that had maintained female exclusion and challenged squads to update their governance to meet a modern understanding of gender equality. These men punctured the narrative fiction that Up Helly Aa was a private event to be governed in private without external community scrutiny and accountability.

“Variations of the ‘men are men, women are women’ line are outdated notions which reinforce harmful messages about supposedly masculine and feminine roles, and stereotypes that become mistaken for fact. Everyone is entitled to equal rights and has an equal amount of potential in what they can achieve, regardless of their gender. It is only social structures and the institutions of society which create and benefit from inequality.”

(Karl Johnson, 2019 Shetland News)

“Why can’t my daughter enjoy UHA in the same way that I do, in a squad.”

(UHAfA Facebook April 2022).

3.12 Debate: Female Activism for Continuity

Against feminist groups for inclusion arose a parallel structure advocating continuity of tradition. "Women for Remain the Same" (W4RTS) were women who resisted change and favoured keeping the squad structure and the Up Helly constant. They held significant support among local women.

*"Those who seek to change it will have to persuade women as well as men,
... the most vociferous supporters of the status quo are women"*

(SIC Convenor Bell, Shetland News, 2021).

One of their key arguments was the liberty for men to have things as they so wish:

*"I am disgusted by the sexism and bias on display...Where are men's rights
these days?" ... Everyone feels they have the right to remove the rights of
others...there are many women out there who support them"*

(Women commenting, Shetland Times Feb 2020).

*"Our festival is unique to Lerwick and Shetland. You will find nothing like
it anywhere else in the world and we are determined to keep it that way."*

(WFRTS, 2020)

Reclaim the Ravena and Up Helly Aa for Aa aimed to advance female inclusion and gender equality more widely, while Women for Remain the Same aimed to "support, promote, and encourage the role women play in Lerwick UHA and our community," as well as "hold onto and uphold the tradition we hold dear." "Publicise the work, time and effort that is undertaken each year" and "advocate the reasons for ensuring Lerwick UHA Remains the Same" (WFRTS, Facebook 2 Feb 2020). Their response to the news of female inclusion was terse.

*"We are obviously gutted that the UHA Committee has felt it necessary to
bow to the pressure of a very vocal minority who have tried to force
change upon our much-loved festival, rather than leaving it to evolve from
within" (WFRTS, Facebook 22 June 2020)*

*"The commitment to the festival from those who actually run it is second
to none and we are deeply concerned for the future should they decide to
withdraw their support in the wake of this decision" with thanks for the
support to form "like-minded people who actually understand what Up
Helly Aa means to your community."*

(WFRTS, Facebook 22 June 2020)



Figure 3.11: Photo Courtesy of Gaarda: Women Dancing in Halls during Up Helly Aa

Comments to this final post reaffirm their main arguments that local residents who were agents of change are not legitimate voices. “Makes me so mad. ...how many of those wanting change are actually Shetlanders;” that men’s realm should remain separate “Leave our up Helly alone women do your own thing” and that activists were not aligned with the core of Shetland society.

“I thought we lived in a democratic society. What do you call it when the minority dictates? How much can be ruined for so many by so few” or just did not “actually understand” the spirit, context, operations of up Helly Aa. Their position that incomers should “understand what united the people together over the community’s lifetime”

(WFRTS, Facebook 22 June 2020)

WFRTS denied any social claims of harm from squad exclusion, thinking them illusory. The conservative voice did not give affirmative reasons keep traditions the same. Their arguments were personal: minority activities were bullying the majority into compliance for change. “Remain the same! Don’t give into bullies “(FB 20 Feb 2020). There are

repeated calls in the comments echoing that on 25 Jan 2020,) “going for years and years and years, everything is run for perfectly and why change it!”. The conservative fear is that any change would undermine social stability and expressed as catastrophic loss.

“If loads of women wanted to be in squads that would ruin the halls. Who would be there. It would really disintegrate into a shambles. If it’s not broken, then don’t fix it.”

(FB 4 Feb 2020).

The women of WFRTS do not lack agency.

“I’m a woman and I don’t need a man to speak for me” (WFRTS) or “Yeah. The whole year. It’s the most empowered I feel.... It’s my party, it’s my hall If I don’t want you there, you’ll not be there. Simple.... I have wielded my rights... men being men. Women being women. So be it” I’m in charge of my halls”

(BBC Speakeasy, June 2019).

Their world view being fixed within their own perceptions is also apparent.

“Wha wid run da halls an mak da soup if aa du weeman git in squads?”

(Posting on 1 Feb 2020).

Where there is commonality is on the underpinning values of the importance of Up Helly Aa for collective community identity:

“It pulls, or did at wan time, da whole community tagidder... Community is whit maks Up Helly Aa whit it is, no do iddir wye roond”

(Alison Moncrieff, WTRTS, 25 Jan 2020).

“Da rural wans too, are incredibly important for da Shetland community as a whole. It brings aabody tagidder at a pretty darka dn miserable time of year, it provides local businesses wi a boost in an otherwise dormant period and it gives folks of all ages da chance tae socialise around da toon fae da weekend afore, right through da rest o da week.”

(Alison Leith, WFRTS, FB 20 Jan 2020).

The gendered realms were seen as an ideal state:

“Respect Shetland and Shetlanders. Up Helly Aa has always had the men doing the procession and the women feeding and watering everyone, they play an important role in making sure everyone has a good night”

(WFRTS Facebook, 2 Feb 2020).

The tone and framing of the contribution align with the imagined communities of Anderson (2016). A shared activity binds a group's identity but here practices are disconnected from a changing society. There was no collective self-awareness that social contexts had changed. The complete disregard of the Equality Act 2010 was unsurprising as disregard for distant authority imposing jurisdiction was a long Shetland tradition. Resistance was consistent with a defiant Shetland protection of identity and community. In championing (W4RTS, 2020) the 47,179 people who have carried processional torches, activists for inclusion quickly pointed out that none had been a woman. The cautious view was that the gendering was immovable and inherent to community meaning. The progressive view was that it was evolutionary structure, and inclusivity was inherent to meaning as a Shetlander. The legal view prevailed that “discrimination in the name of tradition is no argument” (Hamilton, Dec 2021, Shetland News).

3.13 The Debate: Navigating the conflation of tradition and identity.

“Why were women banned? ... no good reason... it was often floated; the word tradition was used a lot”

(Joan, BBC Women's Hour, Jun 2022).

The discourse then revolves around what is the tradition, how legitimate is it and whether traditions can or should change as “when conservative organisations resist change, they make an appeal to culture and tradition” (STV News, May 2019). In a 2011 poll, 31% did not think a woman should be a Guizer Jarl as it “goes against tradition” (Shetland News, 2010). There is a repeated conflation of calling for festivals to remain unchanged as equal to a desire for the socially embedded context in which a Shetlander lives and breathes to also remain unchanged. “It is more than a festival, it is our tradition, it is a

feeling of belonging and a strong sense of pride in who we are” (Comment, Shetland Times, 2019). This was equally derided as lauding the unlaudable:

“The importance of an all-male procession ...women are only allowed to spectate, sew the costumes or serve food in the halls”

(Huband, Sunday Times August 2020).

“It is for the community to change things if they so wish”

(Convenor BBC, 2022).

Institutions clashed, formal and informal, over the difficulty in weighing tradition in discourse. Abrogation resulted by the main governance structure, the council, of any personal or legal responsibility. The main Lerwick municipality also abrogated responsibility for including women, passing the issue to individual squads (Shetland Times, June 2022). Politicians also abrogated leadership: “the social power that those who are deeply involved wield, that local politicians have been running scared” (Editorial, Shetland News, Feb 2022). The suspicion was that “the vast majority of male members of the Community Council take part in Up Helly Aa and prefer it to be primarily a single sex event” (UH4A Facebook comment, Feb 2017.)

Material used by W4RTS was a paen to the past with black and white images of Up Helly Aa in its early days. Whatever private views, few beyond activists on either side indicated their allegiance. There was respect for the voices of individuals who have, guild like, served many years in a squad role. Longevity of contribution generates community respect and there was incomprehension by many as to the requests for female inclusion except when challenged as to why their own daughters cannot participate but their sons can. Tradition was also evoked in structural terms as Up Helly Aa reflected the social order of 1869. Men have been enculturated within it since boyhood. It has become the dominant social structure on the islands determining the informal norms of both men and women. Challenge to tradition is seen as an assault on collective identity, a highly personal assault on what makes a (Lerwick) man a Shetlander. It was not seen as a dispassionate debate about shifting structural boundaries in line with shifts in society but that “we want tae damage the festival which is simply not the truth” (Shetland News comments, Feb. 16, 2020). This chorus also turns dark with social media comments

implying that “those wanting true equality are not true Shetlanders, and should simply leave” (Hamilton, Dec 2021, Shetland News), literally telling people to leave “their” stage.

3.14 The debate: misogynist undertones

This progressive chorus is a call for engagement, structurally in the form of talks between organizations, with a view to finding mutual understanding. The challenge to male authority and autonomy was not well received even when made by other men. “One difficulty with island life is that it can be hard to acknowledge problems, but if you don’t... you can’t deal with them” (Hamilton, Dec 2021, Shetland News). Abuse emerged against the women seeking change, suffused with misogynistic tones and occasionally malevolent:

Boy 1: Whit do you think awe s ash*t in da Shetland News on Facebook about da Lerrick Up Helly AA?

Boy 2: Its f*cking sh*t.

Boy 1: “If those bitches fae sooth think they are going to change our culture and tradition they can just pi** aff on da Northlink where they came fae”.

Boy 2: (nodding in agreement)

(Clickimin Leisure centre, high school boys: extracted from Hamilton, 21 Dec 2020, Shetland News).

Silencing of the female individual or collective voice chorus is attempted (Mann, 2019) either by being berated or threatened for speaking out. “I don’t feel like it is safe to share my opinion. I kind of got approached by this man kind outa nowhere and was - What the f*ck do you think you are playing at? Silly little bitch” (recalled by Girl aged 15, Firestarter Video, Jan 2020). Yet women in both sides of this chorus have experienced “abuse when they had spoken out” but have since “found their voice and found that speaking up is empowering” (Pennington, Orkney News, 2018).

Lesley Simpson, the first female Jarl in South mainland, sees the analogy with suffrage.

“When women were not allowed to have a say in anything that happened to them... there are times through history where women have been entirely subjugated, and we had to move on from there”

(Shetland News, March 2019).

Social media groups have galvanized representation, and many have received unacceptable abuse when articulating their views. For Up Helly Aa for Aa's, abuse is seen as extension of misogynist attitudes and sexual threats. For Women for Remain the Same it is to be “abused, slandered and threatened” and “made to feel we should be ashamed” a reputational damage from being “proud of what generations of men have built up.” They are “harangued into silence for no reason, other than it doesn't fit the agenda of a few.” Perhaps unused to being challenged in the public square, these women still felt a diminution in freedom for speaking out: Women on both sides of the argument risk social exclusion.

“I have never been made to feel undervalued as a woman or mother until now... I no longer have my freedom of speech for fear of being ostracised as do many others who wish for the status quo”

(Hughson, Shetland News 2022)

3.15 The Debate: Reclaiming Nordic History as Female and the Shame of Marginalisation

The call to tradition by both men and women was undermined by the introduction of narrative history of female Viking past, on Shetland and beyond, reconnecting the community with feminist Norse heritage. Female “shield maidens” (BBC, 2019; National Geographic, 2017) fought alongside male warriors. The local Shetlandic interpretation of their exclusion from Viking folklore is described as flawed: “there were female warriors, they have been found with grave goods, so it doesn't represent that” (BBC, March 2019). This is part of a wider reappraisal of the role and representation of Viking women and their role in Norse society. “We need to stop seeing... women as passive and without a will. We need to stop questioning the ability of women and stop taking the ability of men for granted” (Sanmark, UHI, 2021 via BBC), Norse immigrant women appeared to have a high degree of status (Brook, UHI, 2021 via BBC), indeed higher in Scotland than in

other countries colonised by Norse seafarers (BBC, 2015). Country fire festivals are also seen as a vocal challenge to Lerwick's exceptionality, either by the appointment of a female Jarl or by the jesting wit of subversion to expand the audience. In a further break of tradition, in the South Mainland Up Helly Aa," the procession and burning will be livestreamed on the internet" (Shetland News, March 2019).



Figure 3.12: Viking Woman reimagined Courtesy of Gaarda. Hanna Hawker

Shetland's prevailing social norms are rurality, an outward look, resourcefulness, egalitarianism, and secularism. A new undertone had emerged over 2021-2022.: we are being shamed. The election of the first female head of the council was considered a point of anticipated embarrassment in the community. A female Convenor would be receiving squads at a civic reception where attendance in the squads was only open to men

(Shetland Times, 22 June 2022). Pro-Campaigners induced potential shame if the festival became more known for the exclusion of girls and women than for being the biggest and most spectacular fire festival in Europe (Zara Pennington, The Guardian, Jan 2020).

3.16 The Debate: Liberty breaks the deadlock.

Besides a call for tradition, freedom - of identity, movement and governance of their own institutions - rang through. The calls to liberty clashed. There was liberty as non-interferences from outsiders who had control but were kept at a distance. This expands to calls for non-domination by outside governance so seeking full agency over local institutional powers. The alternative form of liberty was a call for equality of opportunity to make Shetland institutions comply with the Equalities (2010) Act as a guarantee of equal rights rather than a reliance on informal norms. Both reflect a culture of freedom for the individual and community positioned within the tradition of Nordicity. Most astutely, the female activists showed how equality would be recombined into Shetlandic male, as well as female, identity.

The arguments for freedom of choice prevailed over tradition. Women were pushing to expand their choices away from the historically prescribed role for social contributions: "it is freedom of choice or rather a lack of it that has prompted the discussion" and to be accepted as equals and create a community based on open and deliberative debate.(UHA4A, 2020). The aspiration of women activists was for people to have "absolute autonomy of choice over how they want to participate or contribute to our amazing festival "(Inkster UHA4A, 2020). Some also hope an appeal to unity for future generations would be influential as all could converge upon a third shared social norm of fairness for the next generation (Bicchieri, 2017)

*"If you can't do it for the activists, then do it for the bairns, and indeed future generations of Shetlanders" (Hughson, Shetland News, April 2019)
or indeed, a call to reputation and honour: I do not want to feel shame for Shetland*

(Johnson, 2019).

Neither the media nor the Up Helly Aa committee have described how internal discussions were conducted to reach their decision to include women. However, the

rationale for change given was not a pivot towards masculine enlightenment but a curious contortion into an amplification of male rights for themselves:

*“We felt that it **was time to give squads a choice over their guizers**, including allowing female participation.” This freedom that is called upon in the spirit of the expanding of male choice and it will be marginal to changing the wider traditional as the “essence and spirit will remain the same.”*

(Up Helly Aa Committee Secretary, June 2022).

Inclusion for girls and women is given but it is freedom of men to choose and the freedom of women to be chosen, thus at the largesse of the male squad. This is not the liberty of autonomy. This is a self-serving conceptualization of masculinity that still privileges male interests. It is not "libertas," nor is it freedom from interference. Shetlanders have realigned themselves, however begrudgingly, with older gender inclusive traditions and the Nordicity they share in communities around the North Sea.

3.17 Discussion

Place can be mischaracterised, certainly in the press. Feminist action is here an affirmation of the role women play with strong and active entrepreneurial agency within marine households across the North Atlantic. As women's roles shifted, men's to a large degree did not. Up Helly Aa has been a very public negotiation of two equal and opposite forces renegotiating shared space. Enactment has been to social peers, and which brings normative expectations of behaviours (Bicchieri & McNally, 2020). Few sought to challenge an institutional structure that accumulated social capital for men and buttressed a differentiated sense of collective identity. Anticipated change triggered a fear of diminution of how to be a Shetlander. Fears of lost island autonomy, oil revenues, a multi-million fund, local governance, future revenues from renewable energy and space activity are all valid. Tight cohesion and differentiated identity help keep scarce resources circulating on the island for the community in perpetuity. It fends off political or economic overreach from elsewhere and defends political subsidiarity in the face of potential Scottish independence. Yet contemporary Nordicity and Scottish culture values equal access to future opportunity. As more people enter each other's spheres, gender

roles become less rigid, and gender is less a criterion for inclusion in social structures. There are still legitimate criteria to access social capital: community contribution, skill, and longevity of commitment, but not gender. Not anymore.

One theme aligns the conflicting narratives. social status on Shetland is earned by contribution to the local community. Male social elevation echoes what helped them survive at sea. The hierarchical or lateral set of structures surrounding Up Helly Aa reflected stratified recognition of committed islanders to each other. Class hierarchy is largely absent although dialect shifts between insiders and outsiders. Wealth, erudition, cultural sophistication, and family history are only limited generators of local social capital. Practical skills, group bonding, commitment to a shared causes generate social capital for both sexes, more gendered in the capital than rural areas. Up-Helly-Aa, with its satire, mockery of hierarchy and Scottish power acts as a metaphor of how group social capital is accrued. This accords with Cohen (1987) that such symbolism of action is the unifier and definer of local identity. In a world of change and ambiguity, a Shetlander can step into a role of certainty, even if a dramaturgical confection, particularly if you are a man. It is highly prescribed. You are unambiguously a Shetlander , the script being a clear boundary delineator of who is or is not “true” and bound to others. .



Figure 3.13: Jarls Squad Lerwick 2018. Photo Courtesy Shetland Times

The previous literatures stress Up Helly Aa as per King (2010) as a bifurcation of the social realm into public external and private domestic halls to echo Rosaldo's (1974) theory that women's sociality was subsumed by public sociality. Imagery reflects an era when radical images of middle-class women, together with notions of grace and charm (King, 2010, p. 250) were the prevailing concept. This gives insufficient weight to the strong jurisdiction Shetland women have over community hall operations. They enforce informal social norms and police male behaviour during Up Helly Aa and throughout the year. Both King (2010) and Abrams et al. (2006) identify the guild-like structures of Up Helly Aa as dominant institutions. Squad membership and galley sheds are workplace orientated institutions, accessed through apprenticeship to “embed masculinity into artisanal work and to claim work that was perceived as skilled” (Abrams et al., 2006, p. 207). Such guilds historically kept male roles within a closed social group.

The concept of guild structures explains institutional origin but misses the dynamic that there are two antithetical points of view engaging in the shaping of institutional norms and that they traverse gender. Narratives have conservative versus progressive poles, so incomprehension follows as their axiology differs. The former see change as incremental and with regard to continuity otherwise chaos may ensue. “We shouldn’t start opening the floodgates” (Smith, Shetland News, 2020) and fear that loss of identity and less group cohesion will follow (Kling, 2013). This study further disagrees with Brown’s (1998) analysis that it is a festival of Yuletide misrule to contain the unruly and advance “respectable” norms of social behaviour. Rather, this study sees the festival as a “bolt on” to existing confraternal masculine structures that preceded the formation of Up Helly Aa and its gendered realms. It is also contiguous with similar Scandinavian festivals that encouraged Norse cultural identity. The echoes in pageantry of a subversive, unruly and fiercely independent culture as an ongoing expression of local identity, was present long before and since its formation in 1876. The male processional format and guizing were perhaps not an “indirect influence on the development of the female organizations surrounding the ha’s” (King, 2010, P. 253). Rather, this chapter argues that female structures of managing halls are a direct continuation of the strong commercial role women played within Shetland society. They emerged from a parallel social structure, not a recent adjunct.

The festivals structural purpose was not to confine female agency to being subservient to males but to integrate the community around the shared purpose of 'downright, genuine, wholehearted enjoyment, the greatest of all' (ex-Jarl McGowan Scott, 1913). This enabled a shared identity, norms, and agency to emerge. This is now “a festival of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Leslie, 2011, p. 5). Perhaps the burghers at inception of Up Helly Aa meant to dampen the unruly culture but it could not subsume the underlying values and vitality of Shetland’s joint maritime household structure and cultural heritage.



Figure 3.14: Up Helly Aa Squad Procession 2018. Photo Courtesy Shetland Times

Having contextualized the structure does not explain why it has not changed to allow more cross-involvement of genders. This study contends that fear of loss from change is based on fear of losing access to accruing fraternal capital that collectively shields the islands from external control.

“Everyone doing their bit and friendships that are only reward. It’s the story of simple beginnings, hard work, and good times” and “I have made some great friends, um, almost brothers and people that will be important to me, for, for the rest of my life, as well as actually learning how to use power tools, which is a whole new thing for me”?

(BBC 2019, Cullivoe Up Helly Aa dinner)

Up Helly Aa in Lerwick sits alongside other fraternal orders of their time: religion, medicine, army which left the women outside and fragmented in social capital and only through activism and the rise in economic opportunity did these begin to change (Evans, 2022a). As a result of sustained resistance, we have to ask why "for many people, excluding women and girls has become almost as important as the torchlight procession itself" (Huband, Sunday Times, August 2020). Consistent with a guild structure, male monopoly locks women out of social capital creation and network benefits. Elite patronage gave access to potentially economic ventures associated with that group. The data is blind as to whether differential access to commercial opportunities has resulted from squad exclusion. How this structure has curtailed female entrepreneurship or commercial development on Shetland is an avenue for future research. In contrast, the further distinction on Shetland, similar to other places with joint marine households, women built their own networks of social capital creation. This supported both economic activity and sharing the burden of caring, both products of their time. The festival's original structure reflected prior social dualities.

Through internal and external esteem, the fraternal capital system suits Lerwick men. Many women gained from the social capital generated through the hall's activities and yearlong networks around those institutions. The benefits to squads and hostesses are highly concentrated but the disbenefits in the rest of society are dispersed. Any link to maltreatment of women is difficult to establish. The higher rates of sexual violence on Shetland (Shetland News, Dec 2021) versus Orkney are indicative but not conclusive. However, the statistical link between fraternal orders, entrenched male dominance and female disadvantage is well established in the literature with higher rates of female harassment noted (Evans, 2022a) and the reports of #wistoo reports (Shetland News, Aug 2020) on Shetland and At Up Helly Aa, disturbing. "It is clear that some men equate the Lerwick Up Helly Aa with a night of sexual entitlement" (Sim, UHA4A, 2020). The reverberations to other institutions are challenged as to whether they are also of a fraternal mindset. The raven flag was seen as a symbol of collective hostility and what appears to be a stepping outside of the legal frameworks that bind them. This consistent with a historical stance of subversion and opting in or out of Scottish jurisdictional control when it suits.

“To point out the obvious, the SIC does not have a choice – it is legally obliged by the law of Scotland to fulfil its duties”

(Shetland news, July 2019)

“The council’s involvement in the festival was viewed, by the authority itself, as legal. ...Sexism is institutionalised; it always was but this was the moment it became formalised... The council’s response, another form of silencing”

(Sim, UHA4A, 2020).

3. 18 Conclusions for Scholarship in Entrepreneurship

In the spirit of Welter (2011) and Dodd et al. (2021), this chapter asks why people think as they do in a particular social-economic context, as relates to female economic agency and entrepreneurship. It asks why they have the gendered conflicts they do (Marlow, 2020). By exploring the social-cultural, historic, and spatial influences on the economic context, the development of female work force participation and enterprise participation by women becomes clearer.

Some key insights emerge for further research. One is a challenge to the way social capital is considered to accrue on the ladder of Bordieuan social stratification of class monikers. There is an exception to this on Shetland where the social structures recognize and awards entry and increased agency to people who show an orientation to community flourishing. It minimises through satire and wit those seeking power for themselves and valorises those participating in a shared devolution of power to their communities and kin. Up Helly Aa is the primary structure on Shetland where that expression is shaped and expressed. As such, this suggests an institutional lens as a method to study community capital formation which is less vertical in orientation but horizontal, community based and dispersed. A more egalitarian structure with fewer established formal institutions was the optimal survival strategy for the group in harsh environmental and political conditions.

The second insight for scholars is that for female entrepreneurial endeavours, the role of local female networks across households and communities is an underweighted factor in creating a culture and pattern of local entrepreneurship. Their role, particularly as

evidenced in joint marine households of the North Atlantic, enabled the empowering of the females as a group moving them from subordination to empowerment and then shared emancipation (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018). This is occluded by the preponderance of literature on male-led hierarchical structures of commerce. There may be an increase in access to available entrepreneurial resources for women if a network of female community contributions is created based on social proximity. This may be expressed through participation in Up Helly Aa festivals and historical household structures. This could be supplemented by a micro analysis of how exclusion has affected access to business opportunities by women or how they may have circumvented this.

Thirdly, as a factor in determining the structures of a community, this study contributes to a growing literature on the role of informal social norms in localised identity formation. In turn, this shapes the commercial and entrepreneurial landscape. This study contributes to the understanding of groups' collective identity and how this is a powerful social motivator behind personal and political decisions.

Lastly, we should be cautious before assuming that resistance to change is prejudice or that analysis defaults to an “oppressor versus victim” narrative on issues of gender. This may unintentionally diminish rather than illuminate the perceived level of female agency. Threats to deep-felt individual and collective identity need to be navigated with care. Researchers should delve with a broad sociological, anthropological, and historical eye to observe how women lead and enable change and how men act in coalition to that end.

“Its winter now,

but I must confess I’m thinking of spring,

and the audacity it takes,

to interrupt a frozen landscape”

(Roseanne Watt, artist, and Up Helly Aa activist 2021)

<https://www.gaada.org/news/weemins-wark-hannah-harkes>

CHAPTER 4

**“WE ARE FREE”: HOW ENTREPRENEURIALISM BY
THE KALASH WOMEN OF NORTHERN PAKISTAN
FURTHERS FEMALE AGENCY AND GROUP
ETHNICITY.**

Chapter 4

“We are Free”: How Entrepreneurialism by the Kalash Women of Northern Pakistan furthers female agency and group ethnicity.



Figure 4.1: Kalash Women at Chalmos Spring Festival. Photo Courtesy of UNESCO 2021.

4.1 Introduction

Counterfactuals are strange and beguiling creatures. Ideas and situations once encountered swirl in the mind, and we proceed to unravel layers of prior heuristics. Startling countervailing evidence means that existing assumptions are reconsidered. This study expands the literature regarding the interrelationship between a social-spatial place and female entrepreneurship. Kalash women, living in the mountains of Northern Pakistan, represent a challenging addition to prior findings exploring gender, religion, cultural adaptation, and the role of emancipatory entrepreneurship embedded within a place. The encounter may cause us to reflect that "knowledge is essentially nothing more than true belief" (Hetherington, 2022, p. 1).

"What do you mean half the businesses are run by women? That's impossible!" (Researcher diary, 2022) or so we mistakenly assume. Yet it appears that around half the businesses in this home of 4,000 people are owned and operated by female business owners. This study, based on a research field trip in Summer 2022, is an exploration with these women. It applies practice theory to investigate the layered characteristics of a society, culture, history, and pre-Islamic belief systems in what was the centre of Peristan. It reveals an interrelated cosmology and way of life persisting in the region for at least 3,500 years (Rehmat, 2017). What begat their enterprises and how does it link to extant levels of female empowerment? To understand how and why the Kalash women "entreprendre", practices are observed which seem to sharpen cultural and religious differentiation from neighbouring Sunni Muslim communities. The long-standing egalitarian culture, albeit with clear areas of hierarchically gendered relations (Cacapardo, 2016a), regards Kalash women as free agents within their working practices. Her agency does not require permission from others. A Kalash woman's experience of venturing affirms a sense of freedom and independence not apparent for the majority of women in rural Pakistan. Venturing is valued as a continuum of other socio-cultural practices that helps the wider community survive as an autochthonous remnant society in the highly precarious place that is the Hindu Kush.

4.2 Literature review

Place and space are understood as providing a unique socio-spatial contextualisation for entrepreneurship. It may flourish contingent upon multiple characteristics. Culture may be mutable but other characteristics such as geography less so. There is also the additional temporal effect of place that an opportunity at one time might differ if conceived or developed at another time within the same space. Conditions are always in flux. This is the venturing equivalent of Heraclius' maxim of "you can't step into the same river twice" (Goodreads, 2022). Few studies have examined the microprocesses of social values within remote places from which ventures emerge. Such granularity would indicate how social impact is created, how a place is reconceived, and ventures alter the fabric of the place over time (Redhead & Bika, 2022). This is the fundamental enquiry underpinning this study: what can be discovered within this place, geographically adjacent to similar surroundings that leads it to generate female-led ventures in this region? Step into this space and female ventures are abundant, step out and they scarcely exist at all. Regardless

of the causality or influence found in these mountain valleys, the search begins and ends here. "Collapse" (2011) analyzed such duality by observing places with the same topography yet diverse cultures, e.g., Hispaniola, to understand how over time, differential outcomes have emerged in parallel societies. It is unusual for the entrepreneurship literature to explore the same regional location containing contrasting patterns of female entrepreneurship in separate socio-spatial places. Containing two sets of women, Kalash Pakistani, and local Sunni Muslim Pakistani, both are embedded within their adjacent societies and under the same state and provincial level institutional frameworks. Why do the Kalash women emerge as entrepreneurs and the local Muslim women hardly at all? There is literature on local Sunni Muslim women as regards to entrepreneurship, but a gap exists as to the neighbouring Kalash women.

Influences on venturing may include social relations, network formation (Granovetter, 1985), female isolation or women's own self-perceptions of their personal agency. There may be no monocausal factor to the Kalash women's exceptionality, but novel theorisation is sought within this place, time and this group of women. To seek the underlying valence of unusual entrepreneurship activity is to respond to the call by Welter et al. (2018) to shift research focus from outcomes to reasons, values, and purposes. Alternatively, there is no specific wider social or economic outcome of the ventures (Patriotta & Siegel, 2019) beyond the immediate effects observed. The presence of multiple intersecting factors, both pre- and post-formation, warrants a mixed embeddedness approach. This includes "variability in terms of region, nationality, ethnicity, religion, economic, social, and cultural resources" (Redhead & Bika, 2022, p. 223). From a gender perspective, such female entrepreneurship in context remains underrepresented (Martinez & Marlow, 2018) in the entrepreneurship literature. What does adopting venturing add to these Kalash women within their society? Why now, or at least recently when networks, locations, and residences have remained relatively constant compared to the political, security and social volatility outside of the valleys? How does female entrepreneurial agency contribute to society, to women and back within this unique place?

Place here is conceptualised as beyond the physical or material world. Inhabitants perceive this place as containing non-materiality (Appadurai, 1990), and deeper meaning (Redhead & Bika, 2022) of belonging, religious symbolism, community, boundary frictions, and related spiritual realms. This study extends by inversion the Redhead and

Bika (2022) model of “adopting place” through venturing to also adopt venturing within place. Rather than it being incomers who take part in ventures alongside locals, this study illustrates women stepping forward to compete with incoming Sunni Muslim men from other parts of Pakistan, yet with minimal venture participation by local Sunni Muslim women. This builds on research within small rural, agricultural communities by McKeever et al. (2015) who observed how entrepreneurship and related social activity can repurpose a location by creating tight social ties within the community. Pre-existing community networks may facilitate of such ventures (Korsgaard et al., 2015).

Novel networks can be seen in the female sorority which extends to all parts of Kalash community. This study advances the argument that female entrepreneurship is a reaffirmation of existing cultural purpose, grasped and developed by community actors for their own benefit. The Kalash women are recapturing and expanding a new custodianship over the essence of place by layering personal venturing activity over other culturally embodied activities. The Pakistani state has contributed to this through a shift in development policy from poverty alleviation to encouraging female entrepreneurs to grow the economy. This exemplifies the “historical interplay between governments and entrepreneurs, showing how policy often creates the conditions, which, in turn, enable entrepreneurs to become change agents” (Redhead & Bika, p. 222).

Welter et al. (2018, p. 319) observed that ventures can reflect the cohesion of fraternal or sorority capital noting tight groups can undergird the network structure of a community resident in one place. Instead of a binary of "embedded" or "unembedded", there is here a spectrum of embeddedness. In these valleys, the contrast is not stark separation of two adjacent worlds but a subtle continuum from one to the other. The outside Muslim defined space shifts into the Muslim “Sek” convert community throughout the valleys so overlapping with the Kalash world situated therein. Each group’s women coalesce around differing social nodes. The Kalash women move like a black murmuration across the landscape, encircled by other women within a social, religious, and economic network embedded in a defined space and place of three valleys. The women in their local Sunni Muslim world, in contrast, encircle family within a fixed residence. The latter is the model of the local Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa community observed by entrepreneurship scholars as prevalent (Yunis, 2018) and a problematic social environment for female entrepreneurship.



Figure 4.2: Men and women dancing together at festival time. 2018. Source FT

These groups of women have a scope of agency and inter-connections that are both distinct from gender norms of women (UN Gender Norms Report, 2021) in Western societies and local Sunni Muslim culture. Reflexive care must be taken when considering group social capital or formation to project evaluations based on prior frameworks of localised gender relations. The Westernised focus of a WEIRD (Hendrich, 2017) country approach to entrepreneurship has been criticised by entrepreneurship scholars for missing the variety of social values and structures existing elsewhere (Dodd et al., 2020). Social capital formation, whether fraternal or sorority, also differs. It is implicit in many Western models, such as Granovetter (1985), Latour (2005), that in the modern world, networks can be created through the free choice of autonomous individuals seeking fellow association. This builds on the post-modernist perspective of building self-determined lives of personal identity by bricolage, an assemblage of resources and identities to form a community for ourselves (Lury, 2009). The modernist perspective sees a motor of social and economic change as the morphing of a rural *Gesellschaft* or community into a more free-form, urban *Gemeinschaft* or society (Tönnies, 1887 [2001]). Yet caution is required as much of the world remains as a *Gemeinschaft* (community). They are embedded in community structures that do not operate from the premise that members are socially autonomous individuals but are cohesively bound in social patterns of family and ethnic identity that continue to roll forward over the generations. This structure also sees

commerce operate inside and on behalf of the community. The market is bound by society (Polanyi, 1957). It still retains the informal or formal norms that curtail market excesses. The scope and depth of local network configurations remain one of the defining characteristics of this remote rural area leading to distinct depth to local embeddedness (Sabine & Korsgaard, 2017) from aeons of sustained practices. This dynamic of shifting relationships between commerce and society was considered in the place literature by McKeever et al. (2015). The external market as a force is here the inward pressure of local Sunni Muslim businessmen coming from the regional capital, Chitral, with funds and conducting normal business affairs, often relating to tourists visiting to see the striking Kalash women. Tensions occur when “outsiders” commercialise insiders as they do not sit within the mechanisms of social network control of the local Kalash community.

4.3 The uniqueness of the place

Visiting the entrepreneurial women of Kalash is to see a sorority living in a society that is a wavelet of gender egalitarianism floating atop a sea of deeply entrenched patriarchy. At less than 1%, Pakistan has one of the lowest rates of female entrepreneurship in the world (World Bank, 2020). It is too low to be included in the Mastercard Index of Countries (2022), sitting below Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Bangladesh. Khyber – Pakhtunkhwa, this North-western province of Pakistan is particularly conservative, home of a significant Pashtun population with interconnected communities spreading across the border into neighbouring Afghanistan. This is a highly ethnically diverse region and further contains a significant population of Ismaili Muslims. Cultural heterogeneity increases and conservatism lessens as one reaches the Upper Chitral valleys. This is mountainous boundary land (Crowley, 2021) atop the Hindu Kush, subject to repeated incursions and shifting power factions for centuries (Ali & Shabir, 2020; Cacapardo, 1991). Whimsically, it is the setting of Kipling’s mythical “The Man who would be King” (1818).



Figure 4.3: Chitral Road to Kalasha 2022 – Picture Authors Own

The Kalash women are considered distinctively empowered in the region, “We are Free” (Maggi, 2001). Their entrepreneurial agency is strikingly at odds with the socio-historical context in which Kalasha society is geographically embedded (Crowley, 2021). The literature on female social entrepreneurship in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa reveals a society that is highly gendered. Home-based women are subject to social restrictions of purdah and men dominate the public domain of business (Yunis et al., 2019): “context determines social entrepreneurship in KP, Pakistan” (p. 27). The range of constraints includes "women empowerment, patriarchal culture, the role of culture and societal norms, religious extremism, and terrorism, forced entrepreneurs, change creators, unique institutional constraints, institutional corruption, and security issues” (Yunis et al., 2019, p. 28).

Entrepreneurship provides a pathway to increased empowerment, often home based, (Noor et al., 2021) but limited female agency in Pakistan is particularly challenging, ranking 161st in the UN Gender Development Index (UNDP, 2022). This can be overcome by women leaving: the social and economic empowerment of entrepreneurship in migrant Pakistani women as they traverse new marginalised Jordanian contexts was identified by Adjani and Marlow (2013). This gave a pathway for escape from their present marginalised position but saw a renegotiation of past constraining social norms

of the society they had left. Kalasha women are situated within especially restrictive social surroundings. Very few Pakistani women found businesses so why are Kalash women entrepreneurially running half the ventures in their valleys, bold and free? There is one rather withering commentary on the entrepreneurial capability of the Kalash (Khan, 2013) but it is largely silent on the obvious presence of women entrepreneurs observable in their location pictures but as autonomous individuals, literally unseen by researchers.

Scholars have considered Kalash as performing a version of novel indigenous entrepreneurship (Croce, 2017). There are corollaries with the strong role Māori women play in community-based enterprises as expressions of cultural identity (Zapalska & Brozik, 2020). Kahn (2013) suggests entrepreneurship to advance self-sustainability for the Kalash, rather than direct investment as economic policy for isolated indigenous communities (Paredo et al., 2004). His stance (Khan, 2013) is through the lens of an embedded academic of the majority culture observing a wary minority. The Kalash may be seen as an enclave within wider Pakistani society, but it lacks the characteristics of enclave entrepreneurship (Bunse, 2019). It is not an incoming minority group entering business within the majority context. Rather, it is an autochthonous, residual group with some characteristics of indigenous entrepreneurship but with severe precarity as to its survival. The predominant feature of female entrepreneurship is influenced by a broad spectrum of social-cultural factors beyond the simple binary of majority versus minority.

The Kalash sit within their reduced territory of three valleys of Bumburet, Rumbur and Birir as a pre-Islamic society living next to, yet apart from, the prevailing, Sunni Muslim dominated culture of the region which contains many other minorities: Ismaili Muslims, Afghans, Kho and Ketah. The Kalash may be best characterised by Parkes (1994, p. 159) as a remnant enclave culture (Douglas, 1996) where a minority culture sits uneasily against a prevailing majority. In its fight to stay viable, a variety of group pressures alter and often strengthen internal identity to differentiate yet coexist with the dominant culture. A striking aspect of Kalash culture is that presence of freely empowered women as the preeminent cultural marker of the group. This is limited female suppression or compliance. This identity of empowerment is built up through a range of ongoing practices that affirm yet differentiate the identity of what it means to be Kalash. This study contends that entrepreneurial practices are the continuation of the underlying differentiation sought by Kalash women and men from their Muslim neighbours. The

contrast is sharpest with local Sunni Muslim women who are constrained and rarely leave the home. They have limited freedom of movement, work, or agency for enterprise creation in the public sphere.

Khan's (2013) claim that the aim of the Kalash population is to reduce their isolation and vulnerability and that they "lack the courage to open up to the mainstream population and are an un-ambitious society" is highly contestable. It is the same outside, mainstream population that been a historical source of threat for centuries. Given the savagery the Kalash have faced in the past, paternalistic dreams of pluralistic embrace by outsiders are not reciprocated. The Kalash share centuries of mistrust and in some cases, brutalization, which have led the population be confined to communal living and affinity with their land, environment, and heritage (Khan, 2013, p. 100). Such mistrust is rational. Any population living in a volatile state would be wary of contact with a disruptive agent. This could bring additional precarity, surveillance and violence. They would eschew contact for measured isolation. Governments are not perceived as strong enough to counter local strong alignments nor able to protect more vulnerable groups (Talbot, 1998). Rather than being an instrument of wider social integration, Kalash entrepreneurship is a route to local poverty alleviation and self-determination. Seeing them as a "nation deprived of its position in society and defaced with no economic agenda" (Khan, 2013, p. 13) misses that the Kalash desire to operate outside the boundaries of state interference as a means of enhanced self-preservation.

Development is constrained whilst Pakistan sits outside the "narrow corridor" or sweet spot of economic and social development (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2019). Informal, localised, social norms of society prevail over the institutional fragility of the state. One of the characteristics of a kin-based society is its repressed entrepreneurial capacity (Schultz et al., 2019, p. 686). This may contribute negatively to Pakistani economic development, given the association between the tightness and breadth of kin-centred institutions, kinship intensity, and economic development. There are no studies, however, on whether a female orientated kin-based network would impede, or possibly advance, economic development. Pakistan may be noted for marital endogamy, but the Kalash practice the opposite, exogamy, and (in theory) limit close kin marriages to be outside of seven generations or not less than 5th cousins.

Khan (2013, p. 110) makes an astute challenge: “how much of the culture are they willing to sacrifice to become sustainable for their economic development?”. This misses the overt role that the women have in successfully commercialising their own heritage through ventures and how they, not just the men, “have revealed very strong entrepreneurial intention. The Kalasha are seen as taking an entrepreneurial inclined decision towards venture creation.” (Khan, 2013, p. 115). There is reference of women’s contribution: “the women of Kalash have also shown entrepreneurial capability. They have exceptional good skill in preparing their jewellery ...not only as souvenirs but also as fashion dresses. Women have therefore benefitted from doing business in these products if properly promoted” (Khan, 2013, p. 123). However, the cultural symbolism both embedded within the materials, the sorority network supporting their production and the sheer number of women participants in local venturing was not observed.



***Figure 4.4: Valley of Bumburet, Kalasha. Corn in fields with high yielding crops
2022. Picture author’s own***

4.4 Forming the research question

The questions tumble forth: How did these businesses emerge? For how long have women run these enterprises? Of what forms of agency is this activity representative? What is it about the social, economic, or cultural context that makes women express their agency through such a strong strand of female entrepreneurship? What do men think about this? Are the Kalash people an outlier? Who are these people? Are they the carriers of a social-economic tradition that suggests a parallel state of gender relations that has been lost? Has living up in the mountains with, until 1970, no road in or out, preserved some element of female existence that we should cherish? And lastly, the most unsettling question is “did we all used to be like this”? A balance of gender relations in an egalitarian sorority that is self-sufficient living in harmony with nature?

A beginning would be a holistic understanding of extent and origin of the economic value and appreciation of these women within their own society. Crowley (2019) gives a clear warning that many Western scholars and observers have projected excessive meaning upon the uniqueness of the Kalash, distorting their origin and heritage narratives to manipulative dark ends. Germany sought control over neighbouring Nuristan in Afghanistan in WWII to protect an apparently long lost “Aryan” European brethren. The Greek government used the Kalash’s supposed intermixing with Alexander the Great’s troops as part of the discourse in contemporary domestic Greek identity politics. More recently, the contrasting emancipation of Kalash women has been used as an anti-Islamic trope, which ignores the longstanding peaceful interaction and co-habitation between Muslim, converted “Sek” and Kalash communities. Any research investigation of the Kalash requires sensitive reflexivity to ensure that the motive and the positionality of the researcher are clear.

Given all the above, there are four interrelated research questions:

1. What are the social norms and belief systems that enable such personal freedoms and empowerment for women?
2. How do these norms beget the high rate of female entrepreneurship (possibly recursively)

3. Whom does it serve to preserve and support female freedom in Kalash society? Why?
4. How does female entrepreneurship contribute to or preserve their ongoing emancipation?

4.5 Exposition of practice theory applied to this study.

Examining the entrepreneurial women of Kalash is to gain insight into two concentric and overlapping worlds of practices. The first is how Kalash women build and affirm their cultural identities as Kalash women. The second is how they manage the border between their identity and regional Sunni Muslim practices. These two sets of practices overlap, conflict, and define a Kalash woman's entrepreneurial agency. Life here is circular, and these two worlds, the inner and outer social contexts of place, are like elliptical paths that occasionally intersect, waxing and waning in their influence. By capturing the repeated performative aspects of clothing as cultural embodiment, the routines of freedom of movement and action, practice theory should capture a world "flux and interconnected... where boundaries around social entities are increasingly difficult to draw" (Nicolini, 2013 p. 2). There are a multitude of practices repeated or spread over time. These practices are expressions of individual and collective autonomy, many of which map onto entrepreneurial traits and activities. Some practice bundles are site specific such as free movement and management of agricultural fields. Others are contiguous across place and centuries of time such as the making and retailing of heritage wear. Other practices are adaptive in response to external practices such as the shift to monotheism to resist Muslim attacks that they lack "God" or "Kafir". Women claimed the right to publicly protest as a female group to male government officers, standing in contrast to local Muslim women who would remain in purdah unseen and unheard (Maggi, 2001). Practice theory analysis is apt for a Kalash culture that values positive female action within a relational context, bound by some practice norms, capable of defying authority and adapting other social norms to their preferences.

Beyond spatial practices, capturing the materiality of recurrent action is also important. "Objects also bring into the scene of action the results of other practices, thus establishing connections in space and time" (Nicolini, 2013 p. 115). Creation of handicraft merchandise is a summation of other practices imbued with symbolism across time.

Beyond the material clothing items, there is further non-materiality of meaning with embodied values of female courage, folklore and narratives of collective female resilience stitched as patterns into the clothes. The responsibility of maintaining the core cultural identifiers of female freedom is with the women as they daily maintain boundaries upon the land, separating the spiritually pure realms from the impure. Physical movement and navigating shifting pathways function as cultural boundaries and action on behalf of the entire community. “Homo practicus is conceived as a carrier of practices, a body/mind who ‘carries,’ but also ‘carries out,’ social practices” (Reckwitz 2002, p. 256 in Nicolini, 2013). Within the dual framework of externally facing and internal practices, it is the external world that is unstable. A “more or less stable background of other practices” (Rouse 2007, p. 505) is normally assumed. Here this position of stability is inverted. The stable practices of the Kalash women stand in opposition to the volatile and unpredictable external practices within Pakistani institutions.

Practice is malleable through shaping, remaking, and defying, whether it be internal practices themselves or extra-Islamic boundaries. This reflects Ortner's interpretation of practice: “that society is a system ... powerfully constraining, but at the same time can be made and unmade through human action and interaction” (Ortner 1984, p. 159). Adapting the methodology to entrepreneurship is to here follow Gartner et al. (2013) noting practice activity at both an individual and collective level and looking at the skills and mental frameworks that embolden and beget female venturing.

The social ontology of practices is a collective, female sorority standing above any individual practitioner but with fluid variety across them (Champenois et al., 2020). However, the literature has no practice examples of an entrepreneurial context where time is seen as a circular rather than linear feature of life. Practices are not “processes that unfold over time, following an unfinalized open-ended trajectory of becoming, mobilizing resources and being pragmatically oriented (Gherardi 2012, p. 204). Here they are circular and interlocking practices that bend and swerve depending on internal changes and potential external conflicts. Venturing emerges from this as another layer of practices on top of those that already have adapted and mutated. These practices are still embedded within a concept of seasonal cycles of fertility shaping rituals, festivals, agricultural activities, and female agency. The patterns of formation of the new, challenge to the incumbent and adaptation, inherent to entrepreneurship, is also within the agentic

scope of Kalash women. To be free is to have the capacity to change, to abandon that which does not work and adopt something that does. This freedom for fluid change means that cultural practices and the culture itself mutate over time and is not constrained by the hegemonic norms which can prevail in nearby communities.

Practice theory is well-suited to observing embodiment. Regular practices establish Kalash identity, their fluidity of shifting spatial meanings and ritualized practices affirm their collective liberation. Social practices rotate around a shared identity of female freedom which are part of a set of axiologies that promote enterprise by women. Building upon Steyaert (200, p. 452) belonging is “a primary motive for entrepreneurial action and for entrepreneurs”. For Kalash women, this may be reconsidered as integrated female practices coordinated by the drive to make an ongoing contribution into the community. This is consistent with the motivations found in Yunis et al. (2018) of social entrepreneurship qualities that benefit the community. Making money promotes the survival of the whole community, which is the social motivation (Johannisson, 2018). This perception is consistent with Reckwitz (2001) observing venturing as collectively shared understanding (Reckwitz, 2002). Operating within context is a collective phenomenon (Johannisson, 2011). The local sorority is an ecosystem (Isenberg, 2011) of female entrepreneurs who are interconnected and motivated to stay bound and inseparable from each other. Unlike Garcia and Welter (2013), there is little conflict between the practices of being a woman and being in business.

This research also examines tightly bounded belonging and how female entrepreneurship might accentuate or limit that for individual women (Champenois et al., 2020). We can therefore argue that entrepreneurship is a "creative and social/collective organizing process that materializes in a venture" (Johannisson, 2011, p. 137). The creation and regular re-enactment of practices reinforce personal agency which is then further expressed through female entrepreneurship.

4.6 Methods of research

To gather data, a field trip was taken in Summer 2022 to the Kalash Valleys. Contact was made through a local guide who managed the interface with the security services and government officials. A local female Kalash translator was engaged to identify local participants and assist with translation. A total of ten women who ran businesses were

interviewed as well as three Kalash men with deep local cultural knowledge plus four Sunni Muslim gentlemen from Chitral with long ties to the Kalash. Further observations were made of local businesses. Inspections of other retail outlets and cultural centres were undertaken. The sample was selected by a translator who was briefed, but flexibility was required since the women were busy, prioritizing trade. Fixed time was a mutable concept. Stopping to speak to someone that the guide knew and trusted was more important. Other interviews extended well beyond the allotted time with a variety of women called in by each other to join what was akin to a mint tea-fuelled focus group session. By remarkable serendipity, a female Sunni-Muslim entrepreneur from Peshawar was visiting the area with her husband and family, who also agreed to be interviewed together and gave a helpful contrast of her life sitting in a highly conservative area employing 120 female craft home-workers. This was a counterfactual encounter within a counterfactual location, further contrasting the boundaries of female entrepreneurs within the Kalash valleys.

Forty hours of recording were supplemented by GoPro video footage created during a five-day stay in Bumburet in a local Kalash family guest house. Secondary literature was also reviewed to understand both academic knowledge and how the Kalash were seen in contrast to their Pakistani context. The backdrop of this trip was a deteriorating security situation with Taleban incursions over the nearby border. Keeping a low profile to not draw attention to either the women or myself, added tension to the fieldwork. In Pakistan, events may take an unexpected turn beyond our individual control. Comparable to Maggi (2001) and Crowley (2019), I too became part of the story and observed rising risks to Westerners. Like Maggi (2001), during interviews, I was co-opted into female friendship groups with warmth and appreciation for being interested in their lives. I was expected, in return, to share my experiences and observations of women in Pakistan, India, and life as a mother. Some of the most revealing commentary occurred over tea.

Transcript material, secondary sources, videos, and pictures were analyzed then categorized in first order coding categories, including: embodied identity, relationship freedoms, axiology of freedom, boundary control, practices of defiance, venturing patterns, and group sorority practices. Gender neutral coding was given for group practices, religious practices, trust building and conflict management. Coding for the male world was concerned with authority practices, inheritance, relationships, and

parenting. A category was also created for Islamic practices inside and outside Kalasha and reasons for conversion. This evidenced the depth of coexistence with permeable spatial and cultural boundaries. Coding was included for what one may expect but also asks what is absent, to wonder why something is missing. Examples are the absence of martial stories of male valour or of any religious prescription to “marry in” that might be seen in enclave cultures under social pressure (Orthodox Judaism: Chabad, 2022). Across these aggregations and referencing the female emancipation entrepreneurship literature (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) these practices were positioned on the spectrum of shifting female subordination to empowerment to emancipation. The segmentation proposed by Thompson et al. (2020) to consider practices as relational, embodied, mediated, and organized around shared practical understanding was too limiting. Kalash women embody the capability to change the practices in which they are situated. To change their spatial world is the essence of their power. Time, conflicting understanding of the political context and the fluidity required for ‘entrepreneuring’ are extensions of the social adaptations needed for group survival and require fluidity in practices. The author’s theoretical framework of female agency (Whitfield, 2022) differentiates between “cum permissio”, a freedom to act subject to the permission of another, that might also be withheld or withdrawn, versus “libertas” or the full freedom of full agency to be free to act unilaterally. It is to defy the will of those who grant permission to act. Coding was further abstracted using Gioia et al. (2013) methodology into insights as to the nature and valence of Kalash women’s freedom and its nexus with entrepreneurship. A total of six rounds of data coding and consolidation was undertaken to arrive at the final interpretation. Photographs from early rounds of analysis plus secondary material are in the appendix.



***Figure 4.5: Group Discussion with N1, M1 and their mother who runs 3 businesses.
2022. Photo: Authors own***

4.7 Framing of place: Findings on the socio-spatial context of Kalasha

"They call it Kafiristan, By my reckoning it's the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan, not more than three hundred miles from Peshawar. They have two and thirty heathen idols there and we'll be the thirty third. It's a mountainous country, and the women of those parts are very beautiful."

("The man who would be King," Rudyard Kipling, 1888)

Such is the mythology of a place of intersecting narratives near the top of the Hindu Kush. These stories are of romantic yearning for lost worlds. Historic records however show brutal enslavement, subjugation, and slaughter. The Kalash are the last remaining pre-Islamic tribe of an uncertain aggregation within Peristan, originally an area (Cacapardo, 1991) in the British Northwest Frontier, occupying a Kalash space roughly the size of Scotland. This land has shrunk by 95% to three valleys the size of Palestine.

Despite being under the protection of British India, they transitioned from being rulers themselves to enslavement and subjugation by the Mehtar of Chitral. The population

shrunk by forced conversion, slaughter of the non-converted or gradual assimilation into the Muslim majority since partition from India in 1947. The only dirt road into the valleys opened in 1970 (Ahmed, 1986) and the entire region was landlocked from the rest of Pakistan until the opening of the mountainous Lowri Pass in the last decade. A prospective road from China through nearby Gilgit in Pakistan (India Times, 2021) brings further concern as to cultural survival from accelerated contact with the international world. Although remote, Kalasha has a geopolitical situation proximate to India, China, and northern Pakistan. To the left, three hours by foot over the summer passes, lies Afghanistan. The security situation remains volatile, the centralised Pakistani state precarious.



Figure 4.6: Road near Ayan Pic 2018 Courtesy of FT

Isolation made the Kalasha self-reliant within a pastoralist economy now supplemented by heritage-related tourism and significant influx of funds from those earning government salaries. Living in five villages between 1900m and 2200m altitude, the scope of Kalash community land has shrunk but the remainder is considered spiritually sentient. The community continues to practice a religion that is distinct from Islam, and which has its roots in the pre-Abrahamic religions of the Hindu Kish and Karakoram region (Cacopardo, 2016a). Although the current Pakistani government is benign to supportive, informal pressures to convert to Islam pervade.

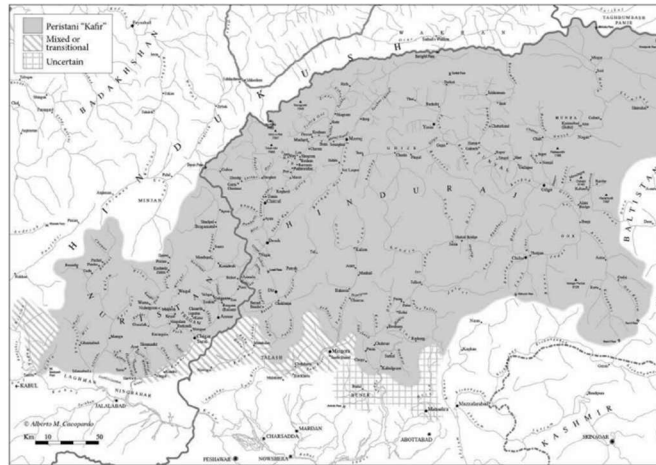


Fig. 1. The Islamization of Peristan (Kafiristan) around 1500.

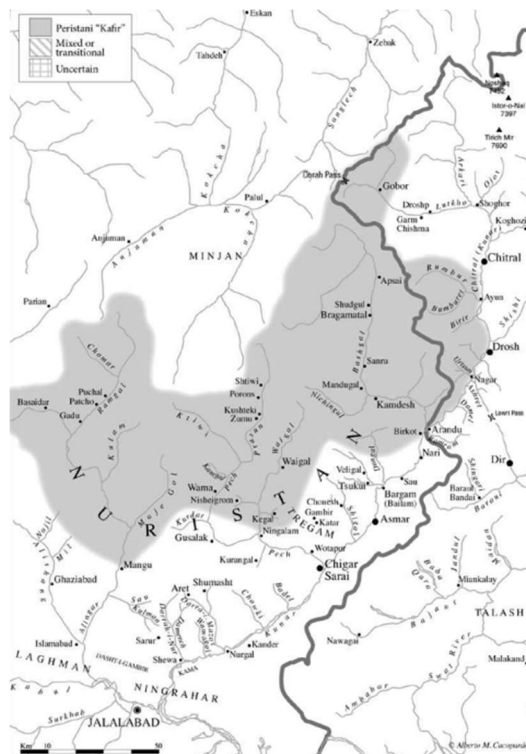


Fig. 4. The Islamization of Peristan (Kafiristan) around 1890.

Figure 4.7: Maps of Shrinking range of Kalash territory. Courtesy of Cacapardo (2016b)

UNESCO has designated the Kalash an endangered community. There are bundles of diminishing practices through which men transcribe the solar, lunar, and astronomical movements into as agricultural calendar from the sky into their decision making. Their religion "appears to have preserved many of the archaic features that seemingly date from the time of the earliest Aryan migrations into Northwest India (Parkes, 1983, p. 2), the "only living heirs in what was a huge and diverse cultural area" (Maggie, 2001).

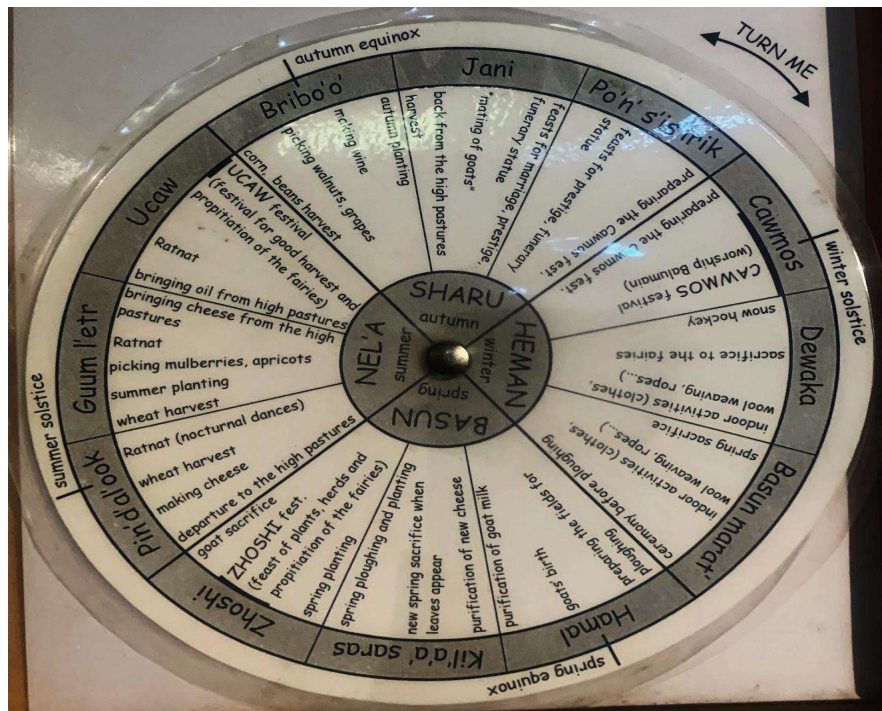


Figure 4.8: Seasonal calendar of Kalash year

Source: Kalash Museum Circular time. Nature-based cultural activity. 2022. (Authors Picture)

Kalash exceptionalism is expressed visually as cultural markers of the women who embody their differentiation from the surrounding Islamic society in a distinctive manner of dress and by being visible and moving in public space. Navigating and changing the sentience of public space is unlike other cloistered women in the region. The frequency of being pale and blue or green-eyed led to naïve speculations of genetic exceptionalism with a language and aspects of religious belief that echoed with lost regional groups of Peristan. How contiguous they are with their neighbours is contested (Crowley, 2021) given scant historical and anthropological evidence. Exceptionalism is amplified by conjecture that the Kalash are descended from the troops of Alexander the Great (d. 328 BC) who hoped to find “where Prometheus had been bound in chains, punished by the gods for teaching man the secret of fire” (Russell, 2014). This is an origin story seized upon by the modern Greek government, funding local cultural projects from a sense of “fellow feeling.” They see in the Kalash their own cultural legacy.

Alongside oral history and contestations over heritage, the genetic studies support the narrative that the Kalash people are autochthonous to the Hindu Kush. Baker et al. (2017) and Ayub et al. (2015) identified the Kalash as separate from South Asians. It is one of

the smallest of 21 distinct genetic groups around the world, more homozygous than Basques or Sardinians. The language is an early separation off the “Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family” (Baker et al., 2017). The Kalash may have arrived from the Caucasus as nomadic herders and spread southward to settle in North Asia some 44,000 years ago. A subsequent divide into Kalash and South Asians occurs about 33,000 years ago. Ayub et al. (2015) propose that genetics show a group descended from “Palaeolithic Siberian hunter-gatherers and may represent an extremely drifted ancient northern Eurasian population that will contribute to European and Near Eastern ancestry.” They lived locally 12,000 years ago and have not experienced much physical movement from place with scant genetic blending. “The result is consistent with the Kalash people representing a population isolate... the Kalash people are not of Arab or Greek origin.” (Shriner et al., 2014, p. 7). Archaeological reviews of Kalash material culture are lacking in peer reviewed literature to support local claims of continuous occupation for at least 3,500 years in these valleys (cited from interviewee L1).

By respectfully disagreeing with Cacapardo’s (1990, 2016a, 2016b) views of cultural continuities with neighbours but acknowledging that exceptionalism brings unwanted attention and therefore security risks, the Kalash appear to be a population isolate. The self-perception of the women supports cultural differentiation as they consider themselves “the original liberated women that live in a natural way whereas the rest are in the grip of hegemonic oppression” (Maggie, 2001, p.114). For how long the Kalash have resided in these valleys or existed as a unified group within Peristan is lost in folklore. The degree to which they differ from others remains unclear. Race is irrelevant and “not an objective genomic classifier”: we are all a mix of each other (Baker et al., 2017, p. 1). Genetics only indicates how group migration into long-standing geographical isolation might explain how a culture is anomalous to its surroundings yet autochthonous. Even if Kalash culture has been isolated for “a long time” its practices relating to its religion, social and gender arrangements would also have evolved and changed in isolation and response to contact with their neighbours (Graeber, 2013). Exceptionalism remains. The standing and extent of freedom that Kalash women have is, to the observer, as unique and isolated as its genetics and language. This affirms the value of investigation how this may have been the social-cultural substrate from which female entrepreneurship, and indeed relative emancipation, emerged in this location.

Does it matter if the Kalash are different to others or how long they have been there? There remains an intrigue about this egalitarian social system that embraces rather than constrains female choice. Did we all used to be like this? These questions require later research to contextualise the Kalash within the socio-cultural record, but the intrigue is legitimate in enquiring whether it is they or later social systems that are anomalous as relates to female agency. Did we all used to live in such societies or at least some of us depending on nature-oriented belief systems within a pastoral system of gender balance? Was there a lost system of economic contribution between men and women around which female autonomy was centred? That enabled freedom of movement, marriage partner choice and control over the key economic resources found in an agro-pastoral production and trade system? Sharma (2007) proposed that settled pastoralism elsewhere saw the emergence of a priest class who was separate to the rest of society, took monetary tributes and enabled a masculine elite priest class to emerge. This heightened male power over women in society. Policing women's behaviour was then conflated with morality and imposed by a male hierarchy (Evans, 2022a). Whatever the pathway in other societies to entrenched patriarchy, its trajectory was different in Kalasha.

The best analysis of understanding the shifts in female agency within place is that it is embedded within the Kalash religion which is a mutable faith system (Cacapardo, 2016a). The “pastoral ideology” (Parkes, 1987) leads to “positive values of human solidarity and harmony with the spirits of nature to the male sphere of goat herding and negative values of individual appropriation and manipulation of nature to the female sphere of agriculture” (Cacapardo, 2016a, p. 244). This is conceptualised as equal and balanced, pure and impure realms. This is made manifest as a system of rituals and festivals, a “practice theory” context on which other social practices are built, particularly the proactive agency expressed by women on whom falls the responsibility to actively maintain the integrity of a shifting, spatial bifurcation of worlds. Gods representing the interplay between omniscience and creative power of generation and fertility (Cacopardo, 2016a) have now become a more merged monotheistic entity (Crowley, 2021). There is hierarchy and preference for male interests within this separation but constrained by the active responsibility and freedom to change and adapt that women bring. The more structured hierarchical, class or caste-based systems, seems not to have been the basis of differentiation.

Yet this gendered division also is boundaried by “the relative purity of their respective occupations... hierarchical principles are limited to the sphere and... rejected as a principle of social organisation” (Cacopardo, 2016a. pg 257-258). Hence there is a ritual subordination of women but, within their realms of purposeful action and contribution, the women are free to act, and their agency based on active contribution from within their sphere of responsibility. Further, the society overall is “fundamentally egalitarian because the principle of hierarchy, outside of gender relations, has only a very limited application” (Cacopardo, 2016a, p. 259). Venturing thus fits as a contiguous activity by women given their role in resource appropriation and reshaping the environment to support the community. This is a distinctive source of agency compared to the accepted consideration of the gender divide between social and economic production. For the Kalash, genders have distinct responsibilities to contribute to both spheres. Female entrepreneurship as an economic contribution is a logical development to changing community needs as they reshape the boundaries of their economic and social relations with the wider world.



***Figure 4.9: Road from Chitral to Kalash with mountains of Hindu Kush Picture:
2022. Authors Own***

A few scant records of the "Kafirs" show that Western observers viewed local Kalash women as not free or equal in the 18th century. Robertson's account may well have

related to the wider Nuristan women when he stated: “Little respect is shown to women. ... All the fieldwork falls to them...They have no rights as against their husbands or, failing them, their male relations. They cannot inherit or possess property” (Robertson, 1889). Their distinctive dress was noted. “Women are dressed in a long, very dark tunic of wool... bind their heads with turbans ornamented with shells and other finery... All the laws to punish theft, assault, adultery, and other injury are based on a system of compensation whenever possible, and of enlisting the whole of the community in all acts of punishment.” He saw that “the aged, mothers and grandmothers” were respected (Robertson, 1998, p. 530). Russell (2014) also observed that unlike other tribes which fought for revenge, the Kalash sought a negotiated exchange and compensation. Exile from the community was the ultimate sanction. They retain a polytheistic, nature based shamanistic (Parkes, 2001) religion (now monotheistic) (Crowley, 2021). There is limited intercession between an individual and God(s) as one spiritualist acts as an elder, an unpaid pastoralist member among equals. A female scholar’s perspective on gender relations was absent until Maggi (2001) then Sperber (2008). A question is if the emergence of Islam in the area lead to cultural differentiation within a previously similar group, a recognition that women working with autonomy and co-producing society as a shared responsibility was a way to cleave from their neighbours. There is almost no evidence either way.

Much remains constant since 2001. There is a more overt positive standing of women, perhaps increased resistance to the further encirclement of Islam used as an ethnic marker of differentiation (Maggi, 2001). Alternatively, female agency is a hidden feature gaining visibility. Sperber suggests the social structure changed from a "Father society" pre-1500 into a "Brother society" egalitarian, or with several competing leaders (Sperber, 2008). What is unambiguous is that women from near communities within Pakistan do not step forward in the same economically precarious circumstances to run businesses, walk freely wherever they wish, have long hair flowing down their backs, have the freedom to divorce and so do not fall under the ultimate authority of men.

There’s is an extraordinary counterfactual as they navigate the retention and amplification of personal freedoms as a core cultural identifier for both men and women. How and why have the Kalash maintained a harmonious gender-balanced community within an ancient economic, cultural, and social system? The pivotal finding is that Kalash women may be

bounded by forms of social norms which limit agency but not limit entrepreneurship. However, they also have the freedom to reinterpret or defy many of those same constraints. They choose a life of meaning from the choices available to them. This is a desire shared by women throughout the world, not just atop the Hindu Kush.

4.8 Nature of businesses within Kalasha and role of women

There is scant information on the Kalasha economy. Secondary material and field observations indicate that like much of Pakistan, it is a factor-driven economy (GEM, Pakistan report, 2012) in five parts:

- Agricultural production of basic crops combined with herding goats and cows
- Tourism services revenue which includes hospitality and crafts.
- Forest-based activity of wood cultivation, carpentry.
- Service industries including general retail
- Government related jobs

Agricultural production is household and field based, extending across families. It is managed and organised by women who coordinate labour, planning, harvesting. Women decide on the retention or distribution of surplus to other families or for sale e.g., walnuts. Wheat, corn, mixed vegetables, and fruit are grown plus added-value businesses such as small batch wine. Herding goats in the high pastures is the preserve of men but their contribution to the household economy is managed by women. Cows and sheep in the fields are managed by children who take on early responsibility and leadership. Girls and women dominate the public space.

Tourism services have been developed aimed at supporting village economies (Russell, 2014). Hotels tend to be owned by outside Sunni interests whereas guest houses are run by Kalash women which means to stay and eat with the family. Crafts for sale to tourists are a pervasive female activity alongside fieldwork. Craft skills are extensive with items for sale to tourists produced through a network of women supplying retail shops that are predominantly owned and run by women. Some shops, especially those of a more general nature, are owned by Kalash men but more frequently by Kho (Chitrali) and Pashtun

men. The presence of serial entrepreneurship by women is everywhere: one woman was on her fourth local business, another her third. These observations are limited to fieldwork within the Bumburet valley with indications that the centre of female entrepreneurship was Krakal and less in Rumbur.

Forestry-based businesses are the domain of men, from logging to construction as in any labouring activity. Boundary disputes over forestry resources and deforestation erupt with “outsiders” although carpentry “was also an old art and skill which still prevails among the Kalash” (Khan, 2013, p. 121). Income historically and now came from men working outside the valleys in labouring activities. Previously, such work within the valleys was unpaid and contributed to the family's farm economy. Government jobs are a significant employer of local, educated men as are NGO's with international funding. Women hold many government roles from teaching to healthcare to local community organisers.

Most Kalash women engage in at-home or village entrepreneurship in agricultural or tourism unless elderly, infirm, pregnant or with young children. The idea of a woman staying at home as economically inactive is not a socio-economic feature. Graduate women worked in government or tourism related sectors while extended family take care of their children. Young women who married and had children early, without graduate education, are more limited to working in local households, crafts, and some tourism related retail. They follow the pathway of their less educated but entrepreneurial mothers.

4.9 Socio-Economic Context of Pakistan for Women

From the research, female labour force participation in the Kalash valleys appears to be over 50% which is in line with global averages. This is more than twice (21%) the rate within wider Pakistan (ADB, 2016; Pakistani Govt., 2022). The stark contrast is Kalash women's economic activity compares to the surrounding local Muslim women, and Pakistani women in general. Pakistan is second from bottom of 146 countries in the World Economic Ranking of gender parity (WEF, 2022), only above Afghanistan. Pakistan scores poorly on the sub-index of economic opportunity and participation for women and, like much of South Asia, has seen a sharp decline in the workforce participation of women since Covid compared to other regions (WEF, 2022).

In Lahore, with a well-educated population and where women have fewer social constraints than rural places, only 10% of women aged 25-60 work. Employment by female graduates in Pakistan is 25%. The identified pool of latent labour, another 25%, would work but for the social norms on women's mobility and visibility, “a large and gendered effect of constraints to physical mobility on women’s labour supply” (Field & Vyborny, 2022). “Conservative norms or high crime, female workers may face additional restrictions on their physical mobility... safety and social acceptability, rather than simply cost, are key constraints” (ibid, p. 1). With extreme social norms on female movement, enforced by patrilineal families, women traversing the public sphere are victimized by harassment and abuse, further inhibiting their ability to venture outside the home.

Male workforce participation is 68% vs women’s 21% (Pakistani Government, 2021). Although it varies by province, the population is broadly equal between men and women. Pakistan has 56m male workers to 16m women, over three to one. In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, this ratio rises to 4:1 and in rural areas, 8:1 with only 180,000 working women vs 1.4m men. In rural Baluchistan, another remote and predominantly tribal area to the south, this male: female work force ratio in rural populations extends to 17:1. Where did all the women go? In most of Pakistan, they are at home, some in the informal economy but mainly unable to step into economic production or the public domain. Although there are limits to their emancipation, to walk into Kalasha is an extreme contrast to the rest of Pakistan. Women are everywhere: unveiled, unaccompanied by men, girls and boys playing together, females out and about, working in the fields, trading from shops, offering hospitality, guiding tourists around in English and openly conversing with unrelated men as they move around the landscape. Even though there are some areas considered male access only, such as the high pastures, this is a place women publicly and visibly occupy.

FIGURE 1.3

Range of scores, Global Gender Gap Index and subindexes, 2022

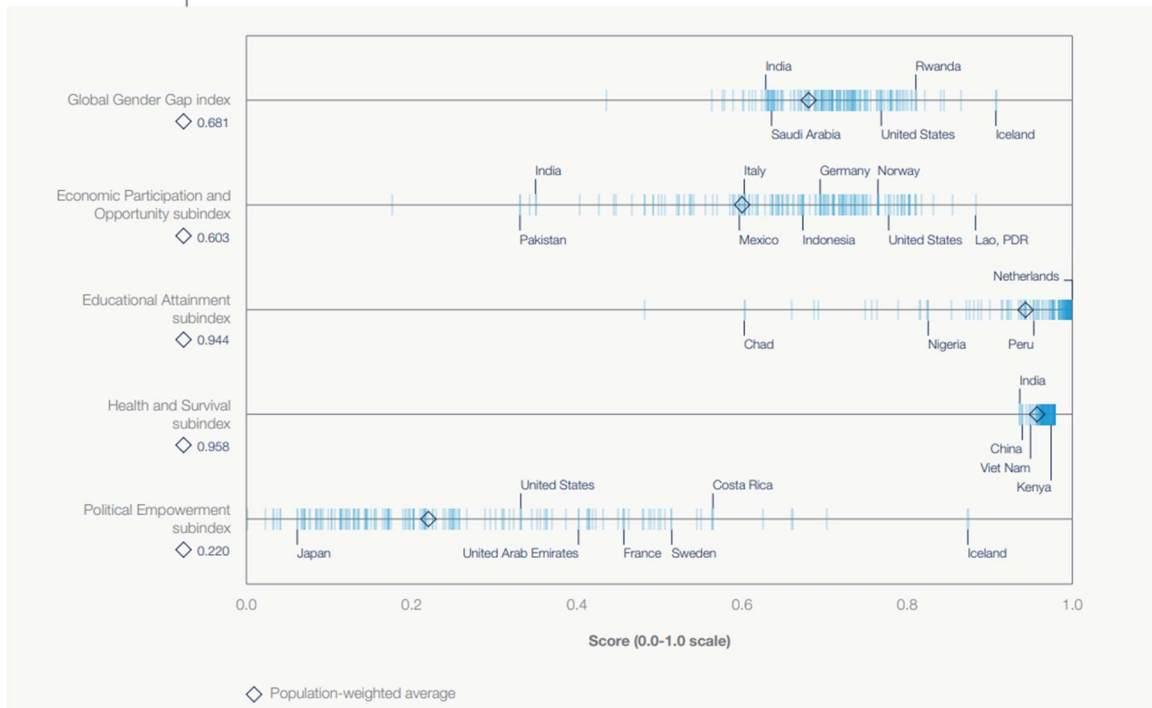


Figure 4.10: Note Low Score of Pakistan on Economic Participation and Opportunity (World Bank, 2022)

Another factor shaping this spatial context are dynamics between a central but unstable Pakistani state with local tribal autonomy. Under the state, there is precarity of existence at nearly every level. Electricity is intermittent, there is a volatile security situation on the border and inside the state combined with a corruptible police force (Talbot, 1998). Weather-related destruction (BBC, 2022) now contributes to instability. In the absence of robust state support, people rely on extensive kin-based networks which build into tribal affiliations. These have close associations with a particular landscape (Sharma, 2007). There is also a “lack of trust among the business community ... a serious hindrance to growth, impeded cooperation among entrepreneurs to develop ...new markets” influencing the low start up rate. Although opportunity recognition is relatively high, early-stage activity is 20% of the global average and female activity is less than half of what would be expected vs male rates (GEM Pakistan report, 2019). By contrast, an internal feature of Kalasha is that “people trust each other” (Russell, 2014, p. 299).

A political struggle exists within Pakistani institutions between maintaining a pluralist society and protecting other faith traditions versus strengthening theocratic structures shifting towards an all-Sunni Muslim state. Ambiguities in policy and informal legal

enforcement fluctuate between these liberal and conservative poles, the Kalash caught between both. They remain at significant risk of extremist attack and forced assimilation yet are also graciously accepted into co-faith accommodation. The history of faith-based antagonism by external actors rather than locals, means there can be limited confidence that social stability can be maintained. Within this wider state structure, each local regional area has its tribal law enforcing local customs and norms, Pashtunwali tribal law being most common in Khyber – Pakhtunkhwa. This is highly embedded and often used in preference to state law. It is contested by women as being excessively constraining but embraced by others as consistent and predictable compared to state justice (Talbot, 1998). It is a realistic response for the Kalash to define their own social norms to build a society and self-determination unimpeded by a volatile state.

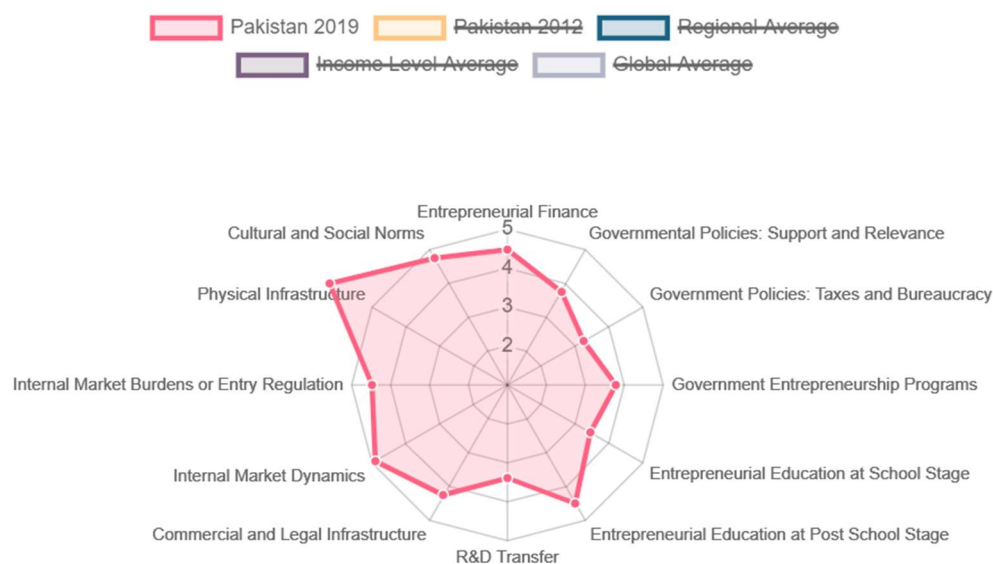


Figure 4.11: Enterprise Conditions in Pakistan

Source: GEM Monitor 2019 Pakistan report – did they ask women?

4.10 Key Findings

Three narrative threads emerge: how participants see themselves in social continuity from the past, their current practices, and how they see their interaction with the outside world. Women are shown as physically strong, capable, and valued for their contributions to family and community for thousands of years. Existing venturing practices might be summarised as “mum to the rescue” in both orientating to the tourism trade, holding the cultural identity together and adapting themselves to commercial opportunities as they

arise. Most notable is a powerful central nativity story with parallels with the story of the Birth of Christ and ancient echoes of Shamanism. This folklore tale has the mother as heroine who saves the Kalash community rather than a divine son as saviour. This characterises the female mother as heroic, enterprising and a leader of females. Sorority practices, such as the maternity/menstruation home, further affirm women's freedom of congregation, movement, and agency (Maggi, 2001). This remains a cultural signifier to differentiate themselves from the isolated, home bound women of the surrounding society whose agency depends on largesse from male members of their family.

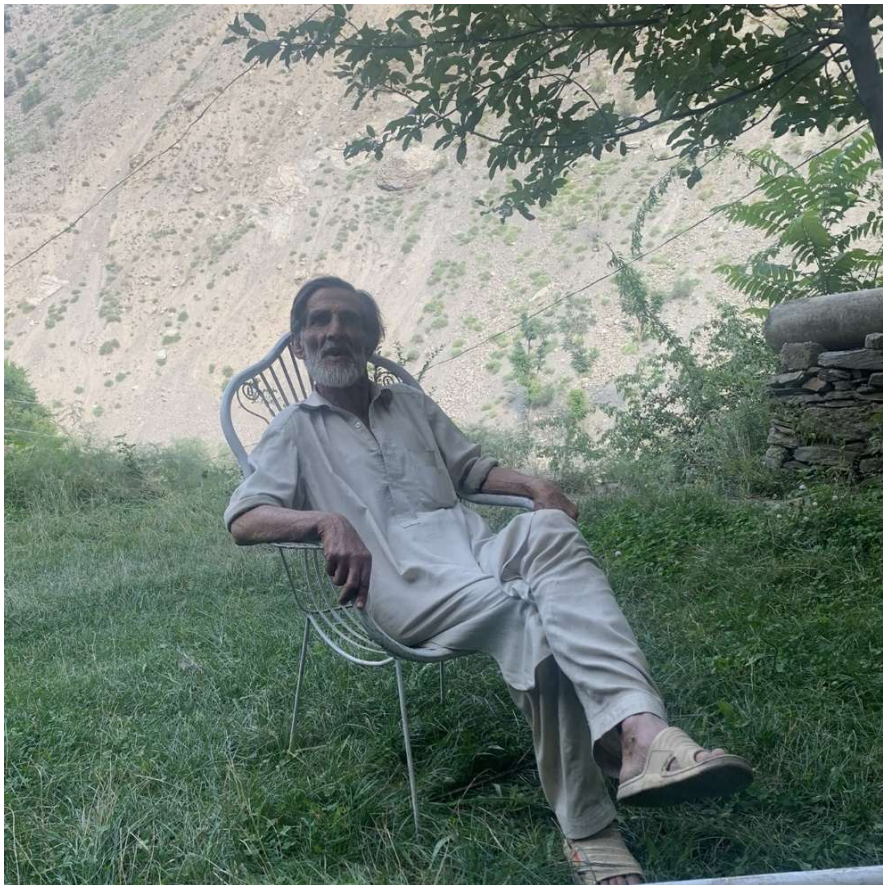


Figure 4.12: A2, 72. Family from Afghanistan 100+ years ago. 2022. Bumburet, Kalasha

4.11 Origin of Female Agency as a Practice

Two intersecting axiologies support female agency. Women have a high degree of self-determination in how to conduct their work. Society also values co-operation and contribution. The social practices that inform gender relations are ancient expressions of their guiding norms encapsulated within what are today foundational myths and folklore.

“About women emerging as entrepreneurs, it is different in Kalash... It comes from the belief system, the religion, the culture... it was given very early stage. Kalash people came here 3500 years ago. maybe, there were some Aboriginal people, they were living here before that 4,000- 5,000 years ago. Messengers, some spiritual, people were giving instructions to people. How to deal... with social issues, they have teach.... And other occasions we do celebrate, be more for women. Specific giving of livestock and other things... this system where they teach the people how to deal with females, how to deal with society... it was given already.” (L1).

This includes the principle that women “were given more freedom to think, to work to wear, to go to talk with someone” (L1).

Religious and personal reputation is less “I” and more “us.” There is no concept of personal salvation, of a destiny towards heaven or hell. Souls return to nature. Assessment of worth in life is by reputation from interactions with others and determines how you are remembered after death. Solo action is less valued but how you affected others, helped them, or made them feel is valorised. This also echoes the findings of Cacopardo (2016a) noting the abiding emphasis on cooperative values. The primary prohibited behavior is harming others. Beyond this, behavior is not sanctioned although women are restricted from certain areas and rituals but so too are men from the women-managed spaces. Harm is not based upon perceptions of honour but recognises material or emotional harm. People “behave” as that generates acceptance. Personal identity is linked to a collective identity of being Kalash. To help one is to help all; to harm one is to harm all. This divide on public versus private jurisdiction is similar to British jurisprudential principles set out by Lord Chief Justice Delvin (1959). He determined that private behaviour was neither the concern of the public nor the law and private lives are not for public scrutiny based on “no harm” principles. Kalasha women's private or public behaviour does not lead to sanction or curtailment of their actions. Reputation or that of their family is assessed similarly to men based on “no harm.” Women are modest but still free to elope, divorce, remarry, choose their own husbands, or love who they choose. Couples develop an “understanding” and matters of the heart are explicitly under a women’s own control. The position is an extreme contrast with socially conservative societies beyond the valleys that police private, personal behaviour, particularly that of females characterised by limited female social agency. This contrast is fluid however as both differentiation

and closer accommodation is sought with neighbours. Some Kalash women are keeping purdah in public and both genders are absorbing a sense of shame on the points their Sunni Muslim neighbours would feel shame about. For example, some men now sense shame at their women running businesses (Crowley, 2022 – personal correspondence).

“Yeah. Whole valley. A person can be humble, kind, cooperating in a larger sense. A person is cooperating if kind at a village level.” (L1)

“People see this [making a disturbance] in know not in a good way. He's not a good person. He's a guy he's making disturbance. He's harming other people, our resources.” (L1)

Concern for social balance, harmony and interpersonal cooperation is constant. The idea of status or hierarchy is perplexing when asked about it.

“They're helping each other....Social harmony is very important and not disturbing anyone.” (L1)

Those activities which support the community are valued and not weighted by gender. People have significant latitude for private freedom so long as they cause no actual harm and the pressures for compliance from concern about how things are seen, is absent. Support of others is not just practical or financial but affective. High emphasis is given to men and women helping others emotionally by caring, kindness and respecting arduous work as sources of community strength.

“Respect means almost caring.” (N1)

“They [men] do not think less of women. They are making a difference. They are doing some tremendous job. They are good entrepreneurs. They're playing a very positive role.” (L1)

In the context of a poor economy, external security threats and a precarious state, generating income through entrepreneurship is a positive contribution by women aiding the community.

“You have to play roles to resolving problem of the community of the members of the village in certain areas. When she or he is playing the role and helping the fellows, the

community and playing very positive in time of crisis, in time of hardship. So definitely he or she will be well regarded” (L1)

The surrounding Sunni culture considers honour as of tangible value to men and it rests upon female public or chaste behaviour. Kalasha honour rests with the mother and she acts honourably by actively contributing to the welfare of her own children and society. Yet this paradox remains of differentiating from Sunni Islam yet at the same time assimilation by influence by local Islamic norms. This protects them from a critique that they are shameful yet also an inevitable influence from people we spend our lives with (Crowley, 2022 – personal correspondence).

“The honour in this house, the honour is with our mother. So, uh, the honour is being a good mother. But our honour? Yes, all the decision I'm making our mother is we obey them.” (N1)

“But the women are very hard working.” (Z1)

Women have free agency in matters which advance her work. In any capacity, individuals have the freedom to move and make the public space and make decisions unhindered. Women are mobile, active agents in social-spatial context, walking everywhere. Starting a business is a natural progression from the active independence and freedom carried forward from the past.

“Men & women are equal. They men are also working. With females. Here womens are so much mature. Many hardworking men of course, men do the heavy work and for example wood cutting. They help, many work for us, the children, the small works, women manage.” (Z1)

In such agricultural households, women tended to control money as observed in household structures.

“Mothers manage money. Sons also but mostly joint [between married couple].” (AB1)

“She my father also when he had money. So, he give me mom yes. my mom manages. the money she manages at all.” (Z1)

“She's uh, leader of my home. My mom is the leader”. (Z1)

“Parents are equal. Probably in marriage equal responsibility, father, and mother. If you have no father; all responsibility are go to mother.” (ABI).

Folklore reflects underlying beliefs, including strength of patriarchal attitudes (Michalopoulos & Meng Xue, 2021). It is indicative of underlying social arrangements if the main character in a folktale is a female who exemplifies strength and courage. This contrasts with narratives of male heroism alongside passive females seen in highly patriarchal contexts (Michalopoulos & Meng Xue, 2021, p. 240)



Figure 4.13: Luc Rehmat, Ishpata News with sister Z1. Ram’s head protecting premises. 2022 Pic author’s own

The Kalash story of Shuragali (Miriam), an unmarried pregnant girl who saves her community and unborn child by killing a dragon while the community despairs is the central cultural narrative. By creating a fire trap and telling her parents what to do, she showed the leadership for women to come together and help each other. There are many extraordinary aspects to this story. There are parallels with the Nativity, Archangel Gabriel, a virgin birth of a divine child and a girl renamed Miriam (Mary) to mark her

courage. Yet, this is a pre-Christian story over 3,500 years old (see appendix). One exchange is when she redefines herself as a leader to her parents, valuing contributing to the community above motherhood.

“Her parents arrived at the Bashali (maternity house), congratulated her on the birth of her son but she corrected them. ‘First you need to congratulate me for killing the demon and ending the issue [of our community demise] and the danger. The second is on the birth of my son.’ And so, the boy grew.” (L1)

Freedom was not a birth right. Respect is earned, but Miriam demonstrates courageous potentiality to all women. Salvation through the divine is through men offering a pathway to salvation for all others in the afterlife as seen in the three main monotheistic religions. Here is a woman saving the community in this life and for living descendants evermore. Saving the community, arduous physical work and showing leadership to the other pregnant women is how female freedom was assured. The values of resilience, challenging work and capability are still valued today. When a threat to the community emerges whether it be economic hardship or cultural threats, it is the women who are expected to step forward.

Interviewer: Well, she's not depending on a man for protection. She's doing it for herself.

L1: She proved that women can be better, which men not always able to, they can do.

Interviewer: She killed, but she was respected also from my understanding.

L1: She was respected after that; all the women were respected by the community. All the women were treated as a brave and as a respected woman. Yes. In society. So that is how it started: the freedom, the choice and all these things, this was a known long ago.

This story was discussed with other locals to cross-reference both content and cultural saliency. It sets out the core principles of gender parity within Kalash society. The maternity home is an exclusively female space. The demon story expresses the profound social transgression of a male entering the sacred feminine and their reassertion of female equality and freedom from both male and external dominance. Miriam dealt with the threat of the demon (male) by luring him further into the female realm and destroying the transgressor therein with the help of other women.

“And courage. Courage was respected, but courage by women most of all” (A1)

“People named her Miriam; it means brave woman. They have given a symbol to the women, which will be known. It will show their bravery; the women are brave. What we were talking about the freedom.” (L1)

The Kalash women wear their identity in their daywear from the age of two: black decorative dresses with a beaded headdress worn over strands of braided hair. A “Miriam cross” design in beads is incorporated around the cap as a symbolic reminder that to be a Kalash woman is to be brave and contribute to saving their community from external threats. This linkage between the practices of dress and its role as a carrier of social narrative is not found in any extant literature on the Kalash people.

Female dress and other aspects of the built environment carry forward the symbolism of a culture that has no written records but a strong oral tradition. There is also design literacy expressing a shared symbolism to further remind people of their foundational narratives:

“Yeah. Sometime there are different design in there and different story in them. The caps represent them... symbol in the cap for female courage” (Z1)

“Everything here, especially in our culture, every single thing has its own meaning. Cause it's very old, like we can say it's ancient culture...”. (AB2)



Figure 4.14: Cross symbols in cap, braids. Note household keys around neck. 2022.

Picture Authors own

“Women in Kalash society. You see the dress now? Yes. The kalash totally depends on their women's culture because the men are the same to look at. This is not our [female] culture. It's the same everywhere. Yeah. The culture represents by the Kalasha womens, not the men, but especially the Kalash women.” (Z1)

4.12 Embedding Female Agency in Beliefs about Nature

Female agency is seen as a flow similar to nature in that it is boundaried. There are times to move in the fields, within festivals, and within natural cycles. Women embody and are believed to bring about spiritual realignment. They invoke seasonal cycles through their physical activities in the landscape. In parallel, being a responsible community member respects fertility and does not act against cycles of nature. The ontology of female freedom is respect and embeddedness of this cyclicity in physical human nature and in women. Both genders are subject to the superior authority of (mother) nature so do not fall under the jurisdiction of the other.

“There are freedoms, certain limitations and they have freedoms. But not to disrupt. Yeah. Not to disrupt. It's like the limit everything is time bound. Like the sun, like the normal in its nature, everything is, you know, in the limit, they are free to move and do what are they? But not like disrupt society.” (L1)

Freedom has always been contingent for Kalash women. It relates to work and family provision so is conceived differently to a Western ideal of agency across broad realms of life regardless of purpose. Moving from one place to another can be choice for a Western woman, not a freedom based on its social necessity to contribute to community well-being.



Figure 4.15: Kalsh Girl in Cap – note cross pattern in beading as female symbol of courage. Picture: UNESCO 2021

“Freedom means not to go everywhere. Yeah, just your work. You are limited. My freedom. That means not go in everywhere and you go to everything. Yeah, there are limits. The limit is just your choice. Now your limit means, you go to work for your family. Stay in your home, and you are doing everything for your family. Your freedom. It’s not about you going to another place. You can do everything as long as it fits with your family responsibilities.” (ABI)

The Bashali or maternity and menstruation house remains the centre of female sorority rather than it being family. Bashali continues to be the centre for the ongoing expression of female Kalsh identity and “home” of the Goddess of Deزالik representing women and childbirth. The freedom of agency women enables them to start and run businesses within socio-cultural beliefs that are long standing and highly distinctive within the region. The social belief in gender equality remains integral to the sense of being Kalash although whether there has been a more patriarchal past is beyond the anthropological records.

7.13 Educational Advancement and Female Enterprise are Intertwined.

Government policy towards the Kalash is currently positive but has mixed effects. The provision of secondary education has accelerated assimilation influenced by proscribed Islamic curricula. The education of the next generation of Kalash children is a central social priority. Women in business are driven by the desire to improve the prospects of their children. There is immense pride all are now more educated than in the past and women's aspirations are high: doctor, anthropologist, teaching after a master's degree, cultural analyst.

“People’s mindset has been changed. They think that education is key to get success to maybe to live better life.” (L1)

“Women are equal here. Education is more important nowadays”.(AB2:)

Women started businesses because they had limited other opportunities given their poor education. This parallel choice continues of obtaining a university education and returning to work within the community. Business of some sort is expected to run alongside, an overt sign of community contribution. The distinction here is that poorly educated women elsewhere in Pakistan, in the main, remain homebound. The World Bank (2022) venturing statistics indicate they do not step out to establish businesses to support their children nor gain employment.

“Kalash allowed their wives to do this business, getting education. ...We are living very poor areas. Before 1990 or 1980, in our areas, nobody getting any education. There was no school at that time. They cannot get well education, so the women are starting their business and yes, a lot of them starting businesses.” (Z1 reflecting on her mother)

“It is equal [between boys and girls]. They are getting education equally... the girls need an education to have a future. Yes, it's hard otherwise...” (Z1)

It emerged from the conversation that the mother's significant role is not simply to provide for the children, but to focus on their education as a route to continued agency. The motivation is not to improve their marriage prospects.

“But role of mother is to protect the girls... they are also guide to daughters like me; mothers there also guide me education... Because the girls education, they are good for societies. Yes. If they are not educated girls, if I educated their mothers, much better for the children.” (AB1)

4.14 How Venturing Practices are Manifest.

"It's been five years now. My mother is okay. Now she's independent. Yes, a businesswoman. We are proud of her ... my mother is in business and all after that". (N1 re mother's three businesses. Put 4 children through university after she lost her husband to Taliban attack 2017)

Business formation is informal, often home-based in crafts or hospitality, but may extend. Many women have small shops that function as outlets for other home craft workers. Women have multiple entrepreneurial activities that all stem from incoming tourism income. These would include wine making, sweets, traditional dresses, beads, guiding or other hospitality related services. Venturing is a practice incorporated into all their other daily practices which require them to be active in the community for much of the day.

“I run three types of business. One is the wine making, two type shop. One is the dress shop and sweet biscuit shop.” (Mother of Z1)



Figure 4.16: Kalasha Children in daily dress. 2022. Picture Authors own

The zeal for running their own enterprises is steeped in their initiative-taking role within the family, running the finances within households. This starts early irrespective of education. Z1's mother who stated trading prior to marriage, had 8 children, continuing to run and develop her businesses throughout. Resilience and independence shines through the women: learning by doing, being self-financed and extensively collaborating with other women.

"I have one son and seven daughters... started the business when I was 15, And my cousins making clothes and, and show these escapes. They were making, selling many. All women make something and sell. So that time when she was teenager. She looks at beautiful things here that her friends, her cousins, she starts their own business, With many others. So not on her own. She made it by hand. She started when her mom died. She learned by herself, prefer by self. Yeah. She met an arrangement marriage when she was 18 but ... love marriage. After he has had big idea, then after he start business Cousins taught her but not support her financially." (Z1 translating her mother)

The rationale repeated was that their motivation was to support their children by working.

"She was a mother with first shop in that time. She only, my mom has this job. She supports their children. Yes, she starts small" (Z1 translating her mother)

"All her life, she has money for...children, mainly money for children. Therefore, she started. That's very stressful ... the financial support us, she brings for us, she's very supporting. I appreciate her. Thank God.... but my mom is really hard to work here. She's very happy in their life. She's working for these children." (Z1 translating for her mother)

The prevalence of such activity means women's business makes a major contribution to the economy.

"The main source of livelihood is women's jobs". (A1)

NGO's have started to assist by encouraging the most proficient crafts people to share their skills with the next generation of women to provide goods to the seasonal tourist trade.

"[Mother] also doing many jobs. She has experience here. They are making my mother's stuff to sell and generated income. The perfect system. She gives skills, machine work. I

guess first are 22 students, do for herself as well as from them, they make their own items and they put their handicrafts in hotel rooms and tourists, like come here... giving money to them. From very earlier. My mother started 2008 ... registered her handicraft center with some NGOs ... they also provide some product to make for the students and they're making them.” (B2)

“Only one source tourism. One source and only income. The profit... there's nothing, except this tourism. Nothing. Everything is also seasonal, you know? Until August there's much tourist came here, but after that, the weathers here snowing, its start here. It is for ... business...income generating things” (B2).

“I think the business is easy. You, your home shops there is easy enough.” (AB1)



***Figure 4.17: Note shells, beading pattern design are heuristics for cultural narratives.
2022. Pic authors own***

In the Kalash micro-economy, life is precarious. Men have outside jobs or support pastoralism. The role of women for aeons was to maintain a joint economic approach. Women must work to advance the well-being of their families. If this was via employment it required education. Without education, tourism related ventures could still

be started by women to generate funds to advance their children's futures through paying towards their education.

"Crafts, hotels, wine. Nowadays [it is] popular. To open their house, like to educate their children...". (AB2)

4.15 Government Support for Female entrepreneurship

"Entrepreneurship in Pakistan, especially in this area is very new thing, which is emerging... But promoting entrepreneurship is very necessary.... Government was thinking that, yeah, it's difficult to provide everyone job. So, promote entrepreneurship they were investing in ideas that are good and doable. So, they were giving grants to the youth, especially women encouraging women to start their own businesses... So, the aim is they will start entrepreneurship. They will start up a business. They can give employment opportunities to other people." (L1)

As Pakistani tourists required female guides when the first tourism arrived less than 20 years ago, women stepped up to seize the new opportunities.

"And when the start, when the people felt that these need to have a female tour guide are to support the tourists, working with families are so women, they are traveling to the area. They're not feeling much comfortable with guys, with men, normally the domestic tourists and families. They're not willing to have a man guide them. They started to have female group guides to facilitate the people." (L1)

This is consistent with the wider government policy and social mores to encourage female business activity that aligns with existing female roles in society. It equally suits Kalash women who like to act freely and independently within their family structures.

"Recently government has started to train women to go for entrepreneurship, to do some businesses.... People are going towards businesses, especially women here in our community. They are free to do what they want. They are free to make their own decisions religiously. They have freedom.. what they have now, they are utilizing for their benefits." (L1)

4.16 Role of Venturing in Cultural Differentiation.

The practices of the Kalash are integral to affirming their cultural identity. As circumstances and threats change, there is a movement simultaneously to adapt to the surrounding Muslim and Sek communities yet further differentiate from them. The arc of change is towards group survival, which explains a mixed strategy of fitting in and standing apart. Female entrepreneurship in this context aligns with this duality. Venturing highlights cultural differentiation (Graeber, 2013) to the surrounding Muslim women and aligns with government policy to have more female-run enterprises.

“Muslim communities. Women are not engaged in more businesses. I know that's the difference, particularly in lower Chitral. Muslim community, work is not a business purpose [for women]. My mother also working in field - kitchen gardening. Look after our cows [at home]. The Kalash women community are going for hours to the fields. Their agriculture is totally different. Produce walnuts because agriculture works mostly.” (A1)

“Kalasha people, mostly the women are not inbound. You can work. Mostly in Pakistan, the other culture, there are Muslim community there, is inbound there. So, they stay in house, yeah. The woman is not going to go outside and work. There is a clash of cultures. The [Kalash] can do work for your family, your children.” (AB1).

Business activity by women is often expressed in contrast to the limited freedoms of Muslim women outside of Kalash, including girls who have converted to Islam to marry for love.

“The Kalash allowed their wives to do this business, are getting education. We are living their Muslim and Kalash together, but the Muslim people ...They do not allow their wife, their daughter... We are equally doing; mother is businesswoman also.” (Z1)

Entrepreneurship provides income and economic sustainability for the community yet also accommodates and builds contact with Pakistani visitors. The interface with Islamic visitors and co-residents is frequent, peaceful but some subtle spatial boundaries are set.

“The winter festival is very amazing. Big festivals of Kalash, Only the Kalash allowed. There are services. No Muslims. There are no allow the Muslims. Foreigners are also

allowed. Only the Muslim are, they're not allowed. Only Muslims. Not allowed was to keep the difference. The foreigners are some little. Uh, what you say that is the little bit you pay? [Contribution]” (Z1)

It also builds an affinity with international female visitors with whom the Kalash women identify as also noted by Wynne Maggi (2001). They look at Western trends and adapt their look to incorporate some elements as well as South Asian Muslim fashions in shawls, footwear, or trousers.

“And our [dress] culture nowadays it changings exchanging. How care is dress... Ideas from elsewhere. They take on another culture. They are starting hair making so different.” (Z1)



Figure 4.18: Entrance to Anish, Kalash Valley

Z1. Note use of English Signage. Highly fertile fields.2022. Pic Authors own.

These tensions are resolved not by contestation but by marginal adaptation within the values of social harmony.

“Like what they're doing because of the freedom. They're making their choice. Whether they go for entrepreneurship, they do some business they want to do.” (L1)

4.17 Looking to the Future

One difficult conversation regarded how Kalash women saw their future. Almost all stated their desire to have their own business. However, it was tinged with sadness as to whether the underlying Kalash culture would remain impervious to extensive informal pressures. The totemic role the Kalash in national politics means their continued existence gives evidence to NGOs of Pakistani's political openness to religious plurality. However, other political forces wish Pakistan to become a monolithic Sunni Islamic state, partly to appease fundamentalist factions. Afghanistan incursions spread social instability and physical threat towards them and the balance of regard between benign and malign neglect swivels within the state.

“As a community, currently the government of Pakistan, the provincial governments all are facilitating Kalash as they are a minority ...even some of the majority Muslim community are saying the government is more doing for Kalash than for them, Muslims. So that time [for their survival] very limited. They are a very minor community. They need more care.... Vulnerability and is also existing small population. Most of the Kalash population is living in poverty.” (A1)

Within Kalasha, the people who are most valued are those who help maintain the community. They emphasize harmonious interrelations over individual accomplishments. How you shape the connections between yourself, and others is given weight.



***Figure 4.19: Women festival dancing. Cotton decoration and note patterns in caps
2018. Pic courtesy of Vice***

“Community people is valuable” (A1)

“These two religious people living since many years ago, but there are no conflict occur during these years. Not a single time. I never heard” (A1).

Flexibility and seeking harmony are capabilities used by the Kalash in seeking accommodation with their neighbours but culturally is a one-way street. There is minimal conflict and long-standing co-existence with the Muslim community but the pressures to convert rise as Muslim teachers in schools prioritise Koranic over Kalasha values. Religious education is a priority by the state for children’s education, but plurality in faith education is non-existent after primary.

“Islamic instruction is mandatory in all public schools in Pakistan. The Kalash students also have to take part. The path, the higher education invariably passes through the public schools. Attending them, offers Kalash people, better job prospects, and a way out of poverty, but they always feel the subtle pressure to conform to the Muslim majority.” (Vice TV Documentary)

The requirement for girls to convert to marry was seen not as pressure but the pragmatic choice of women in love. If the only way to marry him was to convert, then they may convert. Local Muslim men cannot convert without being charged with apostasy nor marry a non-Muslim wife.

“He loves her, but they don't allow [marriage to a non-Muslim]. Yeah. They do not give permission. You have to become Muslim. I am Kalash not allowed. I cannot marry him. Okay. But you can, outside, it can work when, when I accept Islam, then I will. He cannot change the religion. Kalash can change; Muslim cannot. Yeah, not allowed in Islam, but we can change. I can accept Islam. I can accept. Yes. Christian and other religions ok, but Islam not allowed. Muslim people not forced this on us. You are who you are. Not a force on me and as it is a [free] choice that they are converting”.(Z1 translating II, her Muslim, male cousin who has married an (ex) Kalash girl)

There is awareness that conversions are leading to some unhappy marriages derived from misunderstandings by girls of the cultural differences as it relates to female freedom within both communities.

“They are not happy marriages. Somebody who is convert. After one month. They were...happy then after they're not feel they're not happy. The reason is that I think they are differences between Kalash and Muslims. Because we are going freely anywhere and their husbands are, cannot allow to free go somewhere. Yes. So, they cannot. The reasons we are free. You're free. We are going independent. The reason is some [Kalash girls] they don't know about their own Kalash culture. Because they read in the Islamic book, you know.” (N1)

The community identity rests upon the women's cultural identity practices. Women require their unique culture for the businesses to flourish and to retain their unique identity. Pessimism reigns as to whether this can continue. The feeling of misunderstanding and antagonism is felt as insecurity from Afghanistan seeps over the border into their valleys.

“How will Kalash people will be successful in their future? They don't like us, dear. They kill us. They're jealous, people jealous... because of where our [Kalash] country is very unique in the world. Yeah. Some people jealous Kalash, wanna pull you down. They get negative because they get jealous.” (M1)

The main attrition to the culture is situational by living within another dominant culture and no longer being geographically isolated to the same degree. Since the opening of the Chitral road in the 1970's proximity has brought communities closer, and assimilation has accelerated. Female entrepreneurship has helped hold this back, boosting economic independence and cultural differentiation. Educational assimilation is being rethought by the local community as they see their own children culturally ebb away. More Kalash teachers are sought. This may slow down cultural loss, but they are aware of their economic and cultural peril as women and as a community.

Interviewer: How long might the culture last?

ABI: No idea the number of years in future. I don't know if the culture [will be] preserved. Yeah, because there are conversions. Mainly the girls marrying out. 10 to 15 years [left before culture goes]. I'm trying to preserve now that many NGOs are working there. We are the garment of Pakistan, and I also work in this culture preservation. Yeah. Maybe it is best. To convert is the issue. Mostly Muslim teachers now and you know there's almost an expectation.

4.18 Gioia Analysis of Themes

The full set of interview transcripts and visual material was coded, and a number of first order codes were identified between individual practices (religion, venturing, nature, freedom of movement) and relational practices (between women, with men, family, with non – Kalash neighbours, tourism). These were then aggregated by hand onto two large sheets of 20-30 data points from each sub-category. Axial coding emerged across these, and further rounds of higher order themes emerged for a total of seven rounds of extraction. The last four rounds are detailed in the chart below.

Within the conceptual meaning of the practices, there is consistency as to purpose: group survival, adaptation to new norms, and credulous trust. These were derived from such points as credulous flexibility. Such innocent open mindedness may have helped them before but may now bring accelerated assimilation. The role of women's agency in shaping their world of free movement and related religious practices on behalf of the rest of the community is long standing and cumulative. Their courage and defiance protect them all. The link between female love becoming a spiritual basis for community

wellbeing is striking. They take their cues from the cycles of nature and their own emotions, not from male authority. Female preferences and choices are spiritually based, and men thrive when women's choices are supported. This might be paraphrased as saying that if women are happy in love, men are happy. In a "love marriage", they have more children supported by a happy mother and the whole community prospers.

A second pragmatic purpose is that female freedom is a better use of resources because women are free to tend fields and manage crops. The yield from the earth in Kalasha is strikingly higher, around three times that in nearby socialities where women do not contribute to crop fertility and stay home-bound. More food and more chances of healthy group survival result when women make an optimal group contribution to agriculture. That requires equal freedom to act. As a sorority, women increased agricultural productivity. Maternity house practices ensured more children, safer births, and optimal female fertility. Male policing of women would undermine both agency and fertility. It would engender social conflict. Instead, women monitor each other with a view to optimal fertility. It is unclear how increasing female agency would fit within the other tribes operating under with vastly different collective axiologies in wider Pakistan. Therefore, it is not surprising that enlarging the role of women in wider Pakistani society is resisted. Meanwhile, the accommodation and adaptation required to maintain peaceful co-existence is culturally corrosive upon the Kalash as it is a one-way flow of adaptation. The credulous trust shown in the state and wider interests as benign is misplaced for the long-term survival of the group as a separate entity. Meantime, women's cultural ventures contribute to group economic prosperity and durability beyond what they would have otherwise achieved.

The conclusion from the full Gioia analysis and reflections is that group cultural differentiation is both a support and a threat to the Kalash's group's survival. Female venturing tips the balance more towards survival.

4.19 Discussion

The underlying driver behind the exceptional levels of female entrepreneurship by the Kalash women, based on a detailed analysis of both their venturing practices and the contextualised social, cultural, and spatial practices is that it enhances the survival prospects of the Kalash as an ethnic group. This is consistent with a long tradition of Kalash women taking action to support group survival. Venturing is a contiguous activity, a form of community contribution to overall group and family welfare. A related finding is that the level of adaptability across many practices is an additional advantage for the group over time. With no fixed written theology, a loosely coded set of norms enables an underlying axiology of free choice. This exemplifies Darwin's view that it is adaptability rather than strength that supports survival (Darwin, 1859). The belief in the pre-eminence of a natural sentence of place as the constraining factor of ultimate decision making of the group, probably relates to their ethnic origin as a remnant Shamanistic (and now monotheistic) group.

In contrast, prominent levels of openness to change and adaptability veers the Kalash towards credulous trust (Norris, 2022). It appears that cultural adaptation is unidirectional with surrounding societies. Kalash beliefs and practices adapt to their Sunni context, but there are no signs of adaptation occurring the other way. Kalash practices do not seem to have influenced Sunni Muslim social norms, locally or regionally. Pakistan's mainstream society is described as highly credulous by Norris (2022) in an international comparison, overly trusting the principal actors that comprise the institutions of state: political processes, police, and the rule of law. There is also fragmentation of multiple diverse ethnicities and religious challenging the central authority of the state which attracts mainstream supporters. The Kalash are slowly adapting to other cultures' beliefs, at least on the margins, but they are having scant impact on the majority surrounding culture. The Kalash are further buffeted by being spatially contextualized within a religion that is "tighter" versus the Kalash's looser socio-religious practices. (Gelfand, 2018). In tight societies, any breach of social norms is met with harsh punishment and measures to ensure compliance. Kalasha cultural changes less in the direction of additional conformity, but more reinforcing ethnic markers while reducing obvious friction points such as women being unveiled outside the valleys. Adaptation does not imply

compliance, but it does imply a high order of coordination to monitor and ensure group survival in an often-antagonistic context.

Table 4.1: Gioia Analysis of Practices and Abduction therefrom

Gioia et al. (2013) Coding in Seven Rounds			
Round Four	Round Five	Round Six	Round 7
Credulous flexibility that helped may how hinder	Adaptive norms		
Economic and fertility value	Group survival		
Optimal group contribution requires (near) equal freedom to act	Group survival		
Female cooperation drives group fertility	Group survival		
Religion is reification of that which drives natural productivity and fertility	Group survival	1. Venturing by women advances group survival	
Personification of an actor shaping their world on behalf of all	Adaptive norms		
Sexuality not morally policed as that would undermine female and group cooperation here - Scott curry	Group survival		
Cumulative female agency has impact in natural and social worlds	Group survival		
Education is a new tool for collective survival and maximise contribution back to society	Group survival		
Female courage in defiance and challenging norms protects the community	Group survival	2. Flexibility of norms fits with venturing	Differentiation is both support and a threat to group survival. Female venturing tips the balance.
Mother's active work is honourable for the family and community	Group survival		
Female love is spiritually converted into community wellbeing	Group survival		
Men thrive when they support women's choices	Adaptive norms		
Women work within natures laws, not man's	Adaptive norms		
Mature male insight as guide to community wellbeing	Group survival	3. Overly credulous trust may undermine group survival	
Credulous trust in similarity of people and female custom but they also in credulous relationship with the state and religion	Overly flexible/credulous trust		
Conflict is poor for productivity / fertility of the community	Group survival		
Accommodation and adaptation is culturally corrosive as its one way tight: loose co-living	Adaptive norms		
In Pakistan, increasing female's agency does not serve men and unclear how it better serves tribal survival	Overly flexible/credulous trust		
Cultural venturing through women boosts group economic prosperity and so longevity	Group survival		

In the ongoing struggle to manage cultural differentiation balanced with neighbourly accommodation, additional cultural practices as ethnic markers have emerged. Maggi (2001) and Crowley (2021) have noted the role of female embodied culture being valorised as a distinctive ethnic marker. This includes their freedom of movement and the ability to "choose not to", as well as the right to have personal relationships with those of their choosing. This study proposes that two more novel ethnic markers have emerged. The first is the drive towards elevated levels of education in the next generation to position the Kalash youth (and women) as competitive in economic opportunities by being additionally open to learning. The second is female entrepreneurship. This is a channel for further economic and personal emancipation and so a continuation of the Kalash's differentiated cultural factors of female freedom. This stands in stark contrast to the limited ability of movement, trade, and decision making in the public sphere of Pakistani women. This is evidenced by a 1% female entrepreneurship rate and being second from last on gender equality measures, above Afghanistan (UNDP, 2022). In wider Pakistan, a society largely structured as endogamous tribes sitting within a precarious state, low female agency prevails. There is no obvious competitive advantage to the survival of those tribal groups by increasing female agency either for the whole group, the families, or the individual man. Female agency as expressed in venturing in Pakistan is thus close to non-existent or truly exceptional. Unless there is a compelling existential threat to the existing social groups or Pakistani society at large, it is unclear how constraints on female agency will lessen.

This context of differentially rigid belief and enforcement systems in each culture, rather than religion per se, is the fulcrum of conflict. The Kalash's ongoing response to remain true to their identity is shaped by the ongoing looseness of their cultural expression (Gelfand, 2018). The position of the Kalash in Pakistan acts as a proxy debate about the future of Pakistan as either a uniformly Sunni Muslim or multi-faith state. This is itself a debate on the degree of tightness society wishes to impose on the populace as a whole. There are three interrelated theories that might give some depth to this. At a micro level, Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) conceptualisation of a "cage of norms" suggests how informal social norms can contract further around women as a cultural response. This can be a proxy for control of the uncontrollable: from flooding to wider economic malaise. Saudi Arabia tightening the female cage through the rise of Wahhabism or contestation

over the morality policing of womens dress in Iran are examples of the pendulum swinging towards regression.

According to Norris's (2022) concept of credulous trust, unwarranted and excessive trust in governments may not be justified given the poor competence demonstrated. Pakistan is identified as a major carrier of such “credulous” trust alongside China and parts of the Middle East. Trust within the Kalash appears strong with low crime and with high family integration across the communities of Muslim, Sek and Kalash. Setting a dichotomy of Muslim versus Kalash coexistence is inaccurate. It does grave injustice to the positive relationships and proximity between the two communities. Yet people locally are not masters of their political destinies in a remote region where the delivery of state services is distant, inconsistent, and lacking in overall competence (Norris, 2022). This is compounded by national level distrust of neighbours (India, China) and international institutions (Talbot, 1998) and yet both neighbours and international institutions are necessarily enmeshed in domestic affairs. How might prominent levels of local trust within Kalasha but low levels in Pakistan affect future female venture formation and economic flourishing?

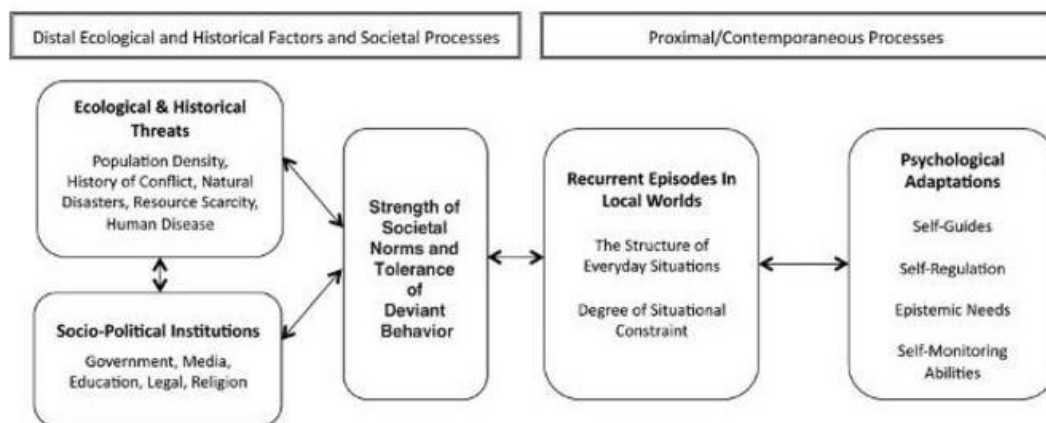


Figure 4.20: Contributing factors to Tight Loose Ranking Source Gelfand, (2018)

It appears that the Kalash have unwarranted faith, an excess of trust in the ability of the nation state and local authorities to protect them. This can be observed at a micro level. This is not because they are a religious minority, but as the gap in government competence to delivery security versus trust to do so pervades Pakistani society at large. The difficulties faced cannot be characterised as a religious conflict. Instead, they encompass a variety of pressures for conformity leading a retreat to informal norms on a

tribe by tribe, location by location basis. The state cannot provide the level of assurance required. This leaves us wondering why such a tight culture is prevalent in Pakistan. Gelfand is convincing, indicating that Pakistan has the tightest social norms among national cultures surveyed for its "tightness" and drivers for tight norms. This is a collective cultural response to the cumulative threats facing its citizens. Situated within a historical and contemporary context of high ecological and historical threats, it is reasonable to cohere more tightly within a group for mutual support. This tightness causes a low tolerance for deviation from strong social norms. It is the more adaptable and less powerful party that bends and assimilates when tight Pakistan meets less tight Kalash.

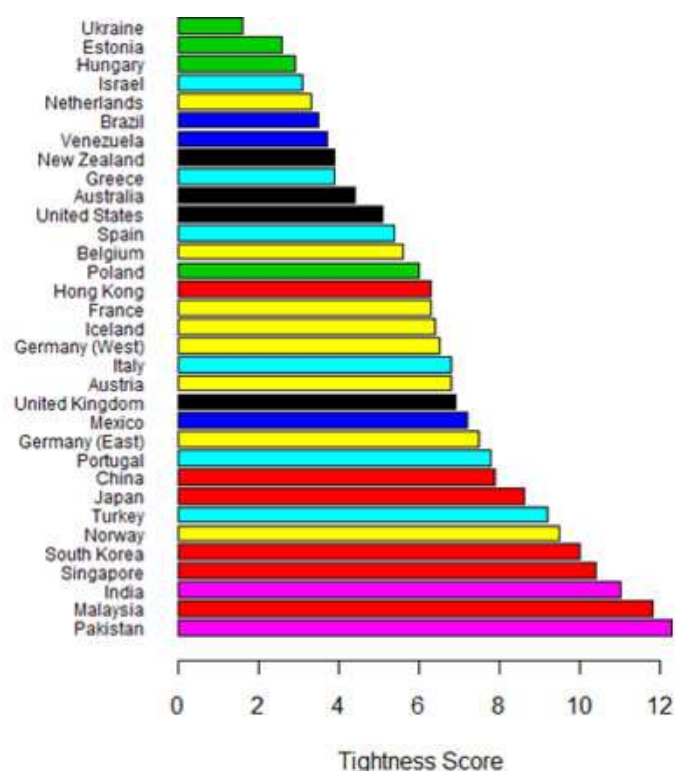


Figure 4.21: Tight Loose Ranking of Countries as measure of strict norm adherence

Source: M Gelfand

While tight normative structures help explain the control on female agency within Pakistan, it does not account for why the Kalash women in precisely the same location responded instead by loosening social norms and maintaining female agency. Evans (2022a) theorising on global gender divergence contends that there is a trade off in many societies with women as the source of economic value for a family. This is weighted against the women's worth as source of honour for the family embodied as being an upholder of chastity and related sexual constraints upon female movement and behaviour.

Where the former (economic value) is greater than the latter (honour value), over time freedom for women has improved in line with the rise of female labour force participation (Evans, 2022a). Where the value of male honour is weighed against the sexual expression of the female, then their lives are constrained with limited participation in the workforce or wider society. This only shifts when the economic benefit of her working outweighs his perceived loss of honour with other men. This constriction either loosens or tightens depending on this starting balance. An external shock in governance can shift this such as Tajikistan coming under communist rule through the USSR which broke down the patriarchal strictures of female seclusion through mandatory workforce participation (Evans, 2022a). By contrast, building networks between women such that collective awareness and action can take place, can loosen the family seclusion of women. This leads to an awareness of other models of female living and a gradual improvement in both formal and informal institutional norms.

The Kalash women have a triple level of impact within this model. For as long as is known, they have been highly valued for their economic contribution to the community. Secondly, the concept of honour as linked to female sexuality and morality is absent. The very opposite is true in Kalasha: honour lies with women as a liberating concept. She is the embodiment of being a provider, and not a passive agent to be protected. Through the social structure of collective working, through the role of the Bashali managing the cycles of the month for all women (and for pregnancy), there exists a mechanism for collective awareness and mutual support in sorority. This swings the balance away from male authority to authority from nature. Collective, nature imbued female strength means patriarchy is to be resisted and they can "choose not to" accept male dominance. Although the surrounding mix of historical and geographical threats create challenges, the community's response is to band together equally with women as free yet interdependent. They are certainly freed from direct authority (*libertas*). This does not follow the model of tightening of norms or falling under male authority. This understanding of personal autonomy might explain why men also resist conversion but have less to lose by doing so than women.

In Pakistan, Muslim women are undervalued for their economic potential, nor are they regarded as active protectors of others. Their role is primarily social production. Having an informal network of male family relations to shield them, adhering to strict *purdah*,

hair veiling and movement norms, local Muslim women's free choices are limited. They operate under a strictly “cum permissio” framework, coming under patrilineal authority of their husbands or fathers. Both cultures act in accordance with what is most likely to determine their long-term survival as an ethnic group rather than at an individual level. One manifestation of that drive is the Kalash exhibit female entrepreneurship and the latter group of Sunni Muslim women, largely do not.

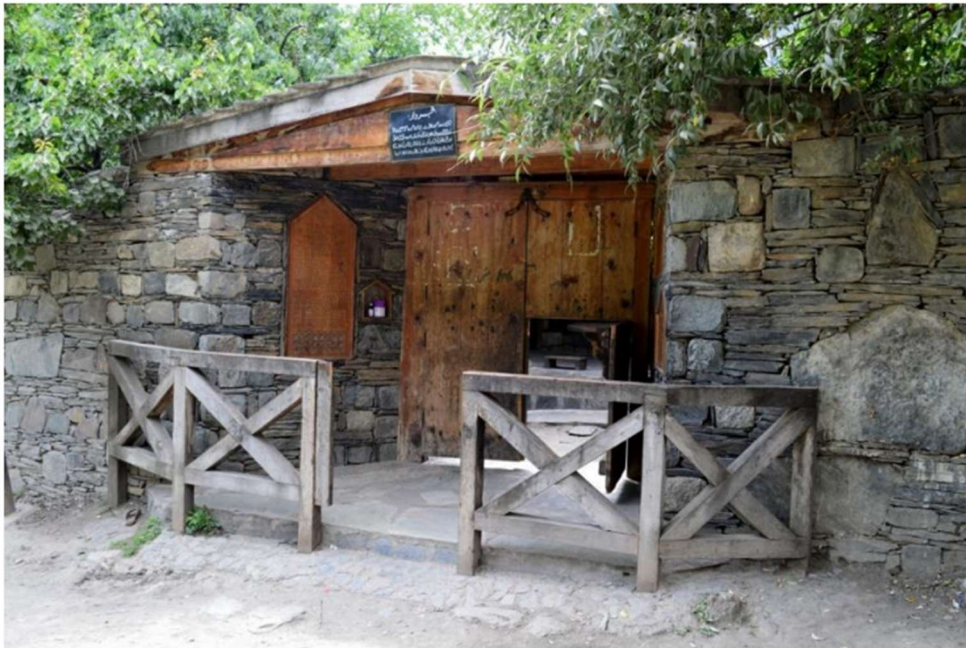


Figure 4.22: Bashali in Bumburet, Kalash. Photo courtesy of Ali, 2020.

4.20 Conclusion and Contribution to the Entrepreneurship Literature

This place of female agency is paradoxical, women bound yet unbound. Their actions have free agency yet are bounded within wider social context of purposeful freedom. It conflicts yet balances with the male and with neighbours. Temporality and cyclicity are very tightly wound together through seasons, women’s fertility, moving up and down the landscape, managing animals and in rituals. This is a unique setting and a set of mixed embeddedness factors that may not be observed in prior studies of female entrepreneurship. Care should be taken before extending the ecological validity of this study beyond the three valleys in a remote part of the Hindu Kush.

There was a quartile of research questions posed at the beginning of this research. The first was to how social norms and belief systems enabled such freedom and female empowerment. This has been comprehensively addressed by a practice theory analysis of

the daily and seasonal practices that shape their lives and so builds on the practice work of Maggie (2001) in anthropology and Nicolini (2013) as applied in entrepreneurship scholarship. This study sets out the long-standing belief system that illustrates a strong social norm of female freedom across the realms of movement, economic activity, and relationships. The central folktale is representative of how female courage and freedom to act is of long-standing provenance.

The next question is how these social norms lead to high rates of female entrepreneurship. Kalash women's economic contribution and skills are highly valued. This is consistent with other activities generating respect by supporting their community. Women are the embodiment of cultural heritage that is commercialised through tourism and shows the ease with which they take one step further to run their own businesses today. There is barely a cultural gap, resource, or social norm chasm to cross as entrepreneurship appears to be a contiguous activity with other female-centric practices within the community. Venturing reinforces these practices and serves as a cultural marker compared to Sunni women living nearby.

The community-values orientation is partly a response to the third question of whom it serves to preserve and support female freedom in Kalash society and why. Venturing appears to reinforce cultural and embodiment practices as well as generate them. Female entrepreneurship is a result, along with the higher importance of the personal liberation that education can bring by granting more free choices for women. Venturing is now a cultural marker distinguishing woman from the surrounding Muslim communities. This extends the practices of being free women as the starkest differentiator of all. Ultimately it is in men's interests as well as women's, that cultural identity and differentiation is retained. Economic prosperity through female entrepreneurship is alleviating a low level of income in highly precarious economic and social circumstances. The underlying valence is that women's success is a contributor to the survival of the Kalash. What serves the group is supported by the group.

The fourth question was how female entrepreneurship contributes to or preserves the ongoing emancipation of women. Female entrepreneurs strive to provide income for families and the community, especially for children's education. The precarity of the community will continue to raise awareness of the Kalash in the eyes of curious Westerners. This may bring malign intent or aggression towards the community, from

the Taliban to jealous locals. The Kalash will remain a part of the shifting agenda and democratic arrangements of an unstable state. Although caution is needed, the rise in tourism has led to more prosperity and international scrutiny. This validates the women of Kalash in their claim to maintain an elevated level of personal agency and prominence.

The contribution to the gaps identified within the female entrepreneurship literature is primarily to deepen our understanding of how women navigate social norms within a place to advance emancipation through entrepreneurship. This study presents a positive scenario. It rebuffs the generalised stance of only marginal gains in agentic scope are found in the developing world (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020) and invites examination of the remote, the liminal and the counterfactual. Within entrepreneurship in a spatial context, this study advances the mixed embeddedness approach from which female entrepreneurship might emerge. This is relevant to interactions between features of bounded contexts: geography, religious beliefs, and a juxtaposition with culturally different neighbours. This study presents the first detailed examination using practice theory to show the accretion of factors that led to the emergence of female entrepreneurship in place when others in a contiguous geography do not.

Credulous trust (Norris, 2022) is a concept that suffuses all facets of Pakistani society, from local groups to provincial, state, and international levels. This study adds to work on trust in entrepreneurship (Welter, 2021). This enhanced concept of trust contributes to a better understanding of the political aspects of place, a hitherto under-researched aspect of spatial context within the panoply of mixed embedded influences. Welter's delineation of trust in place operating at micro, meso and macro levels is echoed and amplified. Although trust is viewed as an attribute of social capital (Jack & Anderson, 2002) that lubricate relationships, trust for Kalash women is a feature of continuing relationships. A breach would be unthinkable. Rather an excess of trust is notable. This may be a response of tight-knit enclave groups engaging innocently with principals outside of that network. The specific call made by Welter was for entrepreneurship for scholars to explore the "contextual aspects of the dark and bright sides of trust". She enquired if, across cultures, "trust is the same no matter the context" (Welter, 2011, p. 206). This study integrates Welter's work with that of Norris's on sceptical trust in various locations where entrepreneurship occurs. It illuminates the differences between personal and community

trust, interethnic and state trust. It answers “no” to Welter’s questioning the universality of trust.

Kalash women are predominantly able to make their own decisions outside of the framework of male authority, either completely or by effective resistance. As such, they are on the emancipated end of the spectrum of agency, expressing their "libertas" both in terms of bodily freedom and movement plus by their commercial decisions. They do not fit into the cultural framework that many parts of the developing world follow where female entrepreneurship is based on "cum permissio". This study investigated in deep granularity what freedom can bring to female entrepreneurship. This extends the model proposed by Alkhaled and Berglund (2018) of subordination to empowerment and ultimately, emancipation in the context of entrepreneurship.

Lastly, under the wider question of how female entrepreneurship may influence society, this research shows a side-by-side socio-spatial analysis. If it were not for the Kalash female entrepreneurship, their economic wellbeing may be diminished, their cultural identity hollowed out and their cultural assets more commercialized by outsiders. The ability of the community to maintain ownership of their heritage and their ethnic boundaries around themselves as a group might be further compromised without women’s venture activities. The pressures for conversion, ever present, would still remain. The risk of starkly reduced levels of personal emancipation by full immersion into surrounding society is the future women still face. Kalash men are well aware of female contribution to economic activity, including entrepreneurship, in protecting the identity and well-being of their community.

There is no certain economic, cultural, or social future for this small ethnic group, and the Kalash world is highly unstable. Female entrepreneurship and other forms of economic and social activity may function as a source of group protection and defence against these forces. This would continue the role that Kalash women have had in the past, of being the shapers of the group's collective identity and, perhaps, their destiny.

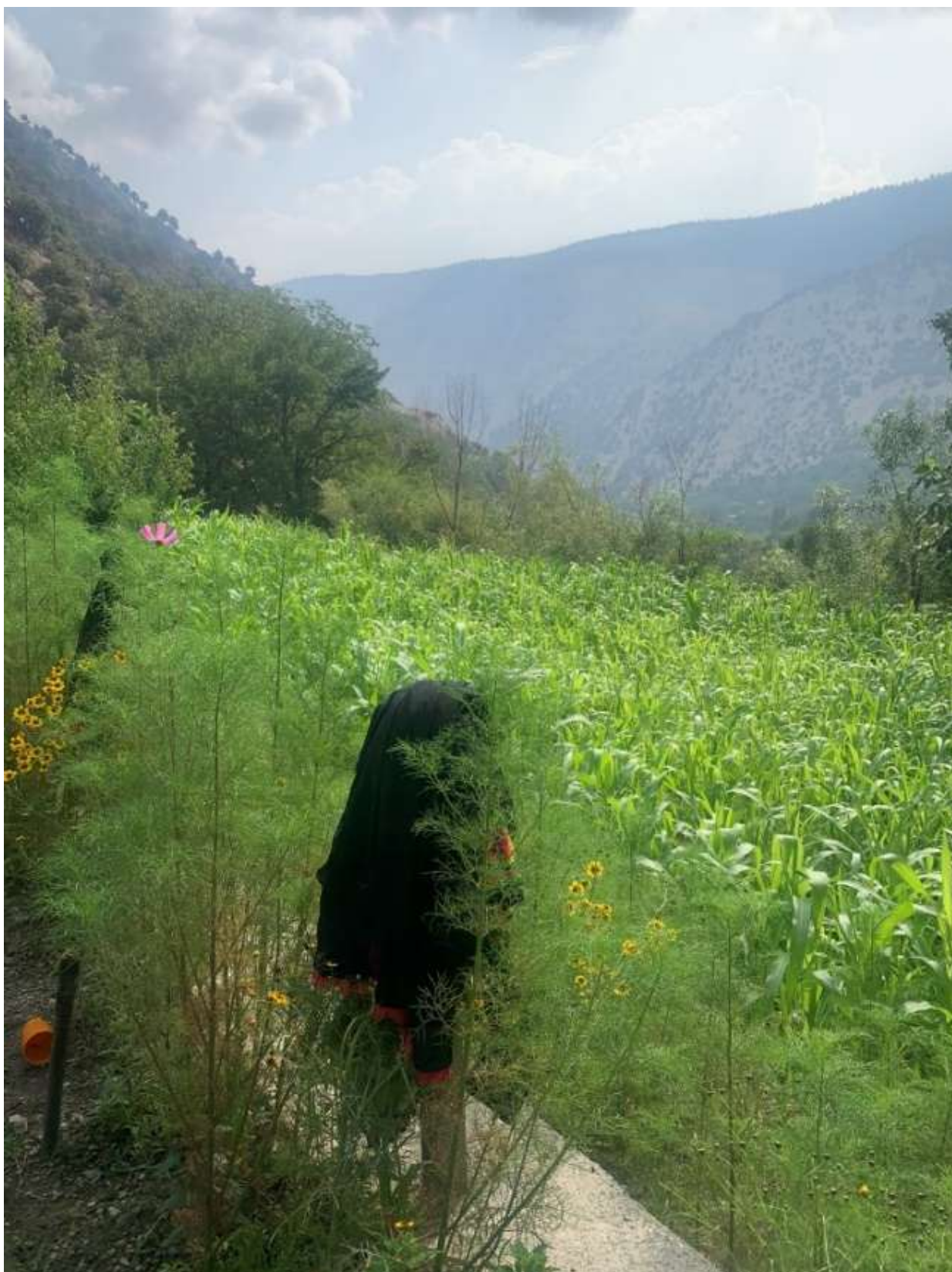


Figure 4.23: Womens dresses drying in the sun, Bumburet, Kalash. 2022. Picture Authors own

CHAPTER 5

**RIPPLES ACROSS THE DIVINE: EMPOWERING WOMEN AND
SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH CREATING SOCIO-SPATIAL
SPACE CENTRED ON THE SHARED ONTOLOGICAL
PRINCIPLES OF KARMIC EXCHANGE IN JAIPUR, INDIA.**

Chapter 5

Ripples across the divine: empowering women and sustainability through creating socio-spatial space centred on the shared ontological principles of Karmic exchange in Jaipur, India.



Figure 5.1: Founders on location at paper workshop

8.1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship scholarship explores spatial context as an influence but rarely the obverse: a shared space that emerges from venturing, a novel innovation which may advance female emancipation. This case study examines how a mother and daughter co-created a spiritually based social-spatial field in Jaipur, India that creatively circumvented contextual constraints. Female agency in India operates within strict norms suppressing capability development (Nussbaum, 2000) summarised as being ranked 135th in gender equality (UNDP, 2021). With a goal to raise India's GDP, the government encourages female economic participation (Hsieh et al., 2019) to lift the 14% rate of female entrepreneurship (Start-up India, 2022) and 24% labour force participation (ILO, 2022). Total labour earning value accrued to women is just 18% (Chancel, 2022) as women remain centred upon social rather than economic production (Anderson & Ojediran, 2021). Indian female entrepreneurship rates remain stagnant, possibly overstated (Rajan,

2019) and primarily are urban educated women. By contrast, over 500 rural, female-led businesses have been started associated with the spatial-context created through the Surprise Someone business offering a dramatic anomaly. This study examines the spiritual ontology that created this space and how sorority may be an alternative commercial approach to navigate the fraternal trading networks that largely exclude women in Indian business culture. It offers the insight that ventures that amplify the social reputation of women are a pathway to increased agency. This counteracts a major hidden barrier to both female entrepreneurship and work force participation.

“This is the best life. I have my own name. People recognize with my name and I'm happy.”

(Potli worker in home)

A barrier to female entrepreneurship remains the tight social networks of fraternal capital groups (Rajan, 2019) underpinning Indian business and social life. Such networks influence the commercial opportunities for participants (Steyaert & Katz, 2004). In creating a parallel, adjunct socio-economic world through a venture integrating both ancient Hindi and modern feminist principles, spiritual space becomes borrowed agency (Wee Chan Au et al., 2018). Beliefs of the afterlife are transmuted into a shared sphere of social understanding, a feminised creative realm of connection and transaction. Empowerment is through amplification of the social worth of the women worker within her social world. Emancipation is not by upending social structures, but by expanding agentic scope through economic activity and reaching beyond preconceptions to be seen as someone of worth in themselves.

The gap in literature remains on the entrepreneurial creation of novel places and spaces, of imagining a better social world through entrepreneurship (Laine & Kibler, 2022). This study advances understanding of female entrepreneurship in patriarchal societies (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010; Barragan et al., 2018; Shahriar, 2018) and in developing countries (Zayadin et al., 2022). It adds to scholarship on female-led family businesses in challenging socio-economic contexts and explored expansion of female agency through entrepreneurship. The epistemological stance is within the theoretical tradition of “affirmative foundations.” By “offering a different understanding of how entrepreneurship can become a critical force of societal production capable of removing

constraints within the economic, social, technological cultural and/or institutional environments to establish new structures more conducive to wellbeing” (Dey et al., 2022, p. 1). Daily activities are shown in place shaping entrepreneurial action (Trettina & Welter, 2019). An imaginative reconfiguring of both material and non-material elements of novel entrepreneurial resources is shown to further female empowerment.

5.2 Literature on Entrepreneurship and the socially constructed characteristics of place

Entrepreneurship may be viewed within a social context that extends beyond the geographical contours of location (Korsgaard & Mueller, 2018) encompassing shared attributes of a socially constructed world. Physical location imagined community (Anderson, 2016), virtual spaces or enclaves of shared practices and values flow within society (Friedman et al., 2018). Ontology is social, revealed through narratives (Hamilton, 2013) to grasp "contextual embeddedness" (Steyaert, 2007, p. 472). Cultural metaphors (Dodd, 2002) and political themes (Perren & Jennings, 2005) reveal social enactments through entrepreneurial processes. The recursive relationship between meaningful places within community and its embedded ventures (McKeever, Jack & Anderson, 2015) may have moral dimensions beyond prosociality (Daskalaki et al., 2015; Farny et al., 2019; Williams & Shepherd, 2016). Ventures in India seamlessly combine Hindu religiosity and capitalism as there is no conflict between God and Mammon. Combining both can advance social change (Nordstrom, McKeever & Anderson, 2020). This raises questions about the moral elements of entrepreneurship: what and who it is for, the redistribution of gains and social inclusion. Spirituality is not seen as a resource but as an influence upon participants or context. The Western tradition emphasizes structural separation of business and faith.

Entrepreneurship may deliver more daily freedom and well-being (Naude, 2013) but emancipation requires a group-level social shift in agentic norms (Calas et al., 2009, Rindova et al., 2009). It remains uncertain if female entrepreneurship shifts constraining social norms to be benefit of other women. There may be a slight positive shift in personal agency but only marginally (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018; Anderson & Ojediran, 2021). Institutional structures and informal norms prevail. Are we asking too much of entrepreneurship? Is it (Ahl & Marlow, 2021) a false dawn for women to hope that

entrepreneurship will enhance female liberty? One unexplored route is that of the sorority. Imagine a loose collectivity of women creating their own trading world. Might building on cooperative sociality (Datta & Gailey, 2012) and female ecosystems (McAdams et al., 2019) as a novel gendered space change wider social norms beyond the impact of a sole venture?

Keeping women within the sphere of social production as opposed to the male sphere of economic production (Anderson & Ojediran, 2021) leads to a restricted agency for women in both. Agency itself shrinks. Yet shifting the structures that give commercial advantage to men will be resisted as why would men change a stable social structure that serves them well? There is evidence of backlash and resistance to female led social change for just this reason (WVS/ Akaliyski, 2022). When Indian female entrepreneurs emerge, as socially embedded women, they still operate within gendered social conditions which may lead to lower revenue growth (Huq et al., 2020; Jayachandran, 2014). A “direction-of-fit” (Kaufman, 2021) error is made inferring that lower growth ventures reflect lesser entrepreneurial ability. There is blindness to social and economic constraints compared to male peers (Marlow & McAdam, 2013).

How might a woman step outside of constraints and new social worlds be created to support ventures as a route to empowerment? There is insight into how social worlds may be inhibiting new ventures or wider development (Anderson & Obeng 2017). The conclusion is that if one seeks greater emancipation and poverty reduction then social conditions may need to change first. Creativity could extend beyond envisioning a venture to imagining a fresh, newly minted changed spatial context where women are not disadvantaged. The distinct characteristics of such place would then enable a new venture. This changes the sequence from embedded characteristics influencing ventures to a uniquely created embedded world made to advance a venture’s purpose. The space itself is created to shift the social or economic structures of a place. It is a vision of creative defiance. The Kibbutz tradition was created as an egalitarian, gender-neutral social system with shared roots in Judaism (Near, 2007). New virtual spaces created around a shared spirituality remain a cultural anomaly. Whilst spatial contexts are often gendered (Welter & Baker, 2020) , there is less understanding of what a women may do about constraints other than defy from within using borrowed agency (Wee Chan Au et al., 2008). She makes adaptations the best she can. There is an empirical gap in the literature

exploring new fields sitting alongside the old, the interconnections between them and how newly conceptualised spaces may be commonly agreed to exist by those within. See appendix 6 for reviews on Hinduism and fraternal networks within the entrepreneurial literature.

5.3 Methods

Narrative life history methodology (McAdams & McLean, 2013) elicits themes in a person's arc of life. These reveal the narrator's inner values, events, observing how self-identity emerges. Discua Cruz (2021) on family business entrepreneurship is analogous, exploring how values shape the identification of opportunities. Anderson and Smith (2007) propose a conceptualisation of "authentic entrepreneurship" of narrative constructed meanings of socially embedded entrepreneurs. This aligns with social acceptability, apt for exploring female entrepreneurs in India seeking wider social acceptance.

Thirty-nine hours of recording plus additional marketing materials were analyzed using textual and visual anthropology methods (Banks & Zeitlyn, 2015). Applying Gioia et al. (2013), first order themes were generated in five large mind maps. (See appendix). From these a further thematic level of axial coding was derived on one central mind map then in round three a list of ten key themes emerged. From these ten, a further abstractive fourth round was taken to elicit four linking concepts. This converged into a final insight: freedom first lives within, is divine energy shared in an unseen space between us and expands by mutuality, recognition and creative exchange.



Figure 5.2: Workshop area, Jaipur. 2022. Picture authors own

Table 5.1: Gioia Analysis final rounds

Gioia Analysis of Surprise Someone and Pinky's World		
Round 3	Round 4	Round 5
Female world		
Spirit connects us	Female power is spiritual power	
Women empower through spirit		
Reputation shifts perceptions of female value		
Recognition empowers	Recognition of inner worth is a superpower	
Allow a low start then upskill		Freedom first lives within, is divine energy shared in an unseen space between us and expands by mutuality recognition and creative exchange
Hidden barrier of reputation management		
Space of reputational enhancement	Creative space is spiritual space	
Recognition is sustained by authentic exchange		
Creativity is potent energy	Mutual creativity is divine power	
The most valuable currency of mutuality is hidden		
We live under a higher power		

5.4 The venture

Surprise someone is a private venture started in 2015 by a mother and daughter team from a challenge set by the daughter's 5-year-old son to make paper without cutting down trees.

"We took [cotton], strained the water ... it came out of love and playfulness. He used to tell me that mama let's do it again. We started making, and that's when I called Vodafone, then, you know, I've started making paper bags... And that's when, after a few days they called me for 10 paper bags".

Their business model creates paper from waste cotton containing local artisanal traditions. Their business model is novel in four ways. Production is of innovatively designed 100% renewable seeded paper made in Jaipur using a fully sustainable supply

chain. Workshop production remains male dominated within a traditional workshop producing 10,000 sheets of seed-embedded cotton paper a day.

“We have a capacity to make, eight to 10,000 sheets daily.”

“1200 plus products”

“And these are seed bombs... just sow them in soil, and it'll grow into plants.”



Figure 5.3: Home packaging room. 2022. Photo: Author's Own

The second innovation is that the cutting, making, and packing is undertaken by women rather than men. Around 100 home-based women use previously unrecognized artisanal skills developed in the domestic sphere. Thirty-five women are employed directly as staff. These women are often first in their families to enter economic activity. They "work with women from rural India to make paper from waste cotton to prevent deforestation and global warming...has embedded seeds so that they can grow into plants." (Surprise Someone, 2022).

The unifying purpose is female employment through selling sustainable products appealing to other women. It is women who care most about female empowerment and buy. The paramount goal is maximising female employment.

“It's not for financial reason; there may be benefits besides that. The picture frames. If you made a thousand of those or 10,000 of those, it's not about the extra money, because you're not gonna make much extra money, but you will be employing a lot more women. Yeah. So that's, these women will have so much motivation. They will open their own company. But even right now, the revenue, what I would've generated, otherwise it is beyond that. But it is not everybody's cup of tea to understand. And I'm not here to, uh, people to explain it.”

Overheads are kept low within the family home to ensure that funds are spent on organic materials and female labour priced at a reasonable wage.

“I cannot put HR head in, head financial head... My product will become expensive and then I'll not be able to empower women.”

The business model is financial gain for female benefit, emotional and practical. This brings business into conflict with those who assess it on business metrics. The founders are resolute as to their purpose.

“Like, where am I standing? I'm standing on this earth with me, my skills, my network. I start right here and exactly that you just do a little bit. And the purpose is very challenging to people who think money. The purpose is not to make money.”

“What people want... is search for meaning out of all of this throwing money, like well, is where is there some depth?”

“I think part of the reason you could grow more is if you are continuing to do more good by growing than not growing.”

“LinkedIn is not to promote your products. Promote your thoughts, promote your why.”

“We don't make money, but we make happiness.”

This brings certain constraints. Products need to be sold at full price to generate cashflow to pay the women in full. This conflicts with the trader ethos in Indian culture of wanting to do a good deal.

“I tell them there's no [so] called discount. Everything I will ask from you, there is no nothing on free shipping. People say free shipping, free shipping. Cannot happen. But that's about wanting to feel, [they have] got advantage. Argument is about, “I want, I did a deal. That's their emotional need. Cause I done a deal”... So, I tell them that this is your misconception... I need labor. Maybe it is a 1, 5, 2, whatever people, women...that's because they don't appreciate women slavery. They don't realize it's people.”

“So, I am against that only [learning to give discounts] then against spirituality. I am asking God. Yeah, that we don't do it. So that is a disconnect, which I am improved in myself. And now I have started from the course. God is giving me this.”

This is also a way of filtering people into their world as buyers. Those who understand the “why” are welcome, others are not. This is also a rebellion against being assessed as a business or entrepreneur based on sale or profit metrics.

“I filtered [out a customer] yesterday. If you evaluate me based on ...my revenue, now you keep evaluating. Well, he's ignoring the why. He's ignoring the why. Yeah. He's ignoring my life.”

“I met a client recently...on a zoom call. I showed him everything and then he is telling me first time he's meeting, ...after 20 minutes, he's asking me, what is your revenue? Like what? No, no... my client is asking me that, we have to check whether, okay. If I tell you X amount, how does it matter to you? Mm. So if I don't give a quality job, uh, even if I do a hundred thousand pro-business, how does it matter to you? So, I had to tell him the story. I do not like working with clients who evaluate us financially. I only work with [who I like] because I have not taken money from private equity. Oh, my God. I am so plain telling that. Yeah. Had I taken money from investors or anybody? I would've been gone after business. I choose my own clients. And I am so blunt. So maybe, there are people who consider me little fool at times, but I am okay with it.”

The third component of the business model is selling items directly online to predominantly female customers so avoiding conventional intermediary channels of

offline shops. The supply chain from waste cotton to paper production in Jaipur is largely male, typical of the industry. The creation of products, graphics, design, purchasers, and end consumers are overwhelmingly female, as are the staff. The creative approach is co-creation whether white label for corporate clients or end users. There is something customisable in every product.

“I got a call from an Indian army school. They have 5,000 kids and they want to give some gifts. And they said, I met you in some exhibition ... So please help us how you can craft and design for us. So tomorrow and then from the home, I'll make a video, and I'll send you, so I'll tell her that how you can do this. You reference video. You'll understand how we help them. This is give us fair idea. This is what we want to do. Can you do this? But I listen to them. I incorporate the idea and add little more energy to it. That gives them, wow. Oh, wow. This is nice. I have to go ahead with this.”

Adopting direct digital sales as a gender enabling space suits female entrepreneurs who are more family based or have constraints on venturing forth into male dominated commercial space. It also eliminates the chronic problem in India of slow payment terms or corruption within intermediary channels.

“What we do is online. People don't believe now it's all digital world. Yes. There's no point of having physical shop and getting additional rental values, electricity there.”

“It's all digital. You do whatever you pay, Now, any women, entrepreneur, not men, women, any. If you find online and you place order, people ask for a hundred percent advanced payment.”

Selling direct is effective for those with a strong narrative. This shifts the sale from tradable items to a brandable products containing emotional and functional benefits:

“So, I'm a consultant in government of India... I teach how to create wow. In your product, how to be a good storyteller, because it's very important to tell your story. And this is what I think we have done differently.”

A fourth distinction is organic growth. External finance is eschewed despite many approaches from private equity, including Shark Tank, as there is divergence on metrics and purpose.

“I've not taken money from shark tank. I can very well refuse it. Had I taken shark tank money, then I would've said, please give me, just outta curiosity, have you people with money approach you and say, we like your business. We would like to invest in it. We like a percentage. Yeah. How do you deal with that? I tell them, sorry, I don't want your money because I don't want anybody to sit on my head and become boss. Then no, no, we love your creativity, and we really want you to see big in stores. And obviously they said that, then I tell them. You are successful. You are made your company. That is why you have 10 crore, hundred crore. Gimme 10 things or one thing where you failed in 50 years. I, you tell me that. That is enough for me. I will give you equity without any money because that'll help me grow because you've giving me learning. What mistake you made in 40 years? I will make again in 10 years later. So, you tell me now only I do not make that mistake. So, I'll be growing, and I'll give you equity for that only you tell me for one year, I'll give you equity without your money. At times they, they do not have a learning only money.”.

She has declined bank finance likewise as there is misalignment of values:

“Rather than building a dream, which could be changed by bank who says, I like that plan, but do this way. No, what's that got to do with me?”

Whether derived from gender, spirituality or sustainability or personal preferences, her value alignment privileges people over money. Workers see the difference.

“No, just do this. I'm giving you paying do this now. Shut up and do this. Nobody would've been [noticed]. Different relationship”

By extending beyond the financial, mutual benefits of indignity and respect develop.

“It comes back to the real transaction is social, yes... money, but it's also about rudeness, acceptance, respect.”

“Respect, you can't demand... has to be earned every day. I feel so nice when different genre of people are feeling so nice.... That she's feeling accomplished”

She is certain that the compromise of accepting external, male dominated, funding is incompatible so pursue a purely organic growth path, believing in spiritual serendipity and their own axiology.

“And some people are flexible enough to expand, others not.... I just think the positive, you know, my master tells ... you should just leave them a difficult soul”.

5.5 Impact of Wider Female Entrepreneurship and Empowerment

Beyond the impact of their own venture, advocacy for female entrepreneurship had led to the formation of over 500 female-founded online ventures.

“One lady I'll tell you, she started ...doing small things for other people and she did for us also. Now she's grown so much... recently she said I've opened my own company. Wonderful... I think that at least she's standing on her feet....And since she gives that credit to me... this is my change.”

Pinky and Shoda are a magnet for other women, including other mother and daughter combinations:

“And there are a lot of resellers, who come and say, I really want to see you, listen to your story. I want to do this. And people who are doing mother-daughter, they get inspiration.”

Individual women then hire other women as sub-contractors though in-home work.

“Now this lady is doing from home. She's getting the online thing. An account for making stitching or putting the Jute strings or ... whatever thing we ask...she's giving further employment to the female family....’ I'm not bothered how much she's paying to her; I'm paying that person. And she manages. So, in this way, she's she actually learning how to manage the quantity and the funds.”

“There are lot of women now who we empower and further, they connect to a lot more [who] work at home... we give paper bags... and they put threads... embroider and stuff.”

The sheer scale of this impact is remarkable. Over 500 new ventures, all female run and many extending outwards to other women in extended households.

“Small female micro entrepreneurs doing small things that are connected to us, by buying something... more than 500 across [the business]. People make boxes, chocolates, cakes, and they need boxes They're also more female run.”

Whereas many initiatives with women are skills based, Pinky's model focuses on working with women as they are and upskilling them. Her observation as a mentee on a Goldman Sachs programme for women entrepreneurs noted a (male) institutional blindness to social context.:

"Not only sustainable is the key for them... sponsoring women only because... they understand that women hesitate [to] grow, spending or investing on themselves. Women think, no, no, I need to move. I left. They think the gap is skills rather than say social context or attitude."

"Have you started spending time with your accountant, your CA, because we have accounting classes also. Have you made your business plan? Otherwise, women don't know what strategy work plan" (Goldman)

Culture context also matters: a corporate approach is ineffective in the highly fluid, socially contextualised operation of Indian start-ups.

"A foreigner would not have no idea or someone who'd only ever been, even if they were Indian only ever been in the purely corporate world but have no idea how to navigate that. They'd lost everything else go this way or that way and not understand that it's a negotiated situation".

The effect is of gentle encouragement. The impact is profound.

"But only thing now, which motivates her are words. If I counsel her"

Pinky suggests a framework of thinking of direct advice, keeping it simple and all the more powerful coming from a woman.

"Always start a business... by solving someone's problem...It's a great way to start the business...I think it's all revolves around motivation because one word can change her. That's what I believe."

"Start-up culture has just come like five, six years, otherwise people used to do trading. I will buy biscuits from you, and I will sell it to you. Yeah. This is what we do. Now. The scenarios changed because people like Uber, Airbnb have come. So, people say, oh, wow."

I never thought about this concept. And then this well opens. Yes. And then they say, I can also do this too. Yeah. Why can't I make this?"

The mentoring is overwhelmingly emotional and spiritual.

"When I tell them, they get excited with my post, do one day, you will reach, have a mission. At least for dream, then only you'll be able to achieve. I'm not asking you to do unrealistic. I'm not asking you dream that you're primary dream. When I can dream them. Why not? You reach, this is a hesitant and women that 15 sales just seems like a dream."

She understands the social context in which the women are living, often married, working at home or all female environments. Her stress on empowerment encourages personal decision making.

"With the conversation I've seen change... messages coming back and saying, I've done this maam. I achieved this. It was lovely listening to you. Or with this only little, talk people get inspired.... So that conviction, then I give them example, like you wanna marry a guy, your parents are not a leader. How you convinced that, and finally you get married. Why don't you get that conviction? And I will do I have to achieve, this is [like a] boyfriend, I said that conviction is not coming. Meaning that is not your passion. That somebody else's passion, somebody else is forcing you to reach this number. No. Then do it yourself. There's a whole other topic I wanted to realize... it sounds philosophical, but it's exactly on this point."



Figure 5.4: Variety of embossed papers made for gifts. 2022. Picture author's own.

Female business customers use Surprise Someone items to package their products online. There are handmade items: regional snacks, ingredients, or other gifts and sympathetic to the original concept of sustainability and female empowerment. As a well-known advocate of sustainable practice, Pinky is inspiring to other female founders. Home-based working, either employed or self-employed, aligns with domestic responsibilities and circumvents family resistance to women moving freely in the public sphere as independent workers. These newly-established businesses do not conflict with prevailing norms, particularly for rural women.

Surprise Someone's products are innovative not only in design and resourcing but in flexible utility. Modern design features innovative twists such as chocolate boxes transforming into photo frames. Design motifs are contemporary with a touch of traditional Indian aesthetic and colourways. The female customer base recognizes this aesthetic as a modern overlay over traditional offerings. Design skills run through the business as does respect for women's artistry.



Figure 5.5: Potli makers at home extended family team. 2022. Picture authors own.

As well as the material aspects of the production process, there is a powerful embedded non-material benefit. Purchasers are supporting a more sustainable future and aiding marginalised women. There is an additional higher order non-material benefit: every item made at home by a woman includes a blessing, a gift of emotion from giver to receiver.

Women perceive this gift as in-built spirit flowing from the product. It can be considered a form of sanctity in Christian terms, appreciated by the recipient. Beyond the physicality of the product's function, gifts enable non-material exchange. An item might be for personal use or self-improvement such as cotton paper journals or gifts celebrating birthdays.

"You think of yourself as selling happiness, but actually you're selling different feelings. Yeah. But this is something which is close to my heart, and I don't stop doing it. We've not been able to, uh, you know, do justice to this, but uh, but keep trying. Yeah. But each one is a package of a feeling. Yeah. That's but I find people really appreciate it."

Another is Rakhi, the annual token exchanged between brothers and sisters. Surprise Someone provides the cotton bracelets with embedded plantable seeds. Instead of becoming waste, bracelets are planted to grow into herbs and flowers bringing emotional symbolism and practicality. Exchange is not the point: a cord is placed on the wrist of a brother to grant him a year of blessings - health, prosperity, and a good life. She asks for his protection in return as the fraternal protector. Today this is more mutual. Both siblings wear thread on wrists on that day and try to be around each other. Sisterhood extends to first cousins. This gift is an amplification of an emotional "pre-blessing embedded" gift within a social-cultural context that cements familial obligations and mutual regard.

"We infuse love in the products.. For example, diaries. It's like our grandmothers. ... this thing, serving spoon, and she's infusing so much love, which you cannot express or which you cannot tell in. Exactly the same thing. Yeah. So, love is care so nobody's upset."

The receiver feels they will be appreciated and remembered for longer by the giver than they otherwise would. Spiritual amplification of their relationships is part of the products' essence. The receiver gains spiritual energy as emotional uplift, physical or emotional healing and happiness. The exchange engenders mutual joy and appreciation of the person.

"I don't want my things to get infected with [bad]energy. There's a lot of this associated with joy and positivity. Yeah. But you don't want jealousy. You feel that vibration. People here have come and told me that Pinky, we feel different vibrations here because everyone is happy here. Nobody worried and so protected."

Recognition and emotional exchange are the non-materiality within each item, not utility value. The spiritual aspect of Hinduism can be difficult to comprehend but shared emotions and energy is a reality in this social-cultural context. The cultural history of emotion is situated between people and shared. It is less internal or individualistic as seen in the West (Fanny et al., 2019; Von Scheve & Ismer, 2013).

“And I believe in energies a lot. I'm a very spiritual person and this healing all about energy. And with that, I am leading my life”.

I'm a very spiritual person... I believe in healing.”.



Figure 5.6: Seed embedded paper gifts

5.6 Beyond economics: the power of recognition

Pinky observes the paucity of recognition of women's inner worth beyond family-based roles in social production. As well as being spiritually embedded within the products for the end beneficiary, regard for the dignity and worth of women is suffused across reimagined supply chains. Earnings for a household are important.

"Yeah, but they can do a little bit more for themselves. The financial is important of course."

"Life, see money, definitely money. People actually look for the money."

Being paid valorises women's work. This expands personal agency through enhanced reputational value; not specific skills being appreciated or utilised.

"I think recognition is one small but powerful medicine".

"She's saying I can't express how happy I am. ... I didn't tell her that I am putting your name, I don't know, this is what we live for." (Potli worker daughter)

The transformation from subordination to empowerment is partly from the opportunity to use their craft skills which were previously not given value outside of their home.

"Family members never thought that this kind of work can affect some money. They always said you can just do craft and nothing else. Just put it on show, please. Apart from that, you can't do. Now, the house is filled in paper. Now they tell me people have started respecting me" (Shada)

"Things [skills] that you've got, they get paid for this, their husband, says what are you doing? All houses messed up with paper and stuff. But when they get money yeah. It changes it."

"These are the women who are told by their husband's father that you can't do anything. So, we just grab a craft [job] and do so we send these sheets to them."

Earning power does shift the perception of the woman, without detracting from being a good wife, mother, daughter-in-law, and wider family member as activity is at home.

“Got to be done in the context of the family home ... women are saying that we can start from home... cause she has to take care of family. Even if you go to office, you have to take care of kids, kitchen... man will never do that... but those women were not only with just sitting at home and doing these exactly. But now women are earning as per you. ... oh, it's lovely women entrepreneurs, but it be at home.”

“Women of before, when she was not doing anything, she was making, cooking, cleaning, and doing this. But while she's making thousands of potties, still she's doing this also. She's not deleted that work. She's not saying I will not take care of you. I will not feel different for you because I'm working on money also. Don't mind. But men usually here, he comes [first], men dominating society. [Women are] there to help. [inaudible] What are you doing? This? But] women, a woman is earning, but still the men saying, I will not do household work.”

“You cannot tell people what to do is, like we said, with children, you have to see a woman do it and think I like her. I can do that. Yeah. And women look to other women; they don't look to men. Yeah. They go, but that man doesn't have my life. He doesn't have, he doesn't have to worry about how I manage my child and this, my feelings of guilt or whatever happens to be. Right. He doesn't have to navigate that world where she does and if she can do it, then it'll be the same, but I can do something.”

The greatest gain for the women employees is recognition of their value as a person. They are given opportunities and seen as a person in their own name (Azmat & Fujimoto, 2016). This transforms self-image leading to an outward shift of the boundaries within her social world.

"I feel life. I feel accomplished and, uh, I don't have time to do other gossips." (Teacher-in-training worker).

Children also re-evaluate their mother and her worth beyond being their mother, wife, daughter in law:

“When she showed her that newspaper, keeping to her friends and other people, they said, "Oh, your mom has become famous. She comes in newspaper and this," so she feels nice. And before that, she was saying ... I used to think that mama's doing little bit small

things, so it's okay. She's doing that. But gradually, she got start getting more work, more quantity... she also started having a little more respect and honour for her mother."

Empowerment is by degree but significant. Rebalancing of agency within the family follows but the father / husband's view still prevails:

"She's saying she's very happy... she's giving credit to her husband because her husband is supporting her so much. That is why she's able to do this work."

"She's saying if she doesn't get her parents support, then she'll not be able to do it because right now, only her parents are supporting. If they won't support, then she'll not do it. So, she's lucky enough that her parents are not stopping. Otherwise, if parents stop... you will not become like this. You don't do this. So, then she will not do it."

This affirmation of interdependence is not about dominance but a shift in scope to negotiate their future.

"Whatever subject or field she wants to choose, she will choose herself. They are saying that we will not force and with the best possible support, they will support. So, rest is their, thing." (Father on daughter Priyanka)

This shift is limited as the social pathway and expectations are unchanged:

"That girl, she has come from a different background, and she's not married...So I wanted to take her to Delhi. make you stable...mother wanted to send, but father tells, some wrong things to his daughter. That she doesn't have capability of doing this. She does, he's going around with other stories happening there. He does just because of the wrong name in the society, because her mother is worried that she's going to get married in next one or two years. So, I don't want her name to be spoiled because her dad, see, these are small things. And now at the same time she wants more also, she wants to show people what she wants Through in society, in her community that she is capable of doing something. So that is why she comes... which also adds to her attractiveness."

Women are assisted to get their own bank accounts and agentic expansion results from a positive shift in esteem from family members. Sharda (mother) ensures the women gain greater financial independence through their earnings.

“So, my mom... , took those cards and made a post office account for them. [Before it would be] credited to their husband's account because husband said, you are nobody else”

“This is wrong. At least you'll have the ownership. Suddenly somebody can't say, oh, this is mine [money]. Now we take to take contribution to the family also. But then we teach them that make [bank accounts] that he can't even touch”

“Yes. I told you. So, I always was not [independent]. Gave up lot of things on him. I never did payment, online payment billing, know the electricity bill taking care of all formalities. We are more capable... We need challenge.”

A change in relationship with a mother-in-law can enhance autonomy as being held in higher regard within family can be transformational. Just as the materiality of a gift might obscure the spiritual gain and social value of its emotional content, generating earnings can occlude the felt non-material benefits of employment for women.

5.7 Family context and early influences

Resistance to Pinky's venture was initially from inside the family: her husband and her parents-in-law. Her mother however is an equal partner, both supported by her father. The divide between marital families was one of values, Pinky having a belief in business as a force for social good as well as family financial prosperity. Her in-laws & husbands see business as a force for personal and family material gain.

“Uh, don't run after money. That is infused in my blood that you don't run after money so you can sleep peacefully.”

Prior to a corporate marketing career and her son's birth, the notable factor in her past was being placed with artisans or workmen from the age of five. Each holiday she would spend about a week with a worker: a shoemaker, elevator repairman or other craftsman, often male. As a child, she observed what they did. The stated aim was so she would have a choice of career when she grew up.

“Since I think I was five or six years old, I have always spent time with carpenters. They've sent me to a tailor ...then into the workshop to learn this...then I was sent to make shoes...He does not force me to do that. The idea was that they gave [me] exposure

of everything...The lift was very new because we used to in independent houses and I'm like 14 now. The lift, which was being repaired. To see how the lift works. So, I remember spending maybe three, four days sitting there. So maybe if you pick up engineering later ...He said I have given you exposure, pick up what you are getting attracted to what you think that you can do... Otherwise, if you don't do, nobody can make a fool out of you."

Her parents' implicit goal was to teach her, as a single child, to value work, no matter how lowly, and to appreciate artisanship and the person behind it. Her creativity was also encouraged:

"I made sure she do extra work , creative work" (On encouraging Pinky's childhood creativity)

She was taught not to ignore the skill and effort of each individual. This had a profound effect on her, reflected today by treating every worker with dignity. Her mother manages the home workers, providing a guiding maternal influence among the female workforce. Discua Cruz et al. (2022) noted that women play a significant role in shaping the external network of a family business. Childhood experiences also left Pinky with the ability to speak on equal terms with anybody. She is in her behaviour less bound by the social strictures of class, caste, and gender.

The second major influence on her was her father, a well-known forestry expert and champion of sustainability for decades.

"This was planted [by my father] when my son was born. Oh, so how lovely this 10-year-old and in 10 years, which is going to amazing flowers. And my dad, when he when we came home, he had sowed the seed. That's like a summary of everything he believes in, you know, and his hope for the future. You know, some people throw a party, he plants the tree."

A pivotal moment for starting the business was realizing her son looked to his grandmother as his primary caregiver rather than to Pinky. Her long corporate hours contributed to her invisibility to him. Seeing her worth as a mother diminishing in her son's eyes, she felt driven to leave employment and start her own business. This fits a pattern of women launching businesses after motherhood (Markowska, 2018) and that 98% of Indian businesses are family-based (Start Up India, 2022).

Motivation is from positive emotional affirmation she feels from making a social impact in accordance with her spiritual beliefs.

“It cannot happen instantly when you do something, when you make difference, be humble to people, make honest effort to make someone smile or happy without dilution. So that is a real happiness. I want to create a difference to women who were nothing. And they became everything.”

“She said: And blessings on you on your birthday. [Thank you] for silently motivating people like me. I said, oh my God, but this messages Truly made my day, you are the spark of my life....They are real treasure for me...you can't buy this That's in a transactional world. You can't buy it.”

“One word can make me happy. One word can make me feel bad.”

The strong foundation she feels with her family allows her to move beyond pressures for social approval.

“My key of happiness earlier was in others pocket. Now it's in my pocket... I don't take approval from you to me be happy... I should not take approval from anybody else that what I'm doing now.”

Pinky recognized that seeking approval from her husband pulled her away from her capability and beliefs. His initial response was to constrain and shame her for trying something he felt was beneath his self-perception of what a wife should do.

“I said, I sell bag for 10 Rupee, but hundred happy people agree... then my husband came to know about this and was very embarrassed. Okay. And now I feel frighten, telling that, but he doesn't like it. He said are you okay? What are you doing? You know, you were doing so great, good job. You were drawing so much good salary and now you make hundred Rupees, please take a hundred rupees from me. Don't do this. I mean, it ...he was feeling guilt about it”

“Best part I did was I did not borrow single penny from anyone to start this. That would've because it would've been a disaster, but I think that's also what's going on.”

There is a strong emphasis on spiritual learning and business growth which fits Hindu principles of continued self-improvement and her high level of self-confidence.

“It's not about the selling of the bag. What did I learn from that? What people liked, what they didn't like, whether the product work or not, whether the marketing work and only thing you invest is what you can afford to lose”?

“You will see miracles entering... not for the business I do it. There's so many messages you say no... I live for this one because there's a lot of affirmation. Yeah. ...you look at the more spiritual note; you're getting the energy back.”



Figure 5.7: Mother Shagda and daughter Pinky. 2022. Pictures Authors Own

“[Mother] handles all the operations and production... I don't directly deal with these, labourers, and people, she handles all of them. I also observed one thing because I come from a corporate culture... It doesn't work here... the culture of corporate, we cannot actually replicate in start-ups.”



Figure 5.8: Pinky's Work Desk. 2022. Picture Authors own



Figure 5.9: Two of packing staff in home sphere. 2022. Picture Authors Own

5.8 The creation of a boundaried feminised world

Surprise Someone's business model structure is built upon feminised values infused with human dignity. This is highly distinctive within the Indian entrepreneurial context. Success is overwhelmingly structured as families working within a closed network of fraternal capital. By an act of imagination and force of character, “Pinky’s world” is a parallel newly created space of economic and social operation structured as a business. She has reimaged the boundaries of business operation and existence in response to resistance she felt in a patriarchal society. From feeling undervalued has come a positive aspiration of how a better world might emerge for the planet and for women. It is notable that the business is run by two women with minimal access to fraternal trading groups who created a new socio-spatial space outside of traditional networks.

Over time, a parallel feminized space has developed which includes:

- Support of female friends from childhood
- Support and early customers from female ex-corporate colleagues
- Finance through pro forma or internet orders to avoid bank financing for growth and male-dominated institutional gatekeepers.
- Female staff working in an attached house as a central logistical hub
- A unique design-infused working space that champions creativity and free expression
- A network of female workers producing within their homes balancing work with family
- Home workers involve other female family members to assist e.g., threading or embroidery. Young children will be in these spaces with shared childcare.
- The cotton, from south India, are waste offcuts from making women’s saris
- Papers includes seeds nurturing and replanting the planet to add more life. Vegetation is added to the planet rather than removing trees for paper.

- Customers are accepted if they appreciate quality and pay full list prices, so women workers are paid full wages. Women customers accept this and men who quibble or seek to negotiate in bulk are not accepted as clients. Shared values are self-selecting, but a requirement for business objectives to be met. This overcomes women's work being considered not of market value.
- The customer base is almost entirely female. The end products are owned by women.
- The products, as well as Pinky, are advertised on social media using feminized language based on empowerment and sustainability, visual appeal, and spiritual energy. Through Instagram and WhatsApp, Pinky talks female followers, shares affirmations and spiritual messages.
- The network of 500 associated new businesses, mentees, and customers, are overwhelmingly female
- Management decisions are made on what will maximise employment of women. Some products are sold at breakeven to utilise their skills rather than under employ women on more profitable lines.
- There are no male managers in the business, a growth constraint but it is socially unacceptable for an unrelated man to be in shared family spaces.
- Husband and his family are blocked from contact with the business due to their conflicting set of values bringing "negative energies" into the business. The son is actively involved to imbibe the ethos and shared values.

5.9 Interface with the masculine

The one business sphere of Surprise Someone that is male dominated is the workshop of about ten men doing manual jobs making paper in a traditional manner. Screen printing and some assembly is by men using traditional artisanal principles. An old workshop was found and designed as a workflow by Pinky's father to ensure that production was sustainable. Water is recycled, waste is repurposed, and air drying is used for minimal energy consumption. A male figure, here a father, is an example of borrowing agency

(Wee Chan Au et al., 2018). He assisted with the setup, but current operations are under the supervision of Pinky. She is unequivocally the boss. While paper making from cotton is more pervasive in Jaipur as a traditional activity into low-quality, high-volume markets, the alignment with modern feminine design moves the business into premium markets.

Such abutting of the dominate male world exists in other ways. Pinky is a member of an all-women cohort of start-up founders supported by Goldman Sachs. She has been highlighted by the World Economic Forum as an example of female sustainable entrepreneurs in India. Pinky's world has succeeded in creating a sphere where engagement with the masculine is on vastly different terms compared to her original options within her socio-cultural background. As entrepreneurs, mother and daughter have risen above the embedded constraints of place. They only engage with the dominant masculine sphere when their parallel world is publicly valued, not derided.

5.10 Credibility through borrowed agency

Wee Chan Au et al. (2018) in Bangladesh, observed that female entrepreneurs might use “borrowed agency” at the inception of their businesses to access the male dominated business sphere. A husband (Wolf & Frese, 2018) might deal with banks or potential trading partners. Fathers with extensive prior fraternal capital links could broker distribution and supply channels. As the business grew, male borrowed agency was rejected when she could trade independently. This separation from male agency can be a fraught process as it challenges the constraints of female agency. She needs just enough male credibility to commence then she reverts to the feminine world as an independent venture with its own momentum.

Surprise someone used Pinky's father to create a production space for the business and control has peacefully transitioned back to Pinky and her mother. Borrowing of male agency is confined to the father, since tensions with her husband make such collaboration impossible. Agency has also been borrowed from her mother for local credibility and integration into rural networks of women and from two gender-neutral realms enabling her separation from fraternal networks. The first is cyberspace using the internet as a freely accessible neutral trading space which disintermediates fraternal markets. McAdam et al. (2020) noted such transformational benefits selling online allowing

personal agency and empowerment to expand beyond financial freedom. The notable difference with Pinky's is her mastery of the medium. She has co-opted the virtual domain beyond selling to shape the spiritual realm as a shared space of feminine understanding and teaching women online entrepreneurship. Women are drawn within the boundaries of her created commercial space as a compelling female role model inspiring other woman.



Figure 5.10: Example of low-cost marketing advice given online to large numbers of women.

“The realization of self-worth typically starts inside the home, and over time it extends outwards to the wider business and social spheres...entrepreneurship helps to nurture greater agency within the household and uplifts their social status at home.”

(Wee Chan Au et al., 2018, p. 59 Bangladesh)

These challenges echo the pain of taking back full agency once “borrowed.” This Bangladesh case shares the same impulse to create a largely female world in parallel to prevailing masculine structures. Both women emerge as powerful role models and attraction nodes for aspirant women. Pinky relies less on male borrowed agency and more on cyberspace and shared spiritual space. Yet, the borrowing of agency is insightful to reflect the limitations of agency that both women navigate to achieve their goals.

5.11 Karma and Spiritual Space

“Relationship is the mirror in which we can see ourselves as we are. All life is a movement in relationship. There is no living thing on earth which is not related to something or other. We can also discover whether we love or there is no such thing as love. So, we will examine the question of relationship because that is the basis of love.”

(Krishnamurthi, J, Mind Without Measure p 79, 1982)

The more profound sphere of “borrowed agency” in Pinky’s world is to tap into the shared awareness of the Hindu concept of collective spiritual belonging. This conceives all beings as connected. As Krishnamurthi responded:

“How should we treat others?... There are no others.”

(Krishnamurthi, 1982).

Within Hindu theology, there exists a non-material plane of shared transcendent existence where spirits of all beings are connected. Actions affect each other. There are no others, each person is in connection with others and universal spirit. This sees individuation as a mirage versus underlying spiritual unity. This belief is transposed onto the current world in believing that there is an invisible spiritual connection between us. This makes time a circular concept of Karmic influence: birth, death, rebirth occur through collective spirit. It would be a conceptualisation commonly understood in the Indian social-cultural context. Pinky and her mother have co-opted this additional spiritual space to be an adjunct of universal meaning to her imaginatively created feminised trading space.

This conjoining of the mystical and commercial realms works on two levels. All Surprise Someone products have an integrated spiritual non-materiality of deeper recognition, underpinned by spiritual and emotional exchange. The cultural matrix from which this draw is shared belonging to spiritual conspicuousness. Exchange of gifts or purchase is not a commercial transaction but a contribution to and from spirit, of which humans are conduits. The recipient gains spiritual energy, and the gift is a mechanism of energetic exchange. Those who give or receive, as well as those who enable this through female empowerment, gain positive karma. In co-opting this framework of conceptualised

spiritual space into a product offer, implicitly and unconsciously, she is creating a level of utility that is a newly imagined exchange. Purchase is secondary to exchange of non-material value.

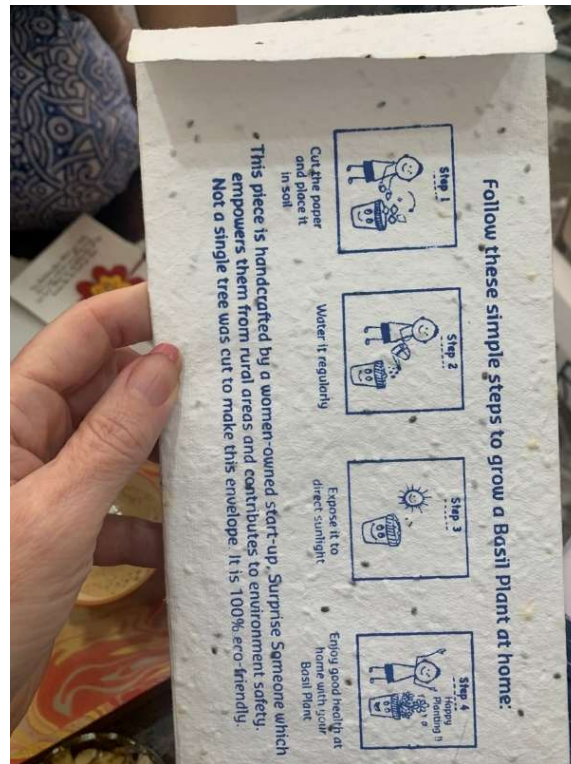


Figure 5.11: Example of seeded paper with plantable product for easy use. 2022.

Picture Authors Own



Figure 5.12: Sharda shrine in house to Baby Krishna (on left). 2022. Picture authors own



Figure 5.13: Articulation of gift of energetic exchange. 2022. Picture Surprise Someone

A related orientating principle of Pinky's world is to do what will add to her "karmic balance sheet."

"I also work on financial balance sheet... I work on one more balance sheet, which is karmic. In next reincarnation, that will be basis. Not my financial"

"Karma balance sheet - when she will die and go up there. That sheet is the one taken into consideration. We try to make a deal with God here. I will stay hungry or do this and God will have by give me what I wish in return. And even if you get what you wanted, it's not because God gave... but your good karma points if you are fit to give away more, you should do it. It looks fair on karma balance sheet, and she can justify her life once she has to face the God. She makes one of the products and sell it at loss

because the process gives her employee sense of acknowledgement. Loss in financial balance sheet but profit in karma balance sheet. In the back of her mind, she is always taking into consideration both balance sheets instead of just financial one.” (Shada. mother)

Beyond sound commercial decisions, generating good in the world today accrues favour on the spiritual plane. No religious intermediary weighs this earthly contribution; it is one's own doing to create rewards in another life. Although there is no conflict in Hinduism with commercial success, there is a priority of values. This is expressed, in Pinky's case, by prioritising what brings a more sustainable world and advances female empowerment. This is paramount even when it has financial opportunity costs. A specific example would be producing complex boxes for baby shower gifts sold at breakeven to ensure more women are employed.

This prioritising of female employment, and asking if her actions bring joy to others, is her karmic balance sheet. Accruing Karma by positive social and emotional gain to others suffuses Indian culture. Karmic balance sheet is the measure of business action and boundary marker of this newly created space. Measurement is not commercial profit but karmic principles of increased sustainability, female empowerment, and interpersonal happiness. Those that weight their lives in the same way are welcome within this spiritual sphere and those that adopt commercial principles over these spiritual values, are excluded. Men may share these principles, but she has conflated karmic philosophy with her creation of a feminised sphere. This separates the fraternal capital network of India from the sphere of her business. Women inside the sphere are largely independent from male influence.

5.12 The power of Recognition in enhancing Empowerment

In Indian society, women are defined by their role as wife, mother, daughter, sister. In a world where 98% of marriages are still arranged, a woman's trajectory in life is circumscribed by her need for reputational stability in the marriage market. This context affects choices to start a business or become employed to reduce any reputational impact on her or on her family as the weight is on the downside. There is an extreme anxiety as to where girls go, who they mix with and keeping them within an all-female environment.

This is tightly policed by families, often by other women. By providing a female sphere, this option of work meets approval.

“They were already curious; can I visit your office wherever you work? She asked my mom ...then called, and she started crying that auntie they're so happy. They say your boss is so nice - they treated, they gifted... nobody does this kind of breakfast and stuff. Your small joys of life, but the family will probably be very happy that their daughter is being looked after. In a commercial way. That's nice. It's good people around. She's not unsafe or anything that'll disrespecting. Yeah. At times even kids are not going to school or there's some issue. So, they come here, and they study...five, six women working here.”

Reputation, her own and that of her extended family, is the coin of the realm. Once married, the concern is maintaining or enhancing the reputation of extended family.

“Everybody appreciates her and everybody's happy and nobody thinks that she's doing anything wrong.”

A woman's actions are largely defined by supporting the male in his own or family endeavours.

“He's saying when he goes on a social meeting and ... family, friends, otherwise his boss, boss' wife and stuff... people say, "we heard, and we know that your wife is doing so good work and appreciate," and he feels nice.” (Husband of jute sewer)

Earning from home is a natural fit to this social structure so long as she is not considered to “underperform” her current responsibilities. Her aspirations centre on social production, the well-being of her family and sharing in their successes.

I feel so nice, and I don't know what she will do, but I want her to become better than me.” That's what she's saying. And she's saying "I would wish I should be, named with her name that I am her mom. “I feel so nice, and I don't know what she will do, but I want her to become better than me.” Mother on Priyanka)

As women become educated, labour force participation can decline (Evans, 2022b). It maintains male social prestige to have your wife not work and be dedicated to family obligations. Observations of arranged marriage ads indicate a woman's earning power is not a major consideration. For a woman's family, these are filtering criteria for him being a potential match. It is her father's family caste and that of male relatives of the mother (her uncles) that matter. Appearance, youth, and caste match with both families in this patrilocal system determine her value in the marriage market. A mother who works or is entrepreneurial is not salient. That which is not conventional socially might risk being a detraction to the child's marriageability. Female entrepreneurship does not add social weight as economic empowerment is secondary to family reputation and female commercial success is rarely pertinent. The social determinants of reputation are not of her making. Scope for self-fulfilment is sparse. The creation of a sphere that values a woman for herself, allowing her to generate reputation that is both hers but adds to her family's, is an exceptional opportunity to shift personal agency. Her emotional labour, care, and inclusion (in her own mind) of spiritual good will enhance others through her material efforts. This is an amplification of her existing social production value to others and her own sense of karmic value. Collaborating with other women means norms of acceptability of personal reputation are not breached. The reputational change is self-image and as perceived by other women as being a good woman, contributing to family. Reputation is not just amplifying male value.

Seeing an entrepreneur as an atomized individual obscures hidden factors across social systems, notably the importance of reputation or collective interdependence. The view of a woman as a solo person is more Western, with its drive for self-worth and individual achievement, difficult to achieve as a woman in a lower caste family in rural India. Her social existence within her family and fraternal groups is her life structure. There is a trade-off between her value to others, her extended family in the main, as an economic source of value or as a reputational repository of family esteem, a chattel that embodies male family honour (Evans, 2022a). Reputation is how honour is weighed and being a holder of nonmaterial value on behalf of others affects her daily life. A woman's ability to earn esteem from other women through her work, in addition to its financial value, affects her reputation with other women, such as her mother-in-law with whom she usually lives. This enhanced reputation ripples out onto female children, raising confidence of what is possible.

Neither the women nor the men are looking to support empowerment which might lead to reduced interdependence. Being a member of the collective, both familial and spiritual, is the Indian social model. The aspiration of these women is not to live independently in affluence and endless choice by forsaking family. They rather wish to have more freedom and respect within the home. Women want more scope, but this study indicates aspiration is for enhanced choice over partners, work, education, job, and work location. They do not appear to want to weaken the framework of society as they know it.

An interesting feature of the currency of reputation and interdependence is that it flows laterally. The benefit of Pinky's business activities is shared by the women as contiguous beings. Pinky's world is a space where her success in selling to a prestigious client is seen by the women as their own success. The prospect of products being exported abroad is characterized as "we are going abroad." There is tight identification of their efforts carrying through to the end destination of the products.

"She's saying, I feel so nice that the things which I made, the family bags, and potties, they're going to different countries, companies, states. She's saying I feel so happy and motivated... she's saying, if I would've not done this, you would've not come here."

This is not projection, but belief that their personal spiritual energy will travel to foreign lands seamlessly to reach the end recipient. As a result, both company, product and individual success diffuse a sense of female reputational gain to the rest of the worker's immediate family. This enhanced esteem usually comes from fellow family members' success, but Pinky has created a world of sorority where one woman's success lifts all families together.

5.13 Discussion

5.13.1 Female reputation versus economic value.

Evans (2022a) argues that societies weigh the value of women within a family as an "honour-income trade-off" that suppresses women's economic participation. One value is as an earnings provider for the family household and the second is as a repository of reputational value for the family. Intangible in nature, honour may be gained or lost based

on a person's social behavior. Those societies, in Evans' theory, which have a marginally increased emphasis on her economic value have seen the agency of women grow over time. In historically patriarchal South Korea (Evans, 2022a), women progressed from a slightly more open scope for physical activity outside of the household to extensive job participation or, potentially, venture creation. Places where the weight is greater on her value as a holder of family honour have seen patriarchal systems stay more intact. Rising economic opportunities in India for example have not translated into significant rises in female economic participation. Honour norms are socially situated in a context with not only a value for the immediate family, but also a value for "preserving male authority vis-à-vis other men in the community, not just within the household" (UN, 2022, p. 128). Female value is thus based on that which advances male fraternal interests. However, it is the interaction between the two values that determines change:

“Female employment only rises if economic returns are sufficiently large to compensate for men’s loss of honour. Otherwise, women remain dependent on patriarchal guardians, vulnerable to abuse and control.”

(Evans, 2022, p. 1).

Societies vary in their geographical and cultural composition. Folklore narratives further embed the positions of women by portraying men as heroes or showing women in heroic roles. Folklore may be one of the vehicles by which norms are intergenerationally transmitted (Michalopoulos & Xue, 2021, p. 4) and so might be predictive of women’s social position today. Gendered folklore narratives, which typically portray women as submissive and men the hero, are a proxy of men's dominance bias in society and underlying gender norms. Indian folklore is at the extreme end of highly patriarchal narratives, roughly similar to Pakistan (Michalopoulos & Xue, 2021, p. 2034). There appear to be linkages between the level of female workforce participation and heroic male tales. Evidence suggests deeply embedded social norms, are replicated through narrative and practice over centuries.

“Male and female respondents from [places with] male-biased oral traditions... comfortable sacrificing women’s labor force participation”

(Michalopoulos & Xue, 2021, p. 2034).

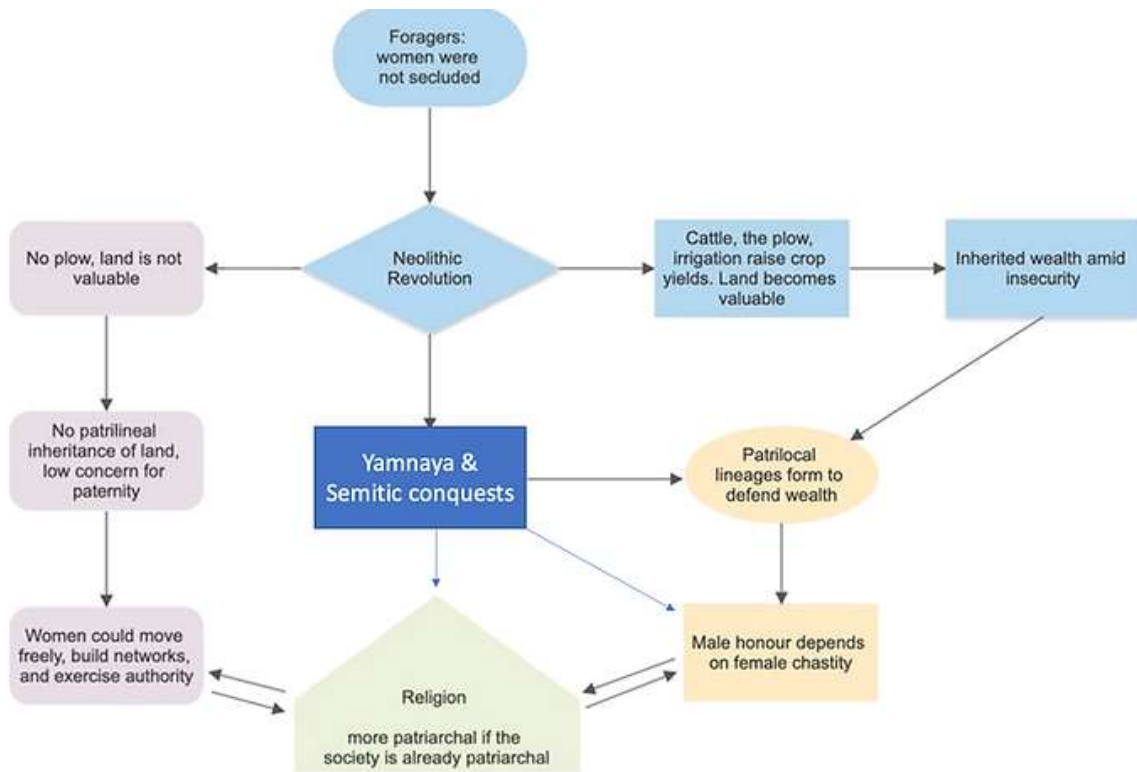


Figure 5.14: (Evans, 2022a “Ten Thousand Years of Patriarchy, p. 2)

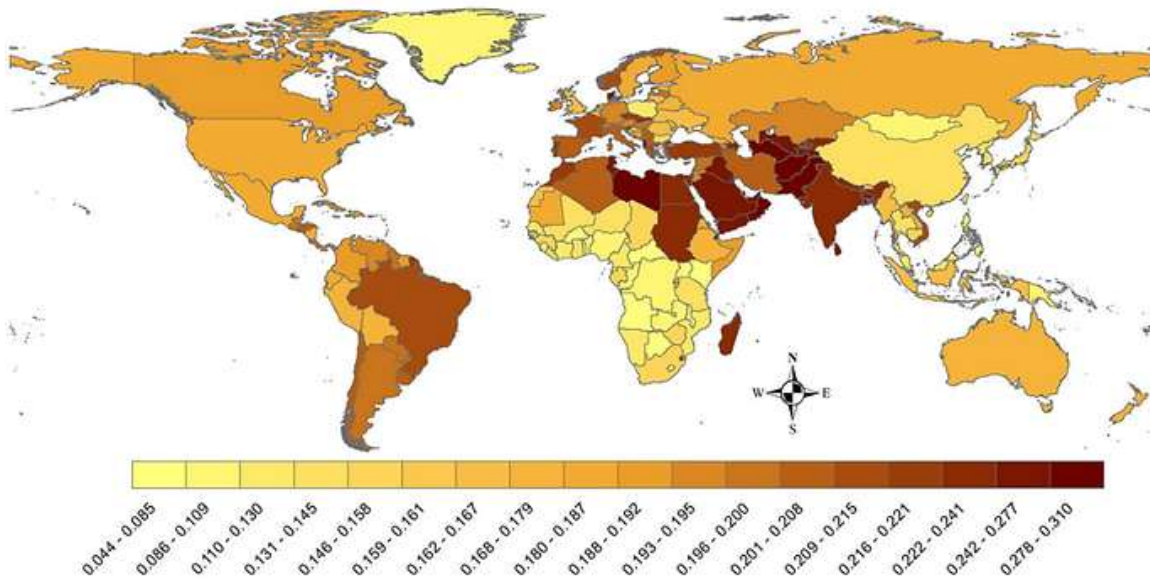


Figure 5.15: Dominance of males in folklore: Michalopoulos & Xue, 2021, p. 2034

British colonialism may have further entrenched these gendered norms in India (Gupta, 2012). When the public male world came under British rule, Hindu men sought alternative power within the private domestic sphere leading to higher control of women and children. Apart from the impact of Covid which encouraged more stay-at-home

employment (Alon et al., 2020), rising wealth in India is not linked to female empowerment. "Gender gaps also show stagnant trends and remain unaffected by decades of sustained economic growth, improvements in female education, and fertility decline" (UN, 20202, p. 107). Gender gaps in India and Pakistan remain greater than in countries with similar per capita GDP (UN, 2022).

For female entrepreneurs, these spatial contexts are places where male honour, supremacy, and segregation of genders are engrained. In patriarchal societies, female seclusion (UN, 2002, p. 109) is the fulcrum of local honour culture with an absence of cross-female activism or ownership of assets. What might shift such norms to increase scope for venture participation and female agency in both the social and economic realms when both appear so stagnant? (Bussolo et al., 2022). The proposed theory of Evans suggests that when economic returns are high enough to compensate for the loss of perceived honour granted to men, then female economic participation will increase. Depending on how women are valued through social exclusion, women will have diverse levels of venture inception when faced with the same economic opportunity. Where there is high economic opportunity, this may overcome seclusion norms as seen in Bangladesh (World Bank, 2022) where the economy produced more jobs proportionally than India and rising female incomes compensated for male loss of honour. Indian women face "a dearth of formal employment reinforcing a vicious cycle of poverty, precarity, familial dependence, jati-endogamy, caste stratification and patriarchy" (Evans, 2022a).

By generating income from home, such opportunities are an interim step that could reduce the honour price of female work since there is less risk attached to reputation. Although this is not yet tested empirically, it is a logical progression. The balance of reputation versus monetary value partially explains why Surprise Someone has been effective at engaging with a hitherto economically inactive female workforce. It also explains why it has brought them into the commercial domain. Being a female-run venture offering stay-at-home working conditions means that the risk of reputational damage is lessened. Economic gains are a net positive for the household without reducing male honour value. These female workers, and Pinky, seem to generate a favourable reputation for honourable activity. Rather than the trade-off being honour versus economic gain, a new integrated esteem is achieved.

The second unlocker of venture participation is female role models (UN, 2022). This demonstrates that the social norm of female social production is not fixed. Both Pinky and her mother are exceptional role models for Indian women. They represent positive female virtues of motherhood and care but expressed as promoting sustainability combined with commercial capability. Pinky's force of personality and savvy spiritual marketing are also highly impactful.

The combination of economic contribution with enhanced, rather than reduced honour, is novel for women. By working within a female-bounded world, their empowerment advances. It also helps circumvent the seemingly intractable and oppressive social norms that inhibit the expansion of female agency.

5.13.2 Synopsis of the Mechanism of Impact

The motive behind the venture's formation is female empowerment. This creates a more sustainable world, both spiritually and materially. Karma is a shared reality where all must face judgment but in an atemporal cycle. Empowerment is financial through a woman contributing to the household economy but also spiritual. Work reveals the internal, divine aspects of each woman leading to a heightened sense of inner worth from co-embedded members of her immediate social group. The overt barrier to female economic activity is underdeveloped skills. Here, simple tasks are tailored to what the woman can do now, and is upskilled on the job, self-improvement encouraged. No woman, on principle, is ineligible from entering Pinky's world due to a skills deficit.

Hidden barriers prevent women from breaching informal social norms. Much of the valorising of the female in a family revolves around her marriageability. Not jeopardizing value on the marriage market is an overwhelming, if understated, concern. The currency of reputational value is strongly present as a non-material influence on decision making in their daily lives. Any action that would adversely affect the social perceptions of women in the eyes of patrilineal families of potential marriage partners is likely to be dampened. A woman's reputation for dignity and competence in her own right, outside of family obligation, is of significant emotional significance to a woman. Pinky and her mother have successfully navigated these norms by having a vision of a better world. They have created a feminized sphere where women can appreciate one another. This is

largely a virtual social-spatial context disconnected from prevailing masculine spaces. She leaves behind a fraternal based world that neither understands nor appreciates her.

The product USP's create a boundary around these new norms and give unity of purpose. The shared values of spiritual energies, and the timeless way they can manifest, unify women along a supply chain and transcend class and caste. The shared narrative broadcast outwards from within that space is of female empowerment through fairly paid employment in rural India. Design excellence, creativity in marketing, and product innovation emanate from inside the boundary to the outside through products and stories that reinforce this. Sustainable nurturing of the planet is by planting trees and female co-creation. Artisanship continues the aesthetic traditions of the place of origin and sustains cotton-paper production and home-based craft skills. Lastly, the USP's include emotions into the end products before they leave the boundaried world to find compatible homes in women who are recipients of their gifts.

5.13.3 *The power of imaginary new worlds*

The literature on entrepreneurship has touched on the idea of imagination and creativity in the development of distinct ventures (Dey & Mason, 2018; Taylor, 2004). Despite this, it has not been conceived as a double creation: a bundled, boundaried social context within which a venture resides. It requires the ability to both conceptualize and externalize a newly created world. This is more of an artistic endeavour than a process of rational planning and recalls Gartner et al.'s (2006) view of entrepreneurship as the science of the imagination (Hjorth et al., 2022). This process is understood to be:

“Expose and problematize the boundaries of collective imagination... transform (cultural) materials/practices and (re)connect, disassemble, and reassemble them. The task is to think of entrepreneurship as an ongoing becoming, shifting from a being to a becoming ontology.”

(Dey & Mason, 2018, p. 193).

Packaging emotional energy is imaginatively applied to create a new bounded institution (Clarke & Holt, 2010), a religious imaginary combined with sustainability and female empowerment. This mirrors Bourdieu (2001):

“Labour of enunciation... to externalize the inwardness, to name the unnamed and to give the beginnings of objectification to pre-verbal and pre-reflexive dispositions and ineffable and unobservable experiences, through words which by their nature make them common and communicable, therefore meaningful and socially sanctioned”

(Bourdieu, 2001, p. 129)

This new socio -contextual “field” (Freidman et al., 2018) is an extended relational process that can reconfigure social spaces. It expands the realm of the possible through a powerful imagination of a future world (Montessori, 2016). In Pinky’s world this is gendered but focused on the power to do, a horizontal egalitarian model rather than a vertical structure of having power over others. This builds on Cassirer (1944) view of social-cultural factors shaping the human consciousness and innovation originating in the imagination of individuals that are relational. This requires an awareness of inner and outer worlds being connected. This is similar to Jungian thinking where integrating the sub-conscious and conscious worlds generates creativity (Jung, 1959; Urs, 2012). This is proximate to the social and spiritual interdependence of shared consciousness and emotions in India. From this, Pinky creates a social world that is inclusive of profit motive but modulated by higher principles. This process is complex and difficult to grasp (Friedman et al., 2018; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). The field is more than its constituent parts. Group-level reality is shared but exceeds the individuals therein (Friedman et al., 2018, p. 243). The parallel would be to consider Karmic rebirth as leaving one energetic connected field and entering another, already connected field. There is a seamless collective consciousness across both fields, and both exist in circular time. From this it is a single imaginative leap to say we can meet there today, exchange energetic blessing, and recognize each other as have a shared divine spark between us, these actions mutually shaping individuals and the energetic shared space. It is entering the land where time forgot to end.

What may define a novel field is a distinct set of meanings around which relations can be formed: “In spatial terms, ‘nothingness’ does not mean an empty space waiting to be filled, but rather the lack of a relationship out of which a field can form” (Friedman et al., 2018, p. 253). The core meaning around which relations coalesce is here the need for mutual recognition as a measure of a woman’s inner worth. This is a powerful unifier as

to be accepted as fully human; a person's identity and community need to be recognized (Kelman, 1973). Women in a world of invisibility beyond their social role long to be accepted just as they are.

This development can be also seen as a form of heterotopia (Foucault, 1967). People reform their conceptualization of themselves compared to historical social norms as participation within the sphere of the venture space as transitional space wherein individuals can (re)form. This is to ask the philosophical question, through forming new relations and absorbing new meanings, what are we doing to ourselves? What are we becoming? This resonates with the Hindu sense of continuous change and transformations through Karmic cycles. It is the view of becoming articulated by Nietzsche: “becoming must be explained without recourse to final intentions... becoming does not aim at a final state, does not flow into being” (Nietzsche in Anderson, 2022). This is the “flow” in the actions of entrepreneuring (Steyaert & Hjorth, 2006) as imagination becomes an entity. Becoming can be extending to be a group effect from the venture. The imaginative process embraces all who touch the venture or the social field it creates. This expands the consideration of reflecting on the ‘critical ontology of ourselves’ (Foucault, 1997). In challenging the world in which gender norms are imagined, a venture may transgress such externally imposed limitations upon self-belief such that gender arrangements may be rearranged. The newly formed space is not determinate of action but allows the women to choose how they include energetic well-being into products, collaborate, exchange gifts and how recipients view and absorb the non-materiality. Free choice within shared beliefs is understood. This fits within the flexible approach of Hinduism where people are free to embrace their belief, choice of God and manner of worship.

Here we have an end product, gifts, through which the non-material exchange is energetic, emotional, and spiritual recognized within a bounded reality. Producers, giver, and receiver all recognize this space as feminised and theirs. The role of metaphysical space as an entrepreneurial context is novel but the idea of spiritual energy and emotional exchange as an externalised rather than individuated experience, is not novel in an Indian context (Urs, 2012). Indian life can be considered a shared experience, one emotional experience shared amongst many. Pinky pursues this further as a supply chain which draws in women. The shared fate of women is her “Karmic balance sheet” orientating

principle. Her acts generate impact for others today combined with spiritual gain for herself later. Her products in parallel amplify this as their purpose is to generate spiritual gain for both giver and receiver.

Products create an imagined world of shared spiritual exchange flowing inside and out, not only do they generate more memorability in the mind of the receiver. They work at a deeper level of perceived spiritual exchange, provoking a sense of enhanced connectedness and depth in relationships. By changing our perception of space, this subverts the patriarchal norms against which women are cast. This:

“Exploits the possibility of changing the social world by changing the representation of this world which contributes to its reality or, more precisely, by counterposing a paradoxical pre-vision, a utopia, a project, a programme, to the ordinary vision which apprehends the social world as a natural world”.

(Bourdieu, 2001, p. 128)

This is a spiritual reality to which people, through exchange or by being part of production, feel they belong.

5.13.4 Values and emotions: binding forces within the new world.

Values hold this created space together as oppositional forces to combat patriarchal norms. These values are primarily female centred and privilege the welfare of female members and families over immediate financial gain for themselves or the business owner. They encompass beliefs in the values of earthly sustainability. The values of mutuality and dignity of exchange are steeped in a collective respect for the divine within us all. This is a tenet of Hinduism, that all actions are weighted by spiritual considerations. Positioning is for the next life, not just this life. Male fraternal groups of Indian business work within long-held practices of mutuality to help both individuals and connected families advance. Such affinities are powerful resource gathering and sharing engines of prosperity with a strong commercial work ethic and risk taking. Pinky's new spatial area has more feminized ethical elements of worker dignity plus all people are considered of intrinsic value as the divine rests within us all.

Circumventing female exclusion from the prevailing commercial structures centred around fraternal capital groups has been the main structural gain from creating this novel social space. This balances the bounded trading zone from which she is excluded. Now, she is bringing women with her. These values and beliefs are further strengthened by shared emotions in which energy and intent are exchanged. This world is felt, not just understood, as a faith-based construct. The literature suggests that collective emotion and sharing work most effectively as a binding force when people are physically proximate: “Emotions...operate most efficiently when the participants with a shared emotion are physically co-present and jointly deal with the shared object of their emotion” (Salmela & Nagatsu, 2017, p. 459). Here, proximate means all the women are local and live under similar cultural constraints so creates plurality, ‘otherness’ and multiplicity (Calás et al., 2009). If people share a place under stress, external events are more likely to elicit convergence and bind them together (Fanny et al., 2019).

Pinky's sharing however is a positive, joyous emotion. Expressing this through social media acts as a magnet that draws people into the field and reminds them that they already belong to a spiritual and cultural sorority. This brings women closer together around hope for sustainability and female empowerment. No external binding or triggering event is required to lead to convergence as a happy place where positive feelings are exchanged and lives enhanced. This accords with Fanny et al. (2019) that emotional content and affective experiences can be a justifying function to align people as to the correct action, the right bilateral exchanges. Broadcasting love and positivity as a shared emotional experience across social media is akin to Pinky setting the emotional tone of the room in which there is approval and affirmation of participants' shared collective practices and beliefs (Salmela & Nagatsu, 2016; 2017).

The question remains: to what purpose are participants aligned emotionally and through their actions? In Fanny et al. (2019), novel institutional forms arose to aid recovery after a disaster and aligned group motivations. Group-level purpose is to create a more sustainable planet with enhanced female empowerment. This collective purpose, complemented by shared spiritual and feminized values, creates a sense of emotional commitment to the field.

The creation of this feminized new space was slightly subversive but more an Indian style “adjustment” to flow around the obstacle of a patriarchal set of norms. Its initial use of

borrowed agency aligns with Wee Chan Au et al. (2018) plus adding cyberspace and spiritual space. Little borrowing was required from paternal agency. It is an exercise of co-creation principles to collaborate with many other women to create a new framework of operation in a new spatial arrangement whilst living in another constrained world. This involves a channelling of outstanding creative capabilities, both in envisioning an entirely different space of play plus venture creation and ongoing product creation. The feminine elements extend beyond using a female family support system and friends in the community with female customers, enterprises, and mentees. Boundary creation is by a shared understanding of values and purpose. It is not an enclave but parallelism with attachments and it is unclear if it has any effect on the fraternal capital system but certainly magnetises aspiring women entrepreneurs.

As an act of low-key creative subversion, this creates a social world containing many new ventures within it. The criteria of Bureau and Zander (2014, p.1) for what constitutes subversion are met. Social change should i) be connected to society; ii) develop novel emotional perceptions and representations; and iii) have a behavioural impact. Rather than overthrowing institutional structures, this endeavour sought to achieve a peaceful, parallel separation. This is the creation of a feminised commercial sphere that sits alongside or above the existing fraternal capital spheres. This is not a shift in power relations (Goss et al., 2011) inside a field but the creation of a new spatial field, a complementary spiritual feminised realm.

Strategic separation of parts of the male world such as the production process cleave onto a feminized world built to promote female empowerment and sustainable principles. In contrast to Dashtipour and Rumens (2018), where anxiety can give rise to subversive new social orders, this female-centric space was sparked by creativity and positivity, not anxiety. There is less subversion and resistance than one may find in artists and entrepreneurs, carving out a space within existing rules (Bureau & Zander, 2014). There is positive motivation for creating a standalone parallel world, akin to Katre's (2018) view of using emotional resources. Joy drives out fear to extend beyond the individual entrepreneur into the product offering, customers, mentees, and staff.

5.13.5 *The epistemology of origin.*

The operating mechanism of the new spatial location is a familiar one of shared faith. It is an adapted Hindu related belief system aligned to the goals of sustainability and female empowerment. It is built upon shared positive energy, recognition of female worth, and inner value. Prosperity beliefs are apparent as a natural outflow of positive thinking. This is shared by the female workers expressing belief in their agency to create something of meaning in the outer world. Religiosity supports this new spatial boundary. It is one familiar to other women and invites you to join her therein. Adopting the ethereal world is the central “borrowed” agency. This is an epistemology of the Karmic realm extended into products. This embeds the venture in a deeper awareness that they are selling spiritual emotions. This is also the epistemology behind the concept of a karmic balance sheet.

Pinky has adopted the borrowed agency of existing digital platforms to escape local market constraints to communicate and sell directly to women. There is a deeper belief of spiritual self-actualisation. Pinky’s actions depend on an ontology of belief, that other realms exist and are accessible as venturing resources for women to use for the benefit of society. It challenges the limitation of beliefs about women and oneself, defying the direction of fit constraints (Kaufman, 2021) of female entrepreneurs. Our beliefs may be partial, conditioned by our values but here they are shown to be a possibility of expansion rather than one of constraint (Kaufman, 2021, p. 562). Certainly, there is evidence that women have the same degree of confidence as men in starting a business (Jennings et al., 2022) suggesting that gendered social structures constrain the rate at which how confidence translates into action.

Taking responsibility for other women and strengthening relationships (Borgerson, 2007) also taps into a source of spiritual renewal (Borgerson, 2007). This expands the theoretical possibilities of entrepreneurial action as an emancipatory pathway for the self and others (Rindova et al., 2009) and transformation in the spiritual and temporal world. This expands some early theoretical considerations of Steyaert (2007, p. 472) of entrepreneurship enabling “contextual embeddedness ...connective assemblage and creative involution as different points of entry into a social ontology”. This sees the emancipatory possibilities in unleashing the feminine social imagination (Dey & Mason, 2018). The gendered exclusion of commerce is transgressed by incorporating entrepreneurship back into the female world of social production. This epitomises the

Schumpeter (1955) vision of capitalism changing class systems, though here it is gender systems. Women progress along the axis of subordination to empowerment (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) leading to enhanced agency through the power of external recognition and earnings contributing to a better life (Shepherd et al., 2020).

Laine and Kibler (2022) asked “why is emancipation needed in entrepreneurship?” They posit that it will lead to social change (Calás et al., 2009; Chandra, 2017; Steyaert & Hjorth, 2006). Yet this is circular answer. Why emancipation and why social change cannot be the answers to each other’s relevance but need to be linked to a deeper epistemology. One such linkage is to Nussbaum’s (2002) view that positive social change is that which develops the full capacity of the individual. Emancipation from constraint and from being under the authority of another could be the underlying basis of evaluating social changes made through entrepreneurship. There is also the question of in what direction is change going, at what pace and against what social model. For example, is it a Western female idea of a life valuing independence or an Indian model of women living within a social and spiritual interdependence. Social change here might be more accepted if it shifts agentic freedom outwards but stays within the bounds of the familial social structures. This would co-opt commercial capabilities back into a female gendered social world. It is a route to localised contextual success rather than a compromise towards Western ideals.

5.13.6 Reconnecting the wider purpose of entrepreneurship as a motor of social change.

Welter et al. (2019) contend that the driver of wealth creation and prosperity are intrinsic in entrepreneurship, but that social purposes of a venture may be less apparent. Pinky uses borrowed agency from Karmic and cyber space to aid female connectivity to her enterprise, other new ventures, and the shared field of Karmic understanding . This is an act of creation but also by force of will. This is her world; her people and their well-being. The point of the venture is the happiness of women, the prospects for their children and a sustainable world with emancipated women.

This exemplifies the view of Calás et al. (2009) of reframing "entrepreneurship as positive economic activity" to "entrepreneurship as social change". This imagines how an entrepreneur can further female emancipation (Rindova et al., 2009) by creative world

making (Clarke & Holt, 2010). Through value-generating incentives for change (Hartman et al., 2006) she extends beyond the criteria of economic rationality (Lundmark et al., 2022). Surprise Someone has shifted the boundaries that separate female social production from economic production. This reunites them in a novel spatial construct that is continually expanding to include more women in India (Dey & Mason, 2018). Sustainability principles are embedded in a model that integrate the socio-cultural values of place (Samier & Eman, 2021).

The history of colonial and Western orientated thinking (Henrich, 2017) being superimposed onto the Global South as models of emancipation or economic development is challenged. A localised Indian perspective is essential. This includes understanding internalised subjugation from the rigid social structures in which women are placed. What do local Indian women want? This may be unclear, but we can start with the concept that entrepreneurship might reveal it. “In the economic sphere, freely roaming entrepreneurs are to supply the latent demands of society “ (Kirzner, 1997; Schumpeter, 1934). When ideally trading as ventures, this leads to wider social development (Schumpeter, 1942, 1955). For women, this has indeed been seen. Demand for the products of Surprise Someone suggests an unmet need for social change as that is their non-material proposition. We can therefore flip Kirzner’s statement the other way round and suppose that just as the material demands might be met through a new venture, so might non-material needs be met by new ventures otherwise they would not succeed. That implies demand for a business with female empowerment and sustainability as its core. It would appear that it is female led, incremental change is the model currently sought. These are modest changes but effective ones for the lives of those concerned.

Is catering to unmet spiritual needs a moral offering of entrepreneurship? The benefit is to extend a shared inner moral or spiritual wellbeing. It is not a Western concept of “moral” (Anderson & Smith, 2007) but as a case study, extends the literature’s concept of moral content. This mimics the ideal of business as “the whole of their moral personalities up to their spiritual ambition” (Schumpeter, 1949, p. 346). Within a venture, an entrepreneur applies spiritual aspects throughout and creates a wider social-spatial field to host it. There is no apparent conflict in the duality of personal and social advancement (Van Gelderen et al., 2019), both material and spiritual. The more women

are at liberty to pursue such ventures, the more social and economic development may follow (Zahra & Wright, 2011).

The combination of the two concepts of demand in society and supply by the entrepreneur, creates the possibility of a complete system within society that may advance spiritual and emotional well-being. Theory privileges economic incentives (Kirzner, 1997; Schumpeter, 1934) yet here within a feminised world we see duality of economic incentives with the generation of collective recognition and empowerment. Agentic growth leads to aggregate empowerment in society. It has been theorised that women may adopt more progressive attitudes (WVS, Welzel, 2002) and so drive change on behalf of other women in collective gain. Women through sorority might use group incentives to advance change on behalf of society. This is an avenue for further research given the extent of patriarchal inertia in many societies. However, we cannot ascribe the role of being agents of political labour to women in service of a wider ideological shift in society. This would unreasonably remove the pressure on men to also take ownership of their part of the change required.

India is a place where obstacles are less confronted than circumvented: people adjust (Hofstede, 2022). Tapping into the understanding of the freedom within rather than the material, enhances social impact by raising self-esteem, female confidence, and social agency. This lateralizes existing social positions but does not shift external hierarchies. It offers a vision of a more sustainable world within the bounds of the conventional (Tobias et al., 2013).

5.13.7 *Dispersed gains model*

As suggested by Whitfield et al. (2021), female entrepreneurs appear to operate on a “distributive gains” basis to encompass gains for family and community. This is opposed to a model of first creating new enterprise wealth and then choosing how it might be distributed to society or retained by oneself. This is echoed here where a lateral network of women co-create a commercial ecosystem separate from the fraternal hierarchical system of men. Both are part of the collective, but each gendered realms has its own axiology. Here we suggest that deeply held spiritual values are a shared Lingua Franca. It is understood that actions have two meanings: business and karmic, the former being subordinate to the latter. As opposed to a heroic solo male building a unicorn venture, we

have a female, leading a collective and dispersing gains to create deep sustainability and shared benefit. From the original idea to the current female employment patterns to the broader inclusiveness of the female world, Pinky is following this model. Her scope of distribution is extensive in both material and non-material forms. More empirical research is required on wealth distribution outcomes from gendered ventures.

5.13.8 *Liberation Theology*

The implicit valuation of inner female worth, of their inner divine spark and as being worth of recognition for themselves, is an incentive to shift oppressive social structures. This echoes the thinking of Gutierrez's (1968) concept of the divine within, the irreducible value of all human life. More recent liberation theological thinking sees change required within the current capitalist economic system and action should focus on the oppressed lives of those on the edge, not to overthrow the system (McGovern, 1990). This is consistent with considering entrepreneurship as a force for social good. This epistemology aligns with the "affirmative foundational" stream of entrepreneurship research (Dey et al., 2022) as entrepreneurs working within the existing economic paradigm to drive social change. This is a flow leading into an invented future. It is "not an 'acceptance of being' but the 'creation of being'" (Hardt, 2002, p. 117). There is a theoretical gap of how conceptualizing inner worth might be used as a unifying force within entrepreneurship to shift groups as either employees, customers, or investors onto a pathway of social change. The conceptual developments in liberation theology are a guide to future research on this point.

5.13.9 *Concepts of empowerment*

By valorising challenges to the hierarchical social order through entrepreneuring, perspectives about within-structure types of empowerments or emancipation are sought. Care is required to observe how power dynamics work, separate to hierarchies, especially when living in a socially conservative context. Critical theory approaches may obscure other forms of social progress. These include the freedom to acquire capital and reputation in a free market, freedom of religious expression, and the freedom to move up or across an existing social hierarchy. These all generate greater female agency. To take an anti-hierarchical position as the default "good" from entrepreneurship requires more nuance. To see "entrepreneurship as part of a wider, ideologically determined context of

action” (Laine & Kibler, 2022) is an aspiration that faces additional resistance in places of severely entrenched social practices. Paths beyond political ideology are required to circumvent such structures to advance female agency. Interaction with scholars in political science and feminist theory may expand our consideration of routes to emancipation that are valued by women within their socio-spatial context. This builds upon Marlow (2020): we need an expanded understanding of how entrepreneurship aids women. It cannot be assumed that adding a venture into her life will be an unadulterated benefit to her agency or wellbeing (Kibler et al., 2019). Engaging with scholars in social anthropology to provide understanding of localised mechanisms (Dimov, 2018; Lundmark et al., 2019) would expand the epistemology of freedom in the Global South. Collaborating on heterogeneous empirical studies in different spatial contexts (Welter & Baker, 2020) may advance entrepreneurship theory. This would aid understanding of the gendered challenge of women face balancing both spheres of social and economic production.

5.13.10 Concepts of time

How does time work in this venture space? It lacks a linear arc as it extends from current time to the atemporal space of spiritual dimensions. In Hinduism, this means influences upon today spread backwards as well as forwards in a fluid understanding of collective existence. When spirituality is embedded within, it is absorbed by the gift recipient in a zone beyond linear time. This is akin to an air bubble of positive intentionality wafting through space from one time and place of origination to the end time and place of consumption. It expands across dimensions as a spiritual gift. The impact of the sharing of love and positive intent is also contingent upon the unknown interactions with other karmic influences in their lives. The focus on sustainability is circular rather than linear as seeds are planted that in turn produce flowers, then more seeds, as life expands on earth. Planting a Surprise Someone seed-embedded product is a way of enhancing that circularity.

Welter & Baker (2020) commented on time being another dimension of place that warrants investigation as the literature mainly sees entrepreneurs thinking in the mind of enacting the future (Dimov, 2018; Spinosa et al., 1997). The projection of what might be in the future as a basis of a new venture (Hjorth et al., 2022) rarely taps into borrowing that which is already there or by seeing time as mutable. This can be seen be ‘powered

by connecting with other desires to increase the productive capacity’ (Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004, p. 228). The desire to expand into ethereal time and connect to the internal desires of women is a novel ambition. It is not alien within an Indian context but is novel as a venturing resource. Karmic or circular spiritual time would add a third temporal frame as a contextual condition to that of world time and human time (Johnsen & Holt, 2021.) This still implies a shift from inferior past to superior future (Calás et al., 2009; Rindova et al., 2009) in both material and non-material ways and over an ancient concept of time. This finding of expansionary, nonlinear, circular time pervades Eastern thinking yet is absent from considering time within entrepreneurship research (Lévesque & Stephan, 2020). There is also a deeper question of how sacrifice today to generate future spiritual gain may be atemporal delayed gratification. Less material profit today to achieve greater non-material gain in the next life or potentially Karmic returns in this life. Such considerations are a new angle of research exploration.

5.14 Conclusion

‘The line of flight is a deterritorialization.’

(Deleuze and Parnet, 1987, p. 36)

Much of the impact of Surprise Someone is to challenge existing, seemingly immovable delineations of gender roles in Indian society. Pinky has moved the line separating gendered spheres of male commercial production and female social production to include the former into the latter. The line separating the sacred and the profane has collapsed to create a new bounded socio-spatial context of both commercial and spiritual advancement. The scope for sustainable production has been extended to include both greater waste cotton recycling and reduced demand for wood derived paper. The boundary line of reputationally acceptable activity for a woman at home with children has been expanded. A heightened perceived worth has expanded scope for wider personal agency. The boundary line around the spiritual world had brought in numerous ventures as a borrowed space. This expansion allows access to an atemporal, spatially agnostic concept that is accessible and understandable by Indian women. All of this has been done without the deterritorialization of the male sphere nor changing the structure of fraternal capital that dominates the commercial space of Indian society. Surprise Someone is a venture that is an exemplar of expanding space with “becoming,” unfolding within newly

conceived spatial boundaries. This is both at a literal level of creating a venture in the space of possibility as well as the metaphorical sense of enabling the expansion of female agency. Both are “becoming” more than they were and their inner worth being seen by others within their own social spatial context.

Given that religious expression in Hinduism can combine commercial activities as a route to personal improvement, the critical theory view of capitalism as having deleterious effects upon society is problematic. It assumes a predominantly Western perspective rather than considering how markets can be repurposed locally as a collective good. The “enemy” is less the economics than the social norms that determine both economics and gendered social structures. Social norms are the horse in front of the economic cart. This case study suggests not that an alternative economic system would be preferable, but that female commercial success is a pathway to female poverty alleviation and spiritual expansion. Hegemonies also include hegemony of thought and adding in wider interdisciplinary approaches from theology, or a wider political lens would enhance the scholarship on social-spatial entrepreneurship. Heterodoxy may allow policy solutions around female entrepreneurship to be developed that do not primarily rest on critiquing neo-liberalism. Broader theories are required to suggest how women may acquire positive expansion of their social worth as producers of both economic and reputational value. Given that economic expansion (Ourworldindata, 2022) is a primary and sustained driver of economic improvement for impoverished women in India, caution should be taken before privileging a Western-conceived political dialectic onto Indian women when it may limit, rather than extend, their social and economic betterment.

If politicisation is reduced, subversive imaginings might be heightened. The power to conceive of a better world leads to the generation of remarkable art as an expression of what might be, of social movements, of subversive acts to chip away at what feels immovable conditions. But it can also take the form of a new enterprise that is not a social venture but a way of bringing commercial power to shifting societal conditions. This is to work with, rather than against society to create a newly imagined business and societal model.

Imagining how things might be, creating a vision of a new entity is essential to envisioning the future. The purpose of spiritual “borrowing” is to cleave onto and into the spirit world. It is an escape from patriarchal networks of place and consistent with a

spiritual world view. Payoffs are dispersed across the next life and beyond the existing temporal existence. It escapes the literal bounds of place to reconfigure values and actions on a metaphysical plane. This reengages and empowers through enhanced social agency. By internal expansion and recognition of the light within, women escape literal bounds and enter the spectral realm to then return more empowered.

Against the dominance of fraternal capital, spiritual sorority may circumvent the patriarchal constraints to venturing for women in India. This research proposes that there are different motivations driving the fraternal versus the sorority groups. The goal of Pinky and her mother is to carry women and their children along as beneficiaries, both materially and reputationally. The goal of fraternal groups is to support members as a collective mechanism to then support women and families. Women are seeking to include economic production alongside social production, but their wider goals are aligned. Both men and women see the furtherance of family and family linked relationships in a social – economic context world where group affinity combats the precarity of state institutions. The literature on venturing in India is dominated by the male experience but omits the collective male purpose of Dharma, of family and kin responsibilities towards the future. By throwing light on female purpose and mechanism of empowerment this shows the corollary. By advancing family business interests, the two gendered spheres might successfully cross over, aligned on the goals of creating better futures for their children and the society in which they will inhabit.

The combination of enhanced household income, increased reputation and working within a gendered socio-spatial context drives forward both female empowerment and emotional well-being. This active exploration of circumventing norms is in contrast to the risk of norm blindness (UN, 2022) by researchers and policy makers. This may offer an avenue for policy making that successfully circumvents the hidden social barriers women face without also causing familial conflict. Sorority is an effective balance to fraternal capital.

5.14.1 Contributions to the literature.

This study makes significant contributions to empirical and theoretical gaps in the literature. The research answers the call by Welter & Baker (2020) for a widening of empirical research examples in heterogenous locations, particularly the liminal (Dodd et

al., 2021) and Global South (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). The findings of empirical practice include finding that role models, particularly when advancing shared beliefs, are a binding force and attractor. These can be highly effective at encouraging entrepreneurial activity by women within a patriarchal social context. Co-creation as a practice is a powerful unlocker of employee and client attraction when aligned with other collective and collaborative values. Social interdependence is not only what is seen as observed social practices but might also contain hidden forms of exchange, including reputation and reciprocal energetic blessings. The importance of a distinctive and authentic USP, notably that people will remember you for longer and with emotion can attract customers and supporters to a business beyond being a market differentiator.

The findings on theoretical considerations include the role of reputation as a hidden barrier to female venture participation and as a facilitator of participation supporting Evans (2022a). The effect of social recognition of women working in alignment with social production roles leads to enhanced empowerment through social agency within existing family structures. The introduction of sanctified space as a social spatial shared space of understanding is a novel addition to possible entrepreneurial resources. There is an observed sharing of values with female understanding of love of others and love of the world. This extends beyond physical sustainability measures and so deepens the theory of how values of place may function as orientating principles for ventures. Findings add to the literature claiming creativity is the font of entrepreneurial skill (Hjorth & Holt, 2016).

5.14.2 Contributions to the direction of Entrepreneurship Literature

This study further confirms the ontological framework proposed by Dey et al. (2022) in their proposed typology of research studies. Fitting within their “affirmative foundations” quartile, this study confirms that a phenomenon can be ephemeral and partial, as well as fundamentally ambivalent and contested. It meets their call to look beyond the limits of existing knowledge and to unlock the ever-present possibility of reinventing what we already know. The application of visual anthropology methods can help elicit a deeper symbolic and contextual understanding of place enhances the extraction of meaningful coding from transcript material. The concept of “borrowed agency” in female entrepreneurship is advanced, building on the work of Wee Chan Au et al. (2018). Lastly,

this study concurs with the view of Sperber & Linder (2019) that entrepreneurial research needs to better explore start-up strategies as a gender-specific expression.

CHAPTER 6

**LIBERTY MATTERS: A REFLECTION ON THE
CURRENT LITERATURE OF THE ROLE OF
ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN ADVANCING FEMALE
EMANCIPATION.**

Chapter 6

Liberty Matters: A reflection on the current literature of the role of entrepreneurship in advancing female emancipation.

“The idea at the core of the push towards women's global entrepreneurship is that this business form can operate outside the constraints imposed by customary patriarchy. It can transcend the limits of infrastructural support, giving women agency, and the income to meet, especially, the needs of children. The notion is fundamentally subversive but also perhaps naïve.”

(Scott et al., 2012, p. 564).

6.1 Purpose

The purpose of this literature review is to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the current view on the potential for advancing emancipation through female entrepreneurship. In addition, the review examines the degree to which the emancipatory vision of Rindova et al. (2009) has been realised. Clarity as to the terminology is explored. This seeks to understand not only the current state of scholarly knowledge and its antecedents, but where there are points of ambiguity, debate, and theoretical gaps. Literature exploring the mechanism of social empowerment is further reviewed as a source of novel points of enquiry and clarification. The contextualisation of female emancipation within the wider literature on socially embedded entrepreneurship is given. This leads to proposals as to areas for further research. This review also lightly touches on some of the fields underlying its theorisation such as international development, feminist theory, and social theory. Reframing or redefining will not change the reality of the female entrepreneur, but a proposed pathway is given for further research to break some of the social constraints upon their agency. Such knowledge may better unlock women's collective potential, both to entrepreneur and to be free.

6.2 The conundrum around emancipation

Rindova et al. (2009) set out a call for scholars to extend their view of entrepreneurship from being an economic driver of wealth creation to being an emancipatory act of social change creation. A similar call was made Calás et al. (2009) to invert our focus “from entrepreneurship as an economic activity with possible social change outcomes to entrepreneurship as a social change activity with a variety of possible outcomes?” (Calás et al., 2009, p. 553). Feminism and female entrepreneurship were therefore also a possible vehicle for wider activism (Calás & Smircich, 2014) with the potential to contribute to political and social change (Bell et al., 2019; Nelson, 2020). There is a central conundrum in the vision: how do we know if it is working? The wider the degree of gender equality, as enshrined in its laws within the nation, the higher the rate of female entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2022). Yet, social changes that contribute to women's entrepreneurship may be linked to wider changes in societal norms and then to changes in legal structures and institutional structures. Female entrepreneurship might be a lag indicator benefitting from prior social advancements rather than a primary force for change. To what degree is entrepreneurship contributing to expanded female agency or benefitting from it?

Within the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 5 has become the global policy framework for gender equality. It seeks to increase access to financial assets, political representation, and career opportunities for women. The World Bank (2002) provides a country-by-country “Women, Business & Law” report (World Bank, 2022) on measures that advance female entrepreneurship, adding country comparisons to the debate. This global policy framework has become a guide to national policy for the social advancement for women. The UN’s alignment with other supranational institutions such as the World Bank puts subtle pressure on governments to adopt these measures and ensure monitoring for compliance by international NGOs. Governments are monitored to assess the match between their stated commitment to female empowerment and equality with their legislative enactments. Even with significant and supportive changes in national, formal institutional norms, female entrepreneurs can struggle to emerge. Progressive laws do not mean that rates of entrepreneurship change within the location nor that their social benefits are felt. The World Bank (2022) has recently concluded that international policy development regarding women has been norms-blind. That which is difficult, organic, and deeply embedded has been ignored, perhaps by fear that being of

challenging of repressive norms would be seen as being culturally insensitive. Changing legal frameworks is essential but insufficient. Without understanding the informal norms per context, inertia may reign in rates of female entrepreneurship and labour force participation.

6.3 Financial versus social value risks and returns.

Policy makers are advocating female entrepreneurship as a means to alleviate entrenched poverty (Bruton et al., 2013; Hechavarria et al., 2019). It may offer a route to modernise the economy through sectoral diversification (Bandiera et al., 2022) as women conceive of and develop diverse types of businesses. Economic growth, political utility, and international reputational are resulting gains for governments. By encouraging women to venture, gains from their actions should include a broadening of the social and economic fabric of society (Henry et al., 2017). But the question remains: does this enhance women? Does entrepreneurship increase female agency or are they an instrument of use by governments for economic development in the absence of other poverty alleviation measures? Who is considering their emancipatory potential? Or is this even desired?

Informal norms remain the barrier to expansion of agency (World Bank (2022)). Entrepreneurship scholarship is limited on how informal social norms may enable or constrain women in specific socio-spatial contexts. There is limited clarity as to a pathway (Akinyemi & Ojah, 2018) from female entrepreneurship to changes in that society's informal norms and beyond this, the impact upon formal legislative norms. Benefits from female entrepreneurship accruing to the economy (Duflo, 2015) are acknowledged and the individual benefits persist (Anyansi-Archibong, 2021). The incentives for more female participation are often in place (Berger & Soubaya, 2019). The question remains: are there latent barriers to women that arise when they consider entrepreneurship or enact it? Perhaps we should ask less what they have to gain but what might they have to lose? What informal norms need to be crossed and how aware are researchers of them? What fears remain unsaid that may have a disproportionate influence on women compared to men in suppressing any desire to "entreprendre"? Observing the woman in the context of her family, community, and society may reveal this. Appreciating the social roles she plays within those contexts is to ask questions she may ask herself. What might be disrupted in those social arrangements? What would be an inhibiting factor? What will people think? There is also a darker reflection. Might

there indeed be additional agentic gains for women starting businesses and it is this very expansion of freedoms that others resist? Who else perceives a gain or loss from her entrepreneurship? We would need to explore how such integrated social concerns are weighted beyond financial considerations.

6.4 Evidence of agentic expansion

What difference does female entrepreneurship, once unleashed, make to the women concerned? To the empowerment of other women and to society? What specific personal or social changes do we envisage? To generate and create a new business requires a degree of latitude working within contextual social norms and laws. To reach beyond those norms is an act of agentic will. You must impose your vision onto the world to reshape a trading context through your arrival. This is similar to the legal concept of "condition precedent". This is to be subject to certain norms or conditions before an action can be taken. Here this is the fertility of cultural and social norms that enable female entrepreneurship. That is distinct from what flourishes, economically and socially, in favourable conditions or for men. This does acknowledge:

*“The value freedom has in virtue of being a necessary condition
for a person’s agency.”*

(Binder, 2019, p. 3).

Baughn et al. (2006) were originally optimistic as to the potential for female entrepreneurship to advance independence as her different social roles coalesced around entrepreneurship. Given the variety of contexts, there are a range of findings, but one overview (Datta & Gailey, 2012) indicates empowerment has been a positive impact of entrepreneurship as observed in “economic security, self-identity, challenging gender inequalities and patriarchal norms”. Pettersson et al., (2017) is a reminder of the highly socially modulated manner in which a woman expresses her limited agency in female entrepreneurship. She may be inhibited in her entrepreneurship endeavours, contending with harsh counteractions with even more personal constraints placed upon her. Ojediran and Anderson (2020) provide a sobering assessment of the current limitations of female entrepreneurship, particularly in the Global South. They explore emancipation and identify highlighting that social norms do expand, generating improved financial

independence and personal autonomy for women. There are other less sanguine perspectives of the immense barriers to emancipation in women's daily lives (Bastian et al., 2019; Thapa Karki & Xheneti, 2018).

A missing perspective is one of degree. Agency is not binary, on or off, but a gradation of influence from dominance to full autonomy and across many aspects. It is "restricted agency" (Anderson & Ojediran, 2020) but one could add "gradients of agency". Women see small incremental gains made within a tight set of informal social norms.

In reframing "entrepreneurship as positive economic activity" to "entrepreneurship as social change." (Calás et al., 2009) the conundrum multiplies. Observing that financial gains are not necessarily persuasive to gather support for wider female entrepreneurship then why is that so? Is it because the corollary possibility of her resulting social change is resisted by the women's social context? Her gain in freedom is exactly what informal norms social are containing. Bentham in 1843 articulated just this resistance when looking at the concept of freedom as being the more robust and emancipatory standard of an absence of domination. He foresaw that encouraging fuller female liberation rather than the thinner freedom from interference (Pettit, 2016) would upend social arrangements between men and women. Advancing a social gender balance by giving freedom to women within their marriages was an apparent "provocation" too far (in the eyes of the 18th C male law maker). This would be: "unattainable in experience, inflame expectations that can never be gratified, and disturb the public content with complaints, which no wisdom or benevolence of government can remove" (Bentham, 1843). Might similar concerns be brewing in societies resisting giving women fuller liberty to step away from needing family and male permission to act?

6.5 The feminist gaze.

A feminist perspective on social resistance would be to explore a shift from a realist ontology to the notion of opportunity. It is discoverable with a possible plurality of its ontological status (Calás et al., 2009) to a more organic, relativist, co-created, socially mediated construction (Dodd et al., 2021). This creative and transformative power may be seen as an overt assertion and expression of feminine power in an androcentric world (Welter et al., 2018). Female empowerment does indeed undermine traditional patriarchal power structures (Beard, 2018, p. 59). "The constitution, development, critique and

application of knowledge is profoundly gendered” (Yousafzai et al., 2019, p. 168). The feminist stance must therefore be a “gendered until proven otherwise” perspective. This is in keeping with the feminist post-structuralist approach of feminist philosopher Kaufmann (2021) and Marlow and McAdam (2013) to help “unravel the complex web of intertwined socio-economic and politically framed realities constructed by gendered institutions” (Yousafzai et al., 2019, p. 168).

The literature cites Rindova et al. (2009) exploring female emancipation from participation in entrepreneurship and envisages emancipation across a mix of aspiration, theory, and practice. The idea of enhanced independence is predominantly seen as financial freedom (Duflo, 2015) or autonomy from male influence (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018). Aspirations towards greater social justice (Chandra, 2017) are sought but there is scepticism as to its possibility (Ahl & Marlow, 2020). Alkhaled and Berglund (2018) conceptualize a possible pathway leading from subordination towards gains adding up to collective emancipatory impact. However, the history of feminist social movements (Brown, 1997) is driven by collective women also acting together with allied men. A pathway of progress around atomised women, rather than collective action preceding it, would be historically anomalous. Emancipation through entrepreneurship theory would benefit from integrating an understanding how other historically constraining social norms shifted. Putting the onus on individual women to shift themselves and society through entrepreneurship is both ahistorical as a strategy for social change and exploitative of her position and need for greater financial security.

New theories about the norms determining freedom and emancipation (Binder, 2019) could broaden similar understanding within female entrepreneurship. A new pluralism could be adopted in considering pathways to emancipation, but this requires novel research to establish clearer delineations between the normative preconditions and the economic and social effects of female entrepreneurship. Emancipation has been interpreted as independence or social justice and implies that female entrepreneurs partake in social activism in moving others forward. The literature is unclear if this is what women seek for themselves or other women in socially interdependent contexts. Are we, as per Hughes et al. (2012) acting as “women's entrepreneurship scholars (inadvertently) privileged certain research questions while silencing others” but under investigating social integration rather than separation through entrepreneurship? Such a

perspective would invite different questions about "freedom" based on what participants revealed to be their embedded choices. Am I free to choose? Or do I wish for more choices? What norms prevent either? Is independence from being under another's influence, if so, whom? In seeking to move women from empowerment to group emancipation, are researchers placing too high a burden upon them? They may be other routes besides activism such as being a role model, or the hiring of other women. Placing "political labour" upon the female entrepreneur may unwittingly take away some of her personal agency by channelling her into acting as a conduit for the wider political objective of women as a collective and so reducing her level of individual autonomy in other social contexts. There seems to be an implicit "payback" assumed that she must dig deep for other women through a form of collective action that leads to group emancipation (Rindova et al., 2009). A socially responsible individual is one who helps others (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020) but is this also an extension of the female gender normative trope of a "good woman", the one who cares for others? Are women researchers inadvertently reinforcing certain norms of female behaviour of cooperation rather than the more androcentric norms of individual competition? We should consider whether placing this obligation upon her, particularly in conservative patriarchal societies, is how to lift women. It will be a very context-specific obligation. Evidence either way is sought from the existing literature to inform this point. Women might also share their newfound influence in other ways. There are papers such as Datta and Gailey (2012) in India or Scott et al. (2012) in South Africa which are more specifically exploring the sharing and development of skills through entrepreneurship that can be applied to other personal challenges. Skills diffusion is a narrower interpretation of emancipation but does indicate how empowerment is amplified beyond the original individual. This may, or may not, require additional politicisation to extend to others – the evidence is scant either way.

6.6 Empowerment through economic advancement

There is now recognition of the positive role that female entrepreneurship plays in advancing economic growth as first set out by Ahl (2004) and Duflo (2012) with further impact on economic diversification (Bandiera et al., 2022). Economic empowerment is still considered by policy makers as the primary benefit. As women generate more financial power, they become a larger contributor to the family coffers and have more

scope as a consumers and providers. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG, 2022) have identified monetary gains as a direct form of female empowerment plus a means of alleviating global poverty (World Bank, 2022). Economic advancement for individuals (Ramadani et al., 2013) extends to national betterment (Brush & Cooper, 2012) as well as their social advancement (Bullough et al., 2022; Calás et al., 2009). There is also significant scope for further expansion of economic growth worldwide from generating higher levels of female emancipation (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020) but again it appears agency conditions precede venturing rates rather than venturing changing social conditions that shape local scope for female agency. The agency horse is before the venturing cart, as it were.

Empowerment as expanded social agency is less developed but implicit within the UNSDG's. The goal of fundamental gender equality is: "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, [and] in the equal rights of men and women." (United Nations Charter, 1945). The closest to a UN position on the freedom to be entrepreneurial, as opposed to the freedom that may emerge from female entrepreneurship, is within UNSDG Goal 5:

5.A Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

Freedom for women generated from female entrepreneurship may seem abstract but lifting levels of education, health, and opportunities for venture creation as locally generating finds for development aid are concrete steps to better, more empowered lives for all citizens. Development professionals see female entrepreneurship among the impoverished as a socially sustainable escape to their poverty (Bruton et al., 2013). Microfinance initiatives (Berguiga & Adair, 2021; Grameen Bank, 2022) through female entrepreneurship skills development.

Taking a centuries long view, one could argue it was ever thus. That the lift from poverty of populations around the world was from the emergence of trade and small-scale commerce at a local level (McCloskey, 2016). This was not exclusively male. Female entrepreneurship was notable in several countries around the North Atlantic (Pye, 2015)

but so too were preceding egalitarian conditions (World Bank, 2022). Again, the conundrum is to ask if emancipatory conditions precede or follow the rise of female entrepreneurship. This debate continues. The trajectory of UNSDG's policy remains to lift the rate of participation in female entrepreneurship. There is growing recognition that impediments to empowerment remain structural inequalities such as unequal legal protections and unfair social norms (Nanda et al., 2020).

There are longstanding gaps in the rate of both female labour force participation (FLFP) and female entrepreneurship and although they should not be conflated there are similar social factors inhibiting economic participation. Evans' (2020) considers the tensions between the role of women as an economic asset for the family compared to an asset as a repository of family honour. The nexus of female entrepreneurship and home-based employment lead to tensions in breaking cultural norms when women leave home to work in the public sphere. Information technology has had some "emancipating" effect in this regard, widening the "at home" income and venturing opportunities beyond those of the past (Martinez Dy et al., 2018). These benefits are contested (McAdam et al., 2020). This congruence around home, venturing and the role of economic and social value creator within a family is a uniquely gynocentric tension with limited exploration within the literature. One research direction might be to enquire if enhanced social reputation from entrepreneurship (Kalden et al., 2017) translates into greater empowerment for women in other social domains. In the alternative, fear of reputational impact might be a constraining factor.

6.7 Global South and the Global North

Although overall rates of female entrepreneurship are growing around the world, there remains a gap in the levels of female entrepreneurship in developed versus underdeveloped contexts (GEM, 2021/22), and in technology ventures (NASSCOM, 2018; Piva & Rovelli, 2021). In most locations, women lag men in start-up rates (GEM, 2022). Women are 30% less likely to start an early-stage business than men (Dheer et al., 2019) and lower female participation rates prevail (Di Paola, 2021; Strawser et al., 2021). There are wide-ranging intercountry differences making universal assumptions problematic: the USA in 2020 has reached near gender parity in start-up rates and countries such as Kenya and India show significant jumps in female entrepreneurship (GEM, 2022) post-Covid. Women's labour force participation also lags male rates in most

countries (World Bank, 2022). The assertion that it is informal norms rather than formal institutional structures, which function as the preeminent constraint upon female entrepreneurship has force. The three predominant factors predicting the rate of venture participation have normative underpinnings: the country's position within the human development index, the Gender Inequality Index, plus the national religious composition (Maniyalath & Narendran, 2016).

The prevailing structure of most developed or developing economies is not dominated by large companies, rather there is a preponderance of SME's. The SME sector contributes 56% of the EU's GDP (Statista, 2022), the less glamorous but foundational part of the economy and a major engine of growth. Further, in a field where social and spatial context are understood to be integral to understanding female entrepreneurship (Baker & Welter, 2020), there are few cross-comparative country studies around an incisive place-based theme. The formative paper by Alkhaled and Berglund (2018) is an exception by comparing experiences in Sweden and Saudi Arabia.

Female entrepreneurship rises in tandem with male enterprise (Baughn et al., 2006). Greater equality between men and women in the law, as expressed by the *Women, Business, and the Law* index, also lifts the share of female entrepreneurs (World Bank 2022, p. 12). There is a higher probability that ventures in the informal sector will be started in contexts of more discriminatory law (ibid p. 12). For women, the reification of social norms into principles of equality enshrined in laws (Pirie, 2021), leads to economy-wide gains and better measures of social welfare (Goldberg & Chiplunkar, 2021). Gender constraints determining female entrepreneurship are not solely attitudinal and informal but resolve into institutional structures. What appears to assist female entrepreneurship is to sit within contexts which have a higher rate of entrepreneurship to begin with as the wider contextual ecosystem lifts the enterprise activities of women as well as men. This in sailing parlance is to benefit from a following wind (Baughn et al., 2006; Strawser et al., 2021).

The literature is clear that economic benefits flow both to the entrepreneur, her family and to society. Non-financial aspects of emancipation are present in the literature but less insight on how a woman is valued by her own family and the wider society in which they are situated. It is also unclear how she values herself. A research question for female entrepreneurship is how participation amplifies or challenges her perceived reputational

value. A woman is both subject to her contextual social norms and must navigate norms within the context of how she is seen. This reputational aspect requires a less androcentric lens to understand, even empathise with, the life she is living. This is touched on tangentially in Maniyalath and Narendran (2016) and Xheneti et al. (2019). There are shifts in perceived status inside and outside of the family from the incremental income derived from entrepreneurship coming into the family. “Being engaged in business activities improved women’s value vis-a-vis male member of the household the opportunity to change hostile attitudes towards them from husbands, parents-in-law, and the wider community” (Xheneti et al., 2019, p. 271). This aspect of reputation management by women has not been explored as a formative influence to unlock female empowerment.

6.8 How Academic Literature Embraces Female Entrepreneurship and Emancipation

The gender participation gap in entrepreneurship is theorized as a function of social constructionism, specifically socialisation (Shahriar, 2018). Entrepreneurship is considered a gender defined area of human activity (Jennings & Brush, 2013). The act of creation, development and operation of an enterprise requires interaction with wider cultural structures and existing gender norms so it both affects and is affected by this context (Hechavarría & Ingram, 2018). Prior social expectations will frame opportunities seen and taken by female entrepreneurship (Elam & Terjesen, 2010) as these vary by place. There are also differences in the rate and manner of female entrepreneurship with a notable divide between patrilineal and matrilineal societies (Shahriar, 2018).

In the entrepreneurship literature, women are still underrepresented in the field with 6% of studies regarding female entrepreneurship (Brush et al., 2009). This is notwithstanding that female owned firms in either the formal or informal sectors, make up to one third or more of enterprises worldwide (Coughlin & Thomas, 2002). Theory generation is primarily from developed countries (Acs et al., 2011) with a call to study more developing world contexts (Hechavarria et al., 2019). Such a narrow focus upon the male experience in Western countries means a scholarly blindness to novel contexts where female entrepreneurship may successfully emerge into the market (Deng et al., 2021; Welsh & Kaciak, 2018; Wu et al., 2019).

Further, there is still an over-valorisation of the search for the “Big One,” a Moby Dick (Melville, 1851) search for big venture beasts in the open sea. These are the mythical unicorn ventures that fit the narrative of the androcentric hero fighting an epic challenge against the odds (Campbell, 1959). Hence, the female experience is often underrepresented compared to the male experience (Henry et al., 2016). It minimises pre-existing gendered differences in contexts, rights, responsibilities, and constraints (Cunningham & McAdam, 2021). The prior assumption is the female entrepreneurship experience as an adjunct. Women are seen as the “other” (Lockyer et al., 2018, p. 231), different from the androcentric norm (Birkner et al., 2018). The differences between genders in entrepreneurship have been explored (Barrachina Fernández et al., 2021) considering the interrelationship between three aspects: gender, context, and her unique experiences (Lockyer et al., 2018; Minniti & Naudé, 2010). Scholars amplify the awareness of the female entrepreneur as a separate phenomenon (Calás et al., 2009; Henry et al., 2016; Kogut & Mejri, 2021) but there remains as sense, in the words of Rex Harrison of “why can’t a woman be more like a man” (My Fair Lady, Loewe, 1964).

A more invidious consequence of the portrayal of “underperformance” of female participation and success in entrepreneurship is the conflation of difference to the male norm equating to failure of the female. This ascribed gender weakness as causal to differential outputs in growth (Marlow & McAdam, 2013) rather than institutional reasons or other constraints upon her entrepreneurial potential. She may also choose different destination points based on an alternative feminine axiology (Huq et al., 2020; Kaufmann, 2021). Less visibility is given to the different option set she may have compared to a man, leading to an expression of choice from the alternative consideration set in her hand (Lockyer et al., 2018). This may lead to a venture emerging from the contextual opportunities and constraints uniquely available to her (Henry et al., 2016; Welter et al., 2018). Women are also reliant on a separate entrepreneurial ecosystem to their male counterparts (Brush et al., 2018). The challenge tonally in the literature exploring emancipation is to not identify the women as disempowered, weaker, or less capable but as just different. The necessity entrepreneur (Neegaard & Carlsen, 2021) working at the margins of society is no less of an entrepreneur than one who had the choice to venture or not. Both build from where they stand. There should be resolute challenge to assumptions that women are less entrepreneurial. They are driven by urgent circumstances, often pertaining to the need to support a family (Gavigan et al., 2021;

Welter et al., 2019) They also have more limited choices for employment (Ionescu-Somers & Sampaio, 2022; Marlow, 1997).

The contribution of Marlow (2020) and colleagues (Ahl & Marlow, 2012) has been formative to challenging and expanding assumptions that derive from an androcentric stance. Their gender-aware perspective calls for better integration of the female experience (Nelson, 2020). This has built upon feminist scholars understanding the experiences of minorities and women (Calás et al., 2009; Henry et al., 2016) and how this varies per country (Birkner et al., 2018). Interpretivist epistemologies are suggested to complement the preponderance of positivist approaches (Chatterjee et al., 2019; Cullen, 2020). Welter (2019: et al., 2018, 2011) and Dodd et al. (2013) place the female experience in her wider context with entrepreneurship as a socially mediated process (Berger & Soubaya, 2019; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). This considers space, place (Korsgaard et al., 2015; McKeever et al., 2015) culture, and other contextualising and sensitizing factors, including that of the reflexive researcher (Baker & Welter, 202). This turn towards the socially embedded dimension has enriched the field of female entrepreneurship by seeing how “context becomes part of the story” (Zahra & Wright, 2011, p. 72). This charts how female entrepreneurs navigate location, gender stereotypes and cultural norms through the act of venturing (Kamuhuza et al., 2022; Santos et al., 2018). Entrepreneurship can be considered as “socially embedded and must be recognized as a social process with economic outcomes” (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). There is now a wider call to see how spatial context also affects her agency (Dodd et al., 2013) as an entrepreneur (Hayton & Cacciotti, 2013; Krueger et al., 2013; Welter, 2011).

The number of papers illuminating the social and institutional contexts (Welter, 2019) is increasing, but the contextual focus (Kogut & Mejri, 2021) is still underrepresented in entrepreneurship compared to questions of motivation, performance, or rate of inclusion. There remains an underweight on the socio-political framing of a women’s position in the society in which she is living (Henry et al., 2017; Lockyer et al., 2018). It is as if learning more skills (Lockyer et al., 2018) will suffice in overcoming prevailing social norms that curtail her social acceptability and participation in the entrepreneurial field (Welter, 2019). In the three waves of development, the concept of agentic freedom is well conceptualised but the framework for agentic emergence and operation could be more deeply conceptualised.

6.9 How Context is Explored

Context is highly pertinent to entrepreneurship (Welter et al., 2018; Zahra & Wright, 2011). Scholars proceeded to expand this to the socio-political, cultural historical and geographical antecedents (Carmichael & Rijpma, 2017). This often uses institutional theory as the lens to consider longitudinal change (Welter, 2019) in multiple contexts (Welter & Gartner, 2016; Welter et al., 2018). The third wave is a dynamic model of the recursive relationship between entrepreneurs and context (Welter et al., 2018) and explores the enabling conditions at venture inception and the material and non-material effects of such enterprise activity back into place. This ongoing osmosis is across the permeable boundaries of business, formal and informal norms, and institutions as well as gender and family (Brush et al., 2009).

The most significant gap is the absence of social-spatial studies such as Redhead and Bika (2022) or McKeever et al. (2015) in predominantly female spaces or places or their formation. This differs to assuming female experience is juxtaposed within a masculine domain. A further danger with observing social roles in place is to assume that just as a woman was socialised to act in one way and that with “external” skills and training, she will be “unsocialised” to act in another way. Give her attitude and skills training and off she will go. This is simplistic yet common and as studies such as Ojediran and Anderson (2020) have shown, social change to promote female entrepreneurship is subject to deeply ingrained informal social norms. Traversing such norms may have social consequences unseen to the eye of a Western researcher and development professionals have also grappled with this frustration.

There is also an absence of published looking at diverse conceptualisations of time within different contexts. Western ideas of time as a linear concept are not universal. This shapes assumptions such as the idea of effort now for reward later or of a linear time series for measuring growth or even that our time on earth is finite and will not be revisited. Such an exploration of time would enhance understandings of contexts and how norms of time might be obscuring social dynamics as researchers reach beyond their own ideas of temporality.

6.10 Considerations of Freedom

Scholars debate whether entrepreneurship is a neoliberal excess (Ahl, 2004; Kaufmann, 2021) or a macro-development policy that makes women responsible for their own well-being (Ahl, 2004). This allows policy makers to ignore the structural issues that bedevil women's wider social advancement and levels of personal or collective freedom. That political debate may rage but both pathways, female labour force participation and female entrepreneurship, are positive developments. Women enter and gain influence within the public domain, become less confined to the home and private domains. This keeps both routes of economic growth open. Women are more likely to meet others, share ideas, and form groups that can influence and change society (Evans, 2018). This stance takes the UNSDGs as a set of neutral development policies that frame wider calls for research. It sees the current economic paradigm as neither malign nor benign but a neutral factor. In exploring the concept of freedom within the literature, this stance rejects any suggestion of projecting "political labour" onto the research subjects and making advancement in their freedom contingent on their activation as political beings. Rather, this is to explore how female entrepreneurship, currently and potentially may advance emancipation. It is not assumed presumptively that a critical theory perspective (Dey et al., 2022) is needed nor that there is a need to raise collective consciousness nor that it is the entrepreneur's experience or preference.

We cannot assume that freedom to start and grow a business equates to freedom to disperse its gains. However, it is a useful proxy as to the agency of a female entrepreneur beyond the venture itself. The literature suggests that those spending decisions have an additional valence towards investing back into the family and community. This is consistent with work by Whitfield et al. (2021, Appendix 1) which proposed a "dispersed gains model". Female entrepreneurs across six countries orientated themselves from business inception towards a model of sharing financial and non-financial gains within a close family group. This extended to nearby communities from which they emerged and operated. Women appear to bring a different, more novel and innovation orientated mindset to the ventures they start (Dezsö & Ross, 2012; Huq et al., 2020).

There is divergence in the literature on the choices and mechanisms women are using to express their emancipation. Rindova et al. (2009) refers to freedom as a drive for personal autonomy through an "authoring" (p. 480) of her intentions into action. Doing so causes

a shift in the balance of power. A woman strives “to imagine and create a better world” (Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2011, p. 155). Rindova et al. (p. 482) suggests parallelism between spotting and developing commercial opportunities as an internal process, a manifestation of her inner world. Scepticism prevails as to whether the outer actions shift social norms. On the contrary, venturing may lead to further replication of the existing boundaries in the surrounding social context (Baker & Nelson, 2005). Authoring is a power however, particularly if intent is expressed vocally. This is the power of finding your voice (Beard, 2018). Womens agency increased by her leading public contestation as an idea is projected into the public domain and debated (Rindova et al., 2009, p. 485).

The economic development focus on financial gains appears not to be the predominant goal of the female entrepreneur. Rather it is the desire for “autonomy, to express creativity for its own sake, to pursue innovation, and to be one's own boss” (Baker & Pollock, 2007, p. 297). There is a desire to generate income but more often it is to achieve "freedom and independence from conventional structures of authority” (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Baker & Nelson, 2005, p. 329). The non-material benefit of expansion of her agency may predominate, particularly as relates to “reproductive outcomes” i.e., household support and educating children reflecting her family embeddedness.

“Women’s business satisfaction related to ‘independence,’ confidence, and dignity, having achieved something despite poor education in many cases. The business gave them opportunities to socialize with other women, learn new skills and expand their business, ... ‘to give to others instead of asking from them’ thus, better fulfilling their caring and nurturing roles. Women also considered values such as courage, determination, and self-belief, often not celebrated in a society where women are not encouraged to think for themselves and are constantly framed through their family roles”

(Xheneti et al., 2019, p. 272)

This extension of her role as a woman is mediated by a feedback loop of information as to her acceptability to those around her socially. She sits within constant reputational precarity. Entrepreneurship may be seen as a questionable choice for her to exercise as she is perceived to be moving beyond her social production role to embrace economic

production (Anderson & Ojediran, 2021). Whether in the developed world (Kaden, Cunningham & Anderson, 2017) or in emerging contexts (Lockyer et al., 2018; Welter, 2019), a woman choosing entrepreneurship is challenging her role in society (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020; Shahriar, 2018) and her public portrayal (Santos et al., 2018). There are exceptions: family might empower her further by encouraging female business succession (Feldmann et al., 2020; Overbeke et al., 2015), notably in matrilineal societies (Shahriar, 2018) where family embeddedness may be more acceptable than starting a separate enterprise.

6.11 Do we see the starling but miss the murmuration?

There is a relentless background refrain observing female choices within her socially embedded context, which was best expressed many times in India as “but what will people think” (Ripples in Time: Whitfield, 2022). The reputation of a woman as a tradeable value is undertheorized within the female entrepreneurship literature as a mechanism of enforcing social norm adherence. This may explain a woman's agentic self-containment in not pursuing an androcentric form of entrepreneurship. It is by observing such gaps and converting them into questions (Bell et al. (2019) that we continue to advance a feminist perspective within the literature. It might also be women, rather than men, who are the primary actors of using reputational concerns as a covert form of policing social behaviour (Reynolds & Palmer-Hague, 2022). How it is in women's interests to contain other women is a question for exploration at a group-level with the theory proposed being that it contains intragroup sexual competition. The impact on reputation of undertaking a venture might therefore be subject to group-level social dynamics that are more difficult to discern. Women policing each other is outside the prevailing themes of patriarchal dominance in the literature exploring contextualised entrepreneurship.

Conceptions about emancipation, as well as entrepreneurial practice, vary considerably by context, reflecting distinct cultural axiologies and longstanding traditions. A Western perspective implies a separateness from others, a personal autonomy in thought and action in accordance with the Greek philosophies of "emancipare" and "libertas" as the standing rights of a citizen (Pettit, 2016). It is too narrow to frame emancipation through entrepreneurship as financial freedom (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020), even when it enhances personal and financial choices. Western women living in a consumer culture

may identify emancipation through enhanced financial earnings and by overcoming barriers in their environment that were impeding their progress (Gill & Ganesh, 2007). Imagine asking them the counterfactual. Do you wish to reduce your wider social freedoms but retain economic earnings? It is unlikely they will accept they are still emancipated if they lose other contextual, non-economic rights. They may still wish the freedom to marry who they choose, to vote, of conscience, of wider decision making on non-material matters. As social beings we are not apart from others even if power, status, or hierarchy stratifies the terms of that free interaction. There is therefore hidden fluidity between individual context and individual choice (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020).

In the developing world, feminist concerns may differ (Mohanty, 2013). Many of these contexts follow a more traditional and survival orientated social context such as India or Pakistan. Such places have less legally binding and enforced institutional support for gender equality (World Bank, 2022). Here emancipation can be seen as a marginal but essential enhancement of personal agency (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). Entrepreneurship can bring gradual, though painfully slow, changes in social norms that constrain her choices (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). Within those bounds, being able to pursue your ambitions as a female entrepreneur is a form of expressed freedom (Huq et al., 2020). The lack of scholarship on gradations of agency mean it is hard to discern if these changes are shifts within a pre-existing range of agency already in that society and she is shifting from the lower to upper part of that window or if the whole window is also shifting upwards. We cannot conclude either way, but the point is pivotal to whether venturing aids society beyond the individual shifts or if wider emancipation is a naive dream.

Listening to women in context will advance theory. The tradition of liberal feminism has been to see men and women as equal and that variances may be drawn from gender disparities reified in institutional norms (Langevang et al., 2015). Assumptions have been made to the effect that women will flow forward in an analogous manner to men, not that women's lives are mediated by different informal social norms which constrain them (Shahriar, 2018). Gynocentric choices differ from men. These choices are further affected by the requirement for unpaid care labour (Raworth et al., 2018) as direct competition for time and energy of women (Langevang et al., 2015). The socio-cultural context of a collectivist or “responsibilism” (Talhelm, 2022) society with high responsibility for kin,

means that unlike the West, the very idea of separating from the group is conceptualised differently. It is inconceivable to separate as identity is shared. Freedom may be reshaping the relationships within the group rather than being freed from the group. How this reshaping occurs is conjecture. She may be seen as of superior economic value, superior reputational value (in or out of the family) or better serving the needs of the rest of the group in non-material ways. This reflects the concept of family as being a larger, intergenerationally interconnected social unit versus the smaller family units of the West. Her reputation is interdependent with the rest of the family as weight is given not only her own actions but the weight of everyone else's actions upon her. This could be paraphrased as seeking to create agentic space within the multiple complex strands of a cat's cradle, an extraordinarily complex interlinkage of competing, enabling and constraining factors she may traverse, push aside, or find close tightly upon her in a bounded world (Gill & Ganesh, 2007).

This is not to say collectivist societies are androcentric. There are many exceptions (e.g., Latin America, Hofstede Insights, 2022), There is a complex social matrix, however loosely or tightly configured, that is her primary social embeddedness and might be ideal for male economic advancement but antagonistic to the female pursuing the same. "Entrepreneurs are not the only ones who can be gendered, the socio-cultural context in which entrepreneurship is taking place can also be gendered," making her expression of free choices doubly difficult when the two come together in places such as Pakistan (Yunis et al., 2018) or the Middle East (Tlaiss, 2013).

6.12 Wanting different freedoms at different times

Emancipation effects will also be observed at different points in time across a venture lifecycle, with a parallel track of effects running alongside commercial measures. Akinyemi & Ojah (2018) recognize that different challenges need to be overcome at various times (Alakaleek & Cooper, 2018; Cho et al., 2019; Yunis et al., 2018). There is no sense in the literature of how as a venture progresses, personal emancipation may also progress or even if they are time or event linked activities. The starting point for challenging constraints is a host of gender injustices (Castellanza, 2020): traditional androcentric social norms, unequal access to finance, imbalance in legal rights with respect to assets and agency to start and run an enterprise. This extends to the distribution of household responsibilities among female members (Ali, 2019, Hechavarria & Ingram,

2018, Kamuhuza et al., 2022; Ojediran & Anderson, 2020, p. 2020). Such onerous starting conditions vary significantly across contexts (Krueger et al., 2013) which also have varying levels of welfare support (Holmquist & Sundin, 2021.) There is little attention given to the ecosystem she could benefit from to be less alone in this endeavour (Henry et al., 2017). Another twist of the kaleidoscope upon these factors is to observe a common thread of how a woman values agentic freedom. This is how she values herself and in relation to others in context. It is the mist of mutual regard of seeing each other as equals that floats across the context when individual women find venture partners and the means to embrace their context and succeed (Cullen, 2020).

6.13 Finding her voice

As well as being valued for herself and her reputation, there is little in the literature theorizing how her agentic scope is activated: by action, speech, or breadth of thought. Disapproval is manifest within families and voiced as concern (Markowska & Abebe, 2021). This attempts to keep her aligned and enclosed within the family group (Deng et al., 2021; Welter, 2019). This rises when business responsibilities are seen to be chosen over family duties (Bui et al., 2018; Guelich et al., 2021). Being a mother may also have lifted her self-confidence and motivation to start a business (Markowska, 2018), making this pressure of choice and family scrutiny more acute. Collaboration as an act of outreach to other independent women (Hechavarría & Ingram, 2018) is a substantiation of this freedom and breaches the family boundary to allow some limited engagement in the public domain or shared private domains.

The impact of a woman asserting her voice is underrepresented in the literature. Venturing may make her voice more credible, more confidently expressed, more heard by other women, men, family, and society. This emergence of voice as a form of emancipatory power becomes the lost voice of Hortensia in Rome speaking as the spokesperson for other women (Beard, 2018, p. 18). This desire to escape the muteness of women is an undercurrent in different social contexts with ancient roots (Beard, 2018). Those who spoke in Rome could only be male. Even if it was a woman speaking, she was disregarded. To be male denoted having a voice and that does not belong to a woman. Being male was synonymous with rights to express yourself in public. Gendered speech has unfortunate parallels with contemporary findings on what it means to be an entrepreneur. It is to follow the model actions of a male (Marlow, 2020) since to do

otherwise is to not be an entrepreneur. Given that articulating one's free thought is so often through voice, another research gap is to explore if female entrepreneurship enables women to find their voice and amplify it individually and on behalf of others. The point of discourse is not just the focus on persuasive speech and being seen to be in public. It is taking one's place in the public sphere, promoting themselves and other women (Anyansi-Archibong, 2021).

A darker strand of analysis is underrepresented in the literature. This is the fear of and actual instances of backlash against the female entrepreneur within her social context due to her commercial activities. This might be family sanction (Wee Chan Au et al., 2018), withdrawal of informal freedoms due to a woman's perceived resistance to adherence, or violation, of the norms and expectations that govern her social roles. Socially embedded women observe reputational pressures or other mechanisms which might result in pushback to her autonomy. This requires surfacing in research as an inhibiting and regressive dynamic. As per Kate Manne (2017) when considering the rationale for misogyny:

"What would be a natural basis for hostility and aggression directed towards women...in view of some woman's social roles in a patriarchal culture... what could be a more natural basis for hostility and aggression than defection from the role of an attentive, loving subordinate?"

(Manne, 2017, p. 49)

Given the sharpness of this observation, it raises the question: are researchers being too benign in their observations? We may not see the reputational fears of women entrepreneurs as they are not our fears. Nor do we see how such concerns may supersede the positive possibilities of economic contribution. How do we perceive an individual or collective antagonism toward women who step outside the roles set by their social contexts? This refers again to the work of Beard (2018) tracing the unremitting backlash to the emergence of the female voice in the public sphere from Athens until today. To speak more freely also allows the chance of freedom to criticise and challenge those around her, including men. A venture can accelerate individuation (Jung, 1959) and so a cleaving from her group. She is finding her voice to articulate that which may be observed

negatively or warrant criticism. Freedom of speech is strongly associated with other freedoms:

“Individual autonomy, the democratic accountability of the government, the sanctity of personal conscience, tolerance of difference, and disagreement, the pursuit of truth.”

(Srinivasanan, 2021, p. 52)

Venturing as a form of personal expression is different from freedom of speech but still requires freedom of speech. She must assert, persuade, gain resources, win customers, and project herself on behalf of a venture rather than as her solo self or in a family context. Not finding this voice through venturing or in other social settings might maintain the existing structures of gender relations. As per Hill (1999) about women in 11th century Byzantium:

“The perennial problem of patriarchal society is that women are absolutely crucial to its continuance, but must never be allowed to realise their importance or act on it”

(Hill, 1999, p. 15).

6.14 “Please sir”: Access to financial capital

The tools of freedom in female entrepreneurship are, in part, the skills and training needed to overcome the institutional barriers that lie before a woman. Access to training for knowledge and venturing skills are seen as a pathway to freedom to start a venture (Cullen, 2020). This includes knowing how to navigate the reputational concerns of female entrepreneurship (Kuckertz et al., 2020) and how she will be judged by others in society. The other priority is access to finance, either initially as seed capital or for venture growth. This is a challenge for all aspiring entrepreneurs (Minniti & Naudé, 2010) but unequal access to funding curtails the freedom for a woman to pursue a business’s scope or to invest to scale-up to match an opportunity’s scale, particularly in developing countries (Guzman & Kacperczyk, 2019; Kamuhuza et al., 2022; Rudhumbu et al., 2020; Said & Enslin, 2020). The principle of justice as equal access to financial services regardless of gender is challenged by the lack of gender-neutral finance terms,

be it excess interest charges to female entrepreneurs (Nziku & Struthers, 2018) or gender-influenced lending hesitancy (Brixiova & Kangoye, 2019).

Access to funding via social networks which might circumvent the formal institutional hurdles found in banks is sought but these too are less developed for women (Alakaleek & Cooper, 2018; Kamuhuza et al., 2022). This unequal position of financial access leaves women to use their own or family funds (Nziku, 2016). Women who have a positive view of investing in women-owned businesses (Elam, 2021; Nziku & Struthers, 2018), can shift the norms by investing as a parallel informal institution. Such networks might play a further empowering role through emotional support. They show a pathway through the emotional and reputational entanglements in which a prospective female entrepreneur is situated. They offer reassurance (Neegaard & Carlsen, 2021) and connection alongside knowledge (Berger & Soubaya, 2019; Kogut & Mejri, 2021; Neegaard & Carlsen, 2021). Microfinance is also an accelerator of women's empowerment (Bandiera et al., 2022) providing easier access to funding beyond banks, networks, family, or self. Substantive results emerge in both generating new female-led ventures with a low failure rate and microfinance appears to have brought along an entourage of wider empowerment effects (Berguiga & Adair, 2021; Brahmachary, 2018). It also facilitates cooperation between women, reducing venture avoidance, and building cooperation (Berguiga & Adair, 2021).

A curtailment of opportunities and funding occurs by reducing expectations. This encourages her to focus on survival and borrow less (Daniels et al., 2016) rather than reach the opportunity's full potential (Guzman & Kacperczyk, 2019; Kanze et al., 2018). Who benefits from keeping her as a limited success? How can the opportunity cost to lower growth be understood? What are the social gains that others think they will lose from her eminence? Her dependence and being of service? Her reputation? A number of observations are made about systemic group resistance, but not as to why. Who does it serve to resist her pursuing an economic opportunity that would benefit the group? Conflict and resistance are a wider characteristic of entrepreneurship as a fulcrum for change (Azmat & Fujimoto, 2016) but this is structured as an open market fight against competitors. Here invidious social resistance is an additional hidden barrier to navigate. Pejorative patriarchal assumptions are one perspective, but they are not a sufficient explanation. Reflection again suggests that factors other than financial freedom are at work as social curtailment of her overall capability. The result may mean her social

position and agency in relation to others remains unchanged. Perhaps ambition is seen as a force for unwanted disruption to the social order where her prior role was to serve others (Ahl & Marlow, 2021). Again, the suggestion by Evans (2022) is that financial gains from her potentiality are traded off against reputational concerns in doing something new, an activity out of the control of others. These are the hidden forces of containment upon aspiring female entrepreneurs and their personal agency.

The positive side of reputation is the power of role models, of one-woman inspiring others. Khan (2019) and Anyansi-Archibong (2021) demonstrate this in Africa. Botswana demonstrates exemplary practice (Rudhumbu et al., 2020) of regulatory and legal structures to provide a gender-neutral institutional framework in which women follow each other. Role models also encourage wider emancipation through the expansion of opportunities for others who emulate them. Supportive ecosystem aid women in a matrilineal countries (Mayasari et al., 2021; Shahriar, 2018). They also raise self-confidence (Vodă et al., 2020) as one woman watches another succeed (Bullough et al., 2022).

6.15 Empowerment in practice

As set out above, there are gaps in the conceptualisation of freedom within the literature as regards the possibility of deeper and more invidious social norms that might be curtailing gender justice, participation in economic activity and the generation of economic and social benefits flowing from female entrepreneurship. The suppression of female voices in society, their articulation of who they are and who they wish to be, is unexplored within entrepreneurship literature, as is the role of social reputation in moderating venturing activity. Such factors are deeply contextualised. The weight placed upon a woman's view and her scope to act outside of group reputation norms will reflect long standing norms on the role of a woman in each society. This includes her status within extended family and how her economic contributions are weighted within home and society.

Vignettes are used as context-specific methods to advance research within these literature gaps. Al-Dajani and Marlow (2013) have examined empowerment less as an external attribute of change to one's context, be it political, cultural, or social. Rather, empowerment is conceptualised as taking charge of one's life within the context of living

in that environment. This is proximate to the theory of effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2008). This is the “dig where you stand” approach to entrepreneurship which values personal endeavour in their own resource context. It concurs with Binder (2019) who proposed freedom as “the freedom to be different, the freedom to pursue their own way(s) of life” (Binder, 2019, p. 2). The value is in expressing one's own agency. As a woman, her starting point is expressed as an agentic expression of revealing inner preferences. Home-based entrepreneurship in marginalised contexts is therefore an equivalent, not diminished form of venturing, due to location or necessity of practice (Al-Dajani, 2007; Cinar, 2001). By such small steps does a woman find her voice and initiative to move forward from the place where she stands. Female entrepreneurs in Palestine embrace entrepreneurship in extremely distressed circumstances, demonstrating an empowerment effect beyond the financial (Al-Dajani et al., 2015). These activities strengthen social identities (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010) buttress against wider social challenge and help her assert herself plus raise her socio-political identity. This is empowerment by degrees, a gentle incline to self and personal empowerment. Conceptually she is “taking charge of oneself.”

Becoming aware of one's inner autonomy is also an act of personal liberation. By stepping forward into female entrepreneurship, she is not first requiring external validation or permission before moving past institutional boundaries embedded in her social context. This “liberation of self” as a potential theoretical direction is novel within entrepreneurship but is well established in theological thought where freedom from oppression is facilitated by recognising the individual uniqueness that lies within each person and their right to self-determination as a pragmatic transformative resistance to social circumstances (Gutiérrez, 1988). Liberation is to encourage humanity, “assuming conscious responsibility for its own destiny” (Gutiérrez, 1988). It is aligned to institutional challenge in “the need for unjust structures to be changed” (Ratzinger, 2010). This has been extended by Esack (2003) into Islamic thought. An individual's action on behalf of the collective can question injustice. There are echoes of this in the existing literature on socially embedded enterprise, with Anderson and Smith (2007) calling for consideration of the moral effects of entrepreneurship, as have Drakopoulou Dodd and Seaman (1998). Morality within female entrepreneurship could thus be proposed as that which advances human dignity, human potential and reduces the subjugation of the individual.

6.16 Practical research pathways on which to build.

The opening conundrum posed was to question the order of impact: the antecedents and effects of empowerment from female entrepreneurship. By looking at narratives of contrasting female entrepreneurs in Sweden and Saudi Arabia, Alkhaled and Berglund (2018) observe how personal and collective change can occur. The desire to shift within existing social institutions is illustrated and the desire to enable other women to reap the benefits of such enhanced freedom. The desires interlink but may create unrealistic expectations “to turn emancipation into an (un)reachable object of desire, with a quest for even more individual empowerment and entrepreneurial activity” (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018, p. 878). This opportunity to “do something that liberates humans from different constraints and releases their strengths and powers” (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018, p. 879) is structured within a linear progression: reducing subordination, lift personal empowerment, and then progress to collective emancipation. Institutional theory is used to illuminate the challenges to reach specific points of empowerment: leaving a husband, leaving a family business to pursue one’s own, the balance between child rearing and venturing. Collective emancipation however may require female collective action beyond individual contributions to social change (Brown, 1997). The challenge to institutional power (Kalantaridis, 2014; Welter & Smallbone, 2008) can be heard through women's narratives. This theorises freedom as emancipation practices (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) enacted daily even if they must ebb and flow. These actions are motivated by the collective interests of women. Freedom for oneself becomes synonymous with freedom for other women to prevent the perpetuation of their shared oppression (Verduijn et al., 2014).

6.17 Final words

Empowerment presents as an ongoing daily practice. A cumulative assertion of taking charge of one’s life, of gradually easing into the social constraints and nudging them back for other women to follow. This may not be possible based on the informal social norms of place. This differs from more pessimistic voices that claim that female entrepreneurship has not altered the status quo in the last 30 years (Foss et al., 2018).

“Entrepreneurship itself is institutionally embedded axiomatically most entrepreneurial endeavours will reproduce constraints rather than offer liberation from them.”

(Jennings et al., 2016, p. 81).

This review suggests freedom be conceptualised not as a linear state but a process whose start position is a positive affirmation of a social identity of being oneself. First one sees oneself as more than the expression of others’ requirements upon you. This is to take one step ahead of the original ideas of ‘setting free from power of the other’ (Rindova et al., 2009). First, she is herself. The contrast of a woman being of value as an economic generator versus her value as upholder of social reputation for the group is a novel angle from female labour force participation theory (Evans, 2022). This may unearth socially subsumed resistance to her venturing, casting light upon reasons for inertia. This review offers new directions for research to consider how the value of oneself, to oneself and in the regard of others, might be explored. It suggests how the issues of reputation and economic value, temporality and place may offer enhanced research streams. Although scholars may choose several approaches, institutional theory, practice theory and depth narrative enquiry may advance the theory of liberation, freedom for self and others within the female entrepreneurship field.

CHAPTER 7

FREEDOM MATTERS:

ON THE POTENTIAL FOR A DEEPER THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALISATION OF “FREEDOM” WITHIN EMANCIPATORY FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Chapter 7

Freedom matters: On the Potential for a deeper theoretical conceptualisation of “freedom” within emancipatory female entrepreneurship.

“As people who live... together, we cannot escape the thought that the terrible occurrences that we see around us are quintessentially our problems. They are our responsibility — whether or not they are also anyone else’s.”

(Sen, 1999, p. 282 in “Development as Freedom”)

7.1 Introduction

Freedom matters (Binder, 2019). Imagine the female entrepreneur as a potential social freedom fighter, expanding the frontiers of personal agency, both for herself and for other women. This is the reconceptualization within the literature exploring the impact of women operating as entrepreneurs. This chapter explores how concepts of emancipation and freedom might be deepened within the entrepreneurship field, particular as it pertains to female emancipation. Rather than being seen as an atomised unit, scholarship has evolved to explore her impact on both her own scope of agency and the wider female community. This has grown into a more complex, multifaceted understanding that includes both the informal and formal structures that frame her venture and life. Rather than a single individual generating measurable economic gains, we now have a picture of a woman seeking to extend the freedom she has in life through entrepreneurship. This can be expressed across a spectrum of action from resisting subordination to a wider sense of personal empowerment leading to the aggregate effect of collective emancipation. The vision is that the structural systems within her context shift due to female entrepreneurship. This aspect has been explored primarily through case studies, either individual or comparative, to understand how participants' lives have been altered along this axis. Yet what are the qualities of this additional emancipation? On what axiology does freedom grow and who is determining its trajectory?

7.2 Reflections on the limited theorisation of freedom in the current literature

The theoretical conceptualisation of what it means to be “freer” or have “more power” within this segment of the entrepreneurship literature raises many reflective questions about a woman in a spatial context. What does it mean to be free? From what to what? How are perceptions culturally and spatially contingent? Is this about personal and/or group agency? Is freedom a prerequisite for such agency in the world? Is freedom to act alone (empowerment) of greater empirical value if it allows a wider group more agency (emancipation)? Freedom to believe you have options may be a further precedent to freedom, as is to choose to act or not to act. Cultural factors muddy this. Is greater freedom sought as a route to greater happiness? A Western focus on happiness is not universal. Eastern happiness can be feeling freedom from danger, a feeling of enhanced safety and security but not necessarily the positive expressed emotion of the West (Talhelm, 2022). Contexts are fraught with challenges to standpoint epistemology and cultural relativism.

Such considerations mean observing our own vantage point. Against what value set are we observing a gradient of emancipation or indeed subservience? Does our phenomenological experience of freedom colour external observations? To advance understanding of how female entrepreneurship advances emancipation, a deeper theorisation on freedom would assist and that may be found in consilient bodies of literature: philosophy in particular. This could contribute both abstract and tangible properties of freedom to considering how entrepreneurship could enable female agency to expand.

7.3 Puncturing the acceptability of “cum permissio”

Considerations as to what it means to be free are longstanding themes in writings on what it is to be human (Kant, 1785). This examines the emancipation of self; one’s fellow group or the wider social context. Aristotle (Ferguson, 1972) considered what makes a good life and how might we pursue it from both secular and religious perspectives. This may be an inner cast of mind of Cicero’s Stoicism (Llano & Fernando, 2012) or the free physical being, unrestrained in time and place. Two competing concerns have historically shaped the discourse on liberty (Pettit, 2016): freedom from domination and freedom

from non-interference. This is both for men but also as regards to women's choices. Freedom from dominance is first contextualised in ancient Rome, c. 2nd BC, with an emancipated Greek slave, Polybius. He expounds on the virtues of freedom found in Rome compared to Athens and the institutional structures protecting such liberty. This was later developed by Livy and Cicero. It means:

“Not be subject to the arbitrary or discretionary will of another the choices that the law can and should make equally available to all individuals. You would be subject to the will of another, in the sense inconsistent with freedom, to the extent that others could interfere in the exercise of those choices. The interference might take the form of preventing or penalizing the choice of an option, whether overtly or covertly, or misrepresenting the nature of the options available.” (Petit, 2016).

A slave, even if subject to a kind master, was still “dominatio” (Lovett, 2016, 2010). If someone was still a master over another’s life, actively or passively, the potentiality for dominance remained. “Libertas” was absent. Only law guaranteed freedom for the free man, a “liber.” To be free meant to be a citizen living under your own jurisdiction. The law’s purpose was to ensure private choices were free from domination by another or state. Although this was a status reserved for a small male elite, power over these individuals was kept in check by an elected citizenry. Being a free citizen and having freedom to live undominated by another were one and the same (Wirszubski, 1968) either within the private realm (from another individual) or in the public realm (by the state). This idea of freedom, with constitutional nuances but essentially the same concept, remained until the 18th C. It underpinned revolutionary fervour of the time to limit tyranny at the state level. Trade with another freeman was conducted under these norms. Regardless of relative wealth, a freeman could conduct business with another without coming under their control as both lived in a context generating mutual respect.

“Liberty is, to live upon one’s own terms; slavery is, to live at the mere mercy of another.” (Trenchard & Gordon, 1720).

“The freeman’s freedom...equal and alike in power, dignity, authority, and majesty—none of them having (by nature) any authority, dominion, or magisterial power, one over or above another”.

(John Liborne, 1640's in Sharp 1998)

In her social context, is a woman acting as a free agent or is such liberty contingent on the ongoing choice (permission) of others either in action, belief, or in access to resources? A critical test of "libertas" freedom is high: is the agent free from interference as a matter of law and in daily practice. Or instead, it is a thinner freedom of genial disregard, or a lack of caprice expressed by others, either in the public or private domains? Formal institutions might regard her agency as protected but do the informal social institutions in this context allow her full agency in daily practice? Unless the formal law protects her against the interference made at an informal level, this would suggest not. She is not free as she lacks a legal shield against the extension of power by one individual placed over another. Informal institutional norms require strengthening if a women's self-reported experience of being able to participate in a venture is, at its crudest, *cum permissio*, i.e., by his grace or leave.

"He is a slave who serves the best and gentlest man in the world, as well as he who serves the worst".

(Sidney 1990, p. 441).

"Individuals under the power of masters cannot be denominated free, however equitably and kindly they may be treated".

(Price, 1991)

This is the case whether the agentic body is a person, a group, a colony or subservient government arrangement or a vassal state. It is the potential for interference and domination that remains. Freedom is an illusion relating to that moment and place in time and might evaporate like dew in the harsh morning sun. The question for female entrepreneurship is therefore, if this "leave" was not granted, does she feel free to act anyway, sentiment notwithstanding? Does she have the same degree of latitude as a male partner or family member? In this test of imagining the gender counterfactual, is there the same conclusion about the scope of personal or group agency?

The socially embedded reality of female entrepreneurs may determine the answer. Even if she makes a private domain decision, the socially embedded norms of her wider context

might prevent her from pursuing that venture in the public domain. The influence of external normative institutions, formal or informal, such as family leadership changes (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) or culture can affect her agency. It cannot be assumed that such decision-making contexts remain on a progressive trajectory over time. There may be an ebb and flow of social norms leading to regressive social norms which tighten their grip on her to reverse past latitude (OECD Gender Reports, 2022 Iran). It is

“Existence of that power of interference, not its exercise, reduces her standing to that of a subject and dependent: someone lacking the status of a free agent”

(Petit, 2016).

Measure of freedom here relate to expressing her socio-political voice. Under the ancient Roman institutional framework, the question is whether she had a voice in shaping external institutions, formally or informally? If not, she remains not such much disempowered but “never powered,”. She neither had a voice nor protection from interference in her decisions by either individuals or the state. The power of female voice in generating agency was conceptualised by Beard (2018) as the recognition of self. It is her right to have that self voiced to others and to have her opinions and preferences equally weighted alongside others. To have no voice was not only to be disenfranchised as a citizen but never to have been one at all.

An alternative strand to non-domination is the more limited concept of non-interference. If a person is free to choose from the options available to them, regardless of the approval of others or if he or she is asked for such acquiescence, then unexecuted power is still freedom. This is Bentham’s stance that “all coercive laws ... are, as far as they go, an abrogation of liberty” (Bentham, 1843, p. 503). The potential for institutional legal constraint is not inimical to freedom just because it is discretionary rather than regularly exercised power. This implies a benign stance and suits those who claim they may still have power, but it will be used with care and consideration. This debate over freedom from interference versus freedom from domination might seem arcane if you are able to make your own choices regardless of the superstructure of wider institutions. Yet distinctions matter. The possibility of non-domination of women was, in the 19th C, seen as too radical as it would require a re-evaluation of the role of husband over wife, master

over servant and upend existing informal social norms. Pettit speculated as to the compromise that perhaps Paley “began to think about what freedom as non-domination for all would require, the traditional conception began to seem too radical, and the novel conception looked like the only feasible and appealing ideal” (Pettit, 2016, p.13).

There was no universal suffrage and so no voice for those still subject to the caprice of power. The concept of freedom as non-interference came to predominate classical liberalism. Laws were passed to stop private and public interference particularly when related to freedom to enter contracts. This lent support to the concept of free trade with minimalist oversight, “the reduction of the state and the expansion of the market” (Pettit, 2016, p. 14). Yet the question remains: why did this framing of freedom not lead also to an equal expansion of women's participation in trade, investment, and enterprise? If freedom from non-interference was freedom to choose from the choices given, then such choices were absent from the *carte fixe*, the menu of life choices to which the would-be female entrepreneur saw before her. In Ahearn's words, "how do such loosely structured actors manage at times to transform the systems that produce them" (Ahearn, 2001, p. 120).

“Men, women and even children were driven for want of a better alternative into accepting conditions that clearly denied them an undominated status in relation to their betters. They might have signed up freely for the employment offered ..., but the contract they entered allowed employers unrestrained discretion in how they treated their workers.”

(Pettit, 2016 p. 15)

If freedom for woman to pursue a new business venture is contingent on the permission of her husband or wider social context, then how “free” is this? Under the classical republican strand of liberty, of non-dominance, she is not free. Under the classical liberal tradition of non-interference, she is free. Whether she and others like her had a voice in shaping these arrangements matters but is secondary to this determination. As summarised by Pettit:

“On the liberal approach you are free in any choice to the extent that the doors represented by the different options in any choice remain open (Berlin 1969, p.1). On the republican approach it is important, not just

that the doors be open, but that there be no doorkeepers: no agents on whose goodwill you depend for leaving the doors ajar”

(Pettit, 2016, p. 15).

Female collective action, such as in the voting emancipation movement, is instrumental in shifting the formal and informal norms (Brown, 1997). How might female entrepreneurship move the collective from advancing non-interference to then ensuring personal non-domination to extend wider female emancipation? The model of three stages (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) from subordination to empowerment to emancipation is one model. This emphasised formal institutional changes in vertical, political relationships between individual, group, state, and supranational organisations. The horizontal, interpersonal relationships and informal social arrangements and informal institutions of our daily lives are observed as problematic to shift. Yet these horizontal informal norms that are the constraining factors to female liberty. Scholars converge on this point of difficulty which might relate to the lack of a conceptualisation of freedom that intersects with how informal norms act. Are norms constraint in the form of requiring permission? Is it something constructive but can be refuted if female liberty is in place. North (1990) when considering institutions contends that social informality is undesirable. He proposes that our societies will advance if we adopt impersonal contract structures over personal structures i.e., informal norms, to act in the world. He follows a strong classical liberal tradition and one that equates civilisation with orderliness of structure. He is oblivious to the imbalance of power resulting from implicit or informal dominance that would remain. He is also silent about women and how removing the informal would affect interpersonal relations and social justice, indeed the informal often is the female so his position is antithetical to a feminist epistemology (Kaufman, 2021).

The theoretical question then may be how institutions might shift their aims considering the impact upon freedom. If there is institutional support for “non-interference”, can this premise migrate to the greater agency found within “non-domination” of women and for all? There would be a gradient on the attributes of dominance, beyond a binary of free agency to act without asking, or not. How would we mark progress from supplication to full autonomy of agency and capture the nuances of this ebb and flow of action, reaction, counteraction, change or regression? The principle should be to support that which enables an expansion of choices available. If she has one choice, can there be more even

if permission is required. If it is one choice, can she act freely and have less backlash for doing so. An expansion of agency within the realm of new or expanding choices may expand her world of entrepreneurial possibilities. Agency expands and she is along the pathway to emancipation even if some decisions are still contingent upon social norms framing the exercise of those choices. Progress is being made. The question then is how to advance social justice across horizons as well as challenging the political vertical points. A pathway to expanding her opportunities would lead to human capabilities theory (Nussbaum, 2002). It is developing a life based on enhanced possibilities from where one begins. "The protection and resourcing available should ensure people's enjoyment of the capacity to function properly in their local society, as the capability approach emphasizes" (Pettit, 2016, p.16). Seeing the opportunity to engage in entrepreneurship as a subset of agentic possibilities within one's local society, encourages reflection on how advancing female emancipation occurs through venturing.

7.4 In the shadows of the social

Examining writings on agency and freedom, we can note not just what is in the literature but also what is missing. What lies in the shadows, unseen, undiscussed, overlooked by the omniscient light of a dominant, positivist model and the path that precedes it? The Cartesian focus on rationality over sentience, the quantitative over the qualitative, the empirical over the phenomenological, reduction over the holism. These all stand uncomfortably under a feminist gaze. It questions the "impersonal master narratives that leave no room for tensions, contradictions, or oppositional actions on the part of the individual" (Ahearn, 2001, p. 110). Ahearn recognizes "a dialogic, co-constructed view of language as a form of social action" (ibid). If female voices are not also shaping the institutional framework in which they sit, there is no co-construction of meaning, of co-creation, no ownership of ultimate action. Ahearn proposes we see agency as "the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn, 2001, p. 112), both in its production and interpretation. This is to distinguish an actor "following the rules" from an agent: "a person engaged in the exercise of power in the sense of the ability to bring about effects and to (re)constitute the world" (Karp, 1987, p.137). This can be further divided into "agency of power" and "agency of intention" (Ortner, 2001). But the socially mediated aspects will vary depending upon the societal understanding of personhood or intentionality. We should then consider the framework of freedom as parallel to, but not

the same as, having a sense of causality from one's own actions. Am I free to act but are the consequences predictable, or by chance, or dispersed into a collective responsibility and not related to my individual volition? This is not dissimilar to launching a product into the market, but the consequences are "down to the market" yet the freedom to aggregate resources to that point may be seen as an exercise of entrepreneurial freedom. In examining her actions, does the female entrepreneur see causality? Her actions might still be contingent on non-interference and prior action dependent on non-domination. Free will may still be filtered through "the social nature of agency and the pervasive influence of culture on human intentions, beliefs and actions" (Ahearn, 2001: 114). A female entrepreneur cannot see pure free agency or choice as she must engage with the world and does not live in a social vacuum. This perspective also sees agency as more than offering resistance, as per MacLeod that women:

"Even as subordinate players, always play an active part that goes beyond the dichotomy of victimization/acceptance, a dichotomy that flattens out a complex and ambiguous agency in which women accept, accommodate, ignore, resist, or protest-sometimes all at the same time"

(MacLeod 1992, p. 534)

It is an assumption to see the aspiration to emancipation through structural change via female entrepreneurship as an "anti" movement, founded on a stance of resistance to current institutions. Change at a structural level might occur but that of social norms appears evolutionary and collaborative rather than combative depending on the specific socio-cultural context. How institutional change is adopted will vary from radical rupture to slow accretion.

7.5 Structuration: the view of Giddens

Giddens (1984) departs from seeing agency as free will or volition and rather with its co-dependent twin: the social structure containing the individual. Action cannot be separated from the social structure. Instead, a recursive loop exists between the two, each influencing and changing the other through the micro-processes of daily action and practice. While each individual has unique qualities and nuance, they can also use their capacity to project themselves into the chosen action. Thus, "agency can be considered

the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act, while praxis (or practice) can be considered the action itself” (Ahearn, 2001, p. 118). But here is the chicken and egg – which predominates: the individual agency upon the group structure? Or is there a group-level of agency affecting a group-level structure to which the individual agency and action is secondary? This alternative view suggests that what serves the group, drives the actions of the group to which individuals may conform or not by degree. This perspective uses a different unit of analysis to Giddens structuration. It is that of the group and does not equate to the aggregation of individual actions or intentions. An emerging literature in social psychology on the formation and alternation of group norms proposes this view. Against this inverted model of thinking, we can ask: if entrepreneurship is so self-evidently beneficial for the liberation of women, why is the percentage still so low compared to men? In each society, there will be a myriad of reasons but underneath, deeply underneath, might the prevailing norms suit the dominant group? Why should they therefore change?

Bourdieu (1980) would counter that the continuous social practices reinforce the *habitus* or social context, but this is not analysis of how the novel business idea emerges. Novelty would mean to bring change: to consciously step out from the reenforcing actions and structures working together to strengthen the status quo. A Bourdieu (1980) conception of freedom is more limited compared to “*libertas*”. Personal proclivities and tendencies engrained from childhood, are socially reproduced actions affirming one’s social position and social order. *Habitus* suggests a model for maintaining a conservative social order whereas emancipatory feeling is required in the personal impulse for innovation. Social and market cleavage from “the norm” is implicit in entrepreneurship. The drive to create, to bend the world to one’s will, to break free is inconsistent with behaviour that seeks to replicate one’s social boundaries unchanged. At a minimum, it will generate changed social perceptions about the entrepreneur. This might be the paradox for female entrepreneurs. Does she act to confirm her social position as it is, or does she challenge and change it? What are the risks of adopting either of these positions?

7.6 Stepping Away from Methodological Individualism: freedom entwined with responsibility

The literature expresses the normalcy of women balancing work and family, enterprise, and home (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010). Female entrepreneurs enter the venture arena with a social hinterland. She has responsibilities, a network of connections and mutual obligations that are not occasional, but ongoing. This is not here characterised as a burden, a blessing or different to men but simply a reflection of the literature on female entrepreneurship (Marlow, 2020). They often work within family-based business structures. Seeing women as carrying responsibility is not an assumption laden with sociological meaning of the observer but as how women see themselves – it just is. It is a sea women understand and through which they must navigate whether treacherous or full of camaraderie. Her being responsibility-laden within society highlights the tighter framework in which she can express her agency. Her freedom to generate or advance an idea into a business is mediated by the framework of responsibilities in which she sits. This cognitive framing of the self as being within private domain constraints of responsibility abuts external, public social constraints. Private constraints may reflect her prior free and wholly desired choices. External informal norms such as views on delegation, familial piety, personal beliefs, and preferences will vary. It is an expression of her personal agency in absorbing, altering, or rejecting such external and informal social expectations. Exploring this allows a consideration of how sentiments of mutuality can frame a binary sense of duty. This is from me to you and from you to me to a wider collective sense of responsibility to and within a group. Diffuse or tight, how a female entrepreneur will navigate the sense of collective responsibility in which she sits may “be” her social context. It is a binding yet supportive matrix in which to live.

Ballet, Dubois, and Mathieu (2007) addressed this understanding of situational responsibilities. They theorised an expansion of Sen and Nussbaum's (2000) human capabilities approach to a framework of enabling enhanced freedom through individual capabilities. They asked how capabilities might intersect with individual responsibilities. This is freedom's Ying to capabilities Yang in a women's life. How might social embeddedness shape the ways that responsibilities are perceived shape her and her perception of what is “choosable”. A person is "embedded into a web of social relationships that determine a set of rights and obligations... which must be satisfied

before a person can move on to satisfy his / her rights and freedoms” (Ballet et al., 2007, p. 185). Freedom is seen here as inseparable from responsibility. It requires:

“Self-restraint on a voluntary basis in order to satisfy one’s obligations towards others... a person’s capability to accept ...the responsibility of himself/herself is the responsibility of fulfilling obligations is a precondition for real freedom”

(Ballet et al., 2007, p. 187).

These responsibilities also carry moral considerations which inhibit them being dispensed with in order to expand personal opportunities. Robeyns (2005) emphasized moral considerations as being of concern in social relations. This stance could be critiqued as an optimistic view of nature full of care for others. There are degrees of taking other’s needs into account. Any acceptance of formal or informal expectations of assuming responsibilities will vary by individual. It will also vary on the cultural norms of enforcement against transgression, of reciprocity and the scope for self-interest. It also implies that in many contexts that attending to the needs of others is tied to the worth of a person’s commitment to familial social production. Women’s stances are assumed to be accepting of such responsibilities as the carriers of social responsibilities. Thus, expressions of care include a moral element in their decision making as discharging what is “right”. To exclude opportunities due to prior responsibilities is to be good, to have moral character. Yet this is circular by Robyn (2015). The more well-meaning a person then perhaps the more they will integrate with others. Women may feel an obligation to help other women, but this will be subject to social norms in context rather than assumed to be her choice. However, the central idea that Robyn’s (2015) proposes, that agency is expressed through a set of contextual obligations rather than a social blank slate of no linkages, a “tabula rasa” (Aristotle in Ferguson, 1972), is helpful to consider the practical reality of a contextually restricted agentic scope due to prior responsibilities.

Ballet et al. (2007) also consider how a sense of collective responsibility and capability inform a group-level agency. Sen and Dreze (1999), suggest that social considerations become embedded within the community. By repetition over time and in varying degrees of formality, institutions develop. Opportunities are an emergent quality from those interactions. This seems akin to observing that both the raindrop and the wider sea

contributed to the new wave washing upon the shore. Sen suggests that capabilities (interchangeably called freedoms) are rooted in moral rights and are contingent on the social context of use (Ballet et al, 2007, p. 188). In Nussbaum's view, your own capability stands next to that of others and is irreducible. These core rights are maintained across cultures, regardless of circumstances. The question remains if you have irreducible capability, how do women move to irreducible agency (*libertas*) to express that capability. This brings us back to how group-level agency might support expression of that capability.

Sen and Dreze's (1999) argument bring it to a collective level and is to say there is mutuality of interest in protecting each other's freedoms (capabilities). "Since freedoms are important, people have reason to ask what they should do to help each other in defending or promoting their respective freedoms" (Sen, 2006, p. 338). The responsibility of individuals arises from their freedoms and from the rights of others. He does not say one is contingent upon the other i.e., my freedom depends on you protecting mine and your freedom depends on me defending yours. However, this seems to be an implicit assumption of mutuality and recognition. Yet against what is freedom being defended? The actions of each to each other is a form of mutual restraint and support. This is free men in Roman times trading with each other knowing each had an incentive to preserve the trading rights of the others. There is contemporary literature that trade may lead to fairer norms. Agneman & Chevrot-Bianco (2022) observed that there was less unfairness or bias in trade with strangers than between known individuals within a community. Engaging with others breaks the deeply enmeshed social ties and informal norms that prevail. Fairness is more mutually assured between trading strangers. Hence, expansion in trading agency for a woman may result in she is acting in a role that is of commercial agent, not freighted in this interaction with the multiplicity of her other social responsibilities.

This chapter proposes researchers conceptualise group freedom with regard to these two main ancient streams of thought. It is protection by the group of each other's freedom: trading helps freedom from domination or from non-interference. Sen frames mutuality more narrowly as: "members in a society, in the same way that they benefit from interactions, should also accept the major need of their mutual obligations" (Sen, 1996, p. 91). "These reciprocal obligations generate mutual responsibilities that arise from the

conciliation of each partner's freedoms" (Ballet et al., 2007 p. 189). To paraphrase, this appears to be a version of internalised norms, of "I will watch your back, and you watch mine so we may both exercise our free choices with each other, with our wider society and so we are mutually free." Self-restraint taken on as a responsibility towards others is therefore also a form of reciprocal self-interest and a support for an entrepreneur trading in a market. Where exchange occurs, there is mutuality of support for each other's freedom to develop opportunities. This does not necessarily lead to expansion of agency in the private domain but gives some parity within the public domain: it is in the interests of trading men that females trading with them will watch their back and he, hers.

Beyond this idea of duality of trade, one can also look at the larger market collective in which an entrepreneur may operate. Departing from Weber (1965), Nussbaum (2011) moves beyond the idea that society is an aggregate of its individuals or that social change is a causal line to individuals within it, a methodological individualism of approach, the "great man" view of history (Carlyle, 1840). Rather Nussbaum (2011) proposes that we become responsible for each other's freedom. Yet beyond mutual or dual exchanges is this intrigue. How might we also lift aspiration, encouraging an individual beyond those transactional interests as a freedom then expressed. How might they add to the collective capability for action and so "achieve states of being that would not be possible when acting alone" (Ballet et al., 2007, p. 197). This would make the social aggregate greater than the sum of individuals' exchange. Ballet et al. (2017) did not develop this thought to commercial mutuality, but it is sympathetic with views of trade by McCloskey (2016) as bringing mutual esteem to all trading parties in the eyes of wider society who recognize their role in social wealth creation.

To expand upon this perspective, it would follow that the pooling and therefore sharing of responsibilities leads to collective responsibility. Likewise, the pooling of liberty then assures collective freedom. A similar concept works at the macro level of pooled sovereignty. This is where the collective of states assumes shared responsibility for the rights and freedoms of the constituent members such as in the European Union. This perspective, to enquire as to the end purpose of collectivity, is not within Nussbaum or Sen's analysis. It is the deeper question of why we may achieve higher levels of human well-being or betterment by pooling into a collective. People working together in a collective institution such as a venture might accomplish more together. It is also unclear

how multiple ventures operated by women in a given contexts may lead to the shifting of informal and constraining social norms for other women therein. If they combined more tightly, networked into a loose collective, are their freedoms as commercial agents more guaranteed by being part of that group than as an individual? Do other aspects of agency accelerate to give her more confidence to challenge informal norms. Can she use her voice to assert herself more in society? It is unclear how moving from a solo actor to being part of a collective with others doing similar activities might further expand one's freedoms. Yet that is the history of social advancement for women (Beard, 2018; Brown, 1997). The pathway to emancipation for wider women from individual empowerment is still theoretically opaque.

7.7 Extended freedom for emotional expression

The desire to move from *cum permissio* and *libertas* may fuel revolutionary fervour for institutional structures that advance non-domination. This urge to move out from under another's dominion has fuelled post-colonial discourse (Kohn & Reddy, 2017) in the wish for self-determination. This moves society to "the pursuit of freedom as non-domination for all" as both a Roman and modern aspiration so extending beyond the "non-domination for the few" (Pettit, 2016: 19). However, institutional change is recursive, the influence of structure upon the individual or group and the impact of the individual or group on the structure (Giddens, 1984). Such progress cannot be expected to be linear. The socially embedded literature on entrepreneurship sings this refrain from multiple keys, stressing the fluid, recursive nature of entrepreneurship in a spatial, culturally rich context (Anderson et al., 2019; Korsgaard et al., 2022). A review of the literature on female entrepreneurship indicates that advances in raising the rate of venture participation and venture success rely on skills and capability building (Datta & Gailey, 2012; Scott et al., 2020), role models (Anyansi-Archibong, 2021; Khan, 2019) as well as legislative structures that advance gender equality. Intentionality behind legislation is unclear: more solo female ventures or ventures that advance fuller liberty for women? The former might enhance economic development and personal financial empowerment. But the latter requires more nuanced policy and research focus. More conceptualisation needs to be given as to how enhanced emancipation, *libertas*, can emerge from entrepreneurship rather than leaving the informal norms largely unchanged and her will still subject to the caprice of another.

A call has also emerged for a heightened focus on axiology, a return to exploring the underlying values that give meaning to entrepreneurship, to the venturer, the business and wider society (Anderson & Smith, 2007). This call for a deeper appreciation of values also has a feminist angle. Speaking of the dominant neo-classical economic model, Beneria (2003) states: “the model is gender-biased because it downplays the traits of interdependence and emotion that are so much a part of being human — yet so often associated with or encouraged only in women” (Beneria, 2003, p. 125). What should we do with a more value-laden view, particularly as it pertains to considering freedom? Nussbaum suggests a more emotionally weighted freedom (capability) to “live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves, to love . . . to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude and justified anger” (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 41). Freedom can be inclusive of the freedom to feel and the freedom to associate with others for emotional rather than transactional reasons. Indeed, the freedom to be motivated by feeling rather than rational measures might be the inner freedom sought as people reconcile their outlives with their inner values. This concurs with other social sciences insights that suggests we are primarily emotionally driven, and rationality is an ex-post-facto justification (Kahneman, 2011). Freedom to feel and choose accordingly is a freedom to be oneself.

The female socialised experience might allow for greater articulation of inner emotional reality. This is a gendered expression which can allow one to give attention "to affiliation and emotion, as well as to freedom and reason" (Nelson, 2004, p. 309). When it comes to human economic development, this approach of emotional longing aligns with much in socially contextualised entrepreneurship. It identifies the value of “belonging” to identity and wellbeing given our relational natures. This seeks to “move beyond the neo-classical economic model of rational choice” (Nelson, 2004, p. 310). This is pertinent to the reality of female entrepreneurship which is often embedded within a family context. Emotional content transcribes an abstract concept of duty and responsibility into emotional ties of family obligation, care, and reproductive labour. Whether or not these obligations are freely chosen by her is one aspect. Nelson’s observation is that responsibilities that precede a woman’s venture are formed within emotionally laden relationships rather than being commercially transactional.

“Caring labour, such as working with children or caring for the sick or elderly, is unintelligible without consideration of affiliation and emotion. The ‘economic man’ of Neoclassical theory neither has a need for care nor is motivated to provide it. It is primarily a matter of interdependence due to vulnerability, feelings of responsibility, and the desire to connect with others in meaningful ways that make ‘caring labour’ happen”

(Nelson, 2004, p. 310)

Whether it is to family first or commitments to others, Nelson (2004) adds emotional framing to the sense of belonging in place and identity plus a desire to affiliate with others: “A person who is connected feels grounded, whole, not alone, part of something bigger and interdependent, and senses a reason for being in the world” (Nelson, 2004, p. 314). This motive force, to connect and feel is identified as an inner engine behind our decision making: “Emotions are what make us desire freedom or desire the use of reason” (Nelson, 2004, p. 314). Critically, Nelson (2004) conceives freedom as extreme individualism, the cutting off of all associations with others to generate autonomy, a severance with emotional imperturbability. To cast those relationships aside is to cast the responsibilities that were shared back onto others, often other women or another subjugated groups who take this emotional and relationship labour on as their own. This model is not found within male entrepreneurship, it is a novel addition where on top of responsibilities, comes a venture. This is a gynocentric model of freedom that is integrated with others. Nelson’s identifies that burden shifting to expand the scope of an individual’s personal choice and decision making is not a collective gain in freedom. It is instead a reallocation of burden and risk bearing which is closer to the androcentric model of male entrepreneurs relying on extended family support. This does not extend female agency. The individualistic rational man approach may enhance individual freedom but has not brought net rewards to groups in agency although financial or other material rewards may emerge. The more likely outcome is greater hierarchy as non-material obligations for social production are fulfilled by others. The realms of social and economic reproduction become more gendered and distant from each other. Female agency regresses.

Yet in a socially embedded context, ultimate freedom for women cannot be ultimate disconnection. The relational aspects of human emotion and the search for affiliation are

an impetus to human expression. Emancipation, the structural movement towards increased freedoms of the whole group, may not to be found in burden shifting but in including more opportunities to be jointly shared and developed. Analysis needs to be at the group-level of opportunity development and responsibility sharing. An individual experience of a solo female entrepreneur is situated within this hidden web of interpersonal dynamics and to assume detachment from others to advance herself is unrealistic and undesired.

By exploring such moral and value-laden aspects of female entrepreneurship, we can make a significant contribution both to human development and moral valence that leads to the emancipation that follows. The next advance would be to apply an ethical approach that sympathetically bridges the contextual reality of a women's life and the desire to expand her capabilities to "entreprendre". This should include how individual capability expansion led to greater emancipation for herself and others. For this we return to Nussbaum who starts with recognizing the inner worth of women beyond their social or economic roles.

7.8 Looking to Capabilities to build the Capacity for Exercising Freedom

"We strive for a clearer understanding of what it is that respectively increases and diminishes freedom. If freedom matters, how can we make judgements as to whether one policy, political system or social arrangement serves its pursuit better than another? Is there a way to compare different social states in terms of the freedom that people enjoy in them?"

(Binder, 2019: 2)

"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

(Frankl, 1946, p.)

"The real wealth of a nation are its peoples"

(Hahbub ul Haq, UNDP, Pakistan 1990)

The Human Capabilities Approach developed by Martha Nussbaum, with considerable influence by Amartya Sen, looks beyond the descriptive and culturally varied qualities of life to the underlying conditions for female flourishing. Her critique of economic measures (Nussbaum, 2011) as a method to assess human development echoes that of Dodd et al., (2021) in extending beyond the financial metrics of a venture, revenue, profit, scale of economic impact. It consciously digs beneath the complexities and variety of human lives. It asks, what are people actually able to do and be, and what opportunities are available to them (Nussbaum, 2011). This seeks to establish shared universal human values, the *etic*, such as equality and respect for dignity.

What is omitted within Nussbaum's approach is an exploration of how we might migrate from individual freedoms as empowerment to collective emancipation. There is no intersect with the flow identified in Alkhaled and Berglund (2018) or with other collective feminist movements (Brown, 1997). There is some limited literature on the diffusion of empowerment (Akter & Chindarkar, 2020) which suggests there is significant outward diffusion of empowerment, initially within a family, even if not co-located but networked to other households and then beyond family with durable effects. There is also resistance. An increase in domestic violence can be seen as women assert themselves beyond established roles and there is a near absence of research analysis on male backlash to female economic advancement (Manne, 2018). Self-help groups also amplify empowerment (Brody et al., 2017). This builds confidence in a woman using her voice to extend agency. This helps resolve domestic disputes, networking, and brings enhanced community respect.

7.9 Antecedents to Nussbaum (and Sen)

The central molten core of Nussbaum's belief is her wish to maximise human potential. Opportunities are her means. This is conceptually proximate to a freedom to explore developing a new business idea. "You ought to be able to do what you have in mind and if you aren't able then it is a failure of justice" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 123). The connection of human opportunities with ideas of basic entitlement and justice integrates across several traditions of thought: Western as well as Indian and Chinese. Her primary source for conceptualising freedom is Aristotle's writings on choice: "no action counts as virtuous in any way unless it is mediated by the person's own thought and selection" (Aristotle in Ferguson, 1972). Although written about non-interference from politicians,

this can also be understood within a gender context in that a woman's right to pursue an opportunity is of most impact when it is her own idea, unmediated by others. A life without choice is unworthy of the dignity of human beings (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 125). This is conceptually furthered if we propose that the more choices a woman makes from her own position and context, the more she releases her inner potential.

Aristotle saw the role of society and its politicians as developing individuals' capabilities or opportunities. It was their obligation to remove the impediments to a meaningful choice. Freedom is enhanced by increasing capabilities and then letting people choose as they so wished. Freedom was to have expression through choices, through personal will but an optimal life was not through pursuit of wealth through those choices, nor a life of hedonism. The aim was to "lead a flourishing life in accordance with their choice" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 128). The focus was on individual emancipation of one's potential and from that, society will also flourish as: "the good of each is what preserves each" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 127). Aristotle did not espouse universal rights. His focus was on the Athenian male citizen. Stoicism later broadened this to suggest that all humans have dignity. This gives us an ethical capacity that makes social distinctions secondary. Abuse is then structures or actions that make human dignity subject to the arbitrary will of another. Structurally, abuse is also to allow a social stratification that allows some to tyrannise others (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 130). Thus, to negate a woman's dignity is to constrain her free choice. To make her will subject to that of another or to maintain her in a position where her will is constrained is abuse in Stoical understanding. Therefore, institutions' role is to physically protect the individual and to recognize that humans have an inner ethical capability to make decisions for themselves. The role of the state and family is drawn very tightly, only interceding to prevent physical harm.

Devlin (1965) thought similarly: that private morality should not be the basis of laws constraining others. This echoes Mill (1859) that "man must be allowed to pursue his own good in his own way" (Devlin, 1965, p. 103). This rejected state paternalism in favour of individual freedom of choice. Devlin considered where the line of paternalism might be drawn and "for your own good" was rejected in favour of a narrower view of when your actions affect another's physical wellbeing. Other factors, reputation, or self-harm were insufficient to constrain personal liberty of choice and action. Institutional laws should neither be used to enforce morality nor "to force a man to do what is in his

own moral good” (Devlin, 1965, p. 134). This principle would also inviolate the pervasive family concerns on the immaterial risks of reputational harm upon family honour and the policing of women’s movement. Devlin would see this as an excessive constraint upon her liberty and where the state should intercede to ensure her freedom of choice. The scope for limitation is actual physical risk and “moral” considerations are of limited institutional concern. Many informal social norms are positioned within an axiology of morals considering a woman’s actions as “right or wrong” in the eyes of others or within different value systems. These are particularly constraining for women embedded in a paternalistic and moralistic contexts. They reflect concerns for what is “our own good” rather than “for your own good.” Women are the burden carrier of reputational value for the family or community as a vessel of a collective ephemeral, rather than physical, risk. Positioning her as the “container” of the group’s collective reputational value severely constrains her freedom (Kalden et al., 2017).

This tension between the desires of some to have authority over others versus the desire to have autonomous liberty was identified by Mill (1859). This is also seen within the entrepreneurship literature of women struggling to extend their liberty from the restricted and institutional bounds of family authority and informal norms (Anderson & Ojediran, 2021). The academic literature is agnostic as to the moral weight of social norms whereas the Mill (1859) and Devlin (1965) tradition would be to veer to the side of liberty. This liberal tradition of thought tries to restrict formal institutions, including law, being used to express the contrary impulse to dominate. The parallel would be to ask how entrepreneurship might become integral to furthering human dignity, freedom and escape from domination. This envisages an Aristotelian-oriented practice in the act of personal emancipation. It is a daily act of deciding, without being subjugated to the will of another. It is to imagine and then create something new rather than be content with the old.

7.10 On the axiology of freedom – what goal do we value?

A wider question then emerges. Nussbaum considers that the freer women are in their ability to choose, the higher their inner capabilities are released. Human capital expands overall. The principle of a free market is that it respects individual free choices to put a value on goods and services that are exchanged. Does that imply that the freer women are then the more the “free market” will operate optimally? What are the implications for developing countries if so and has this been a missed theoretical link? Perhaps freer

people expect freer institutions and less unencumbered forms of exchange. There is no logical order to this but more a mass of fluid interaction and the question empirically is what happens if a dollop of additional freedoms gets thrown into the market mix. Countries which have seen a significant regime change towards liberalism from centrist control may show a non-gendered answer to this, at least directionally. The most startling example of this perhaps is Estonia (OECD, 2022) as well Welter and Smallbone (2008) also looking at innovative trading across Eastern European borders. Both contexts show women adopting novel ways of taking advantage of new freedoms in a rapidly changing market. Estonia has seen a concomitant rise in personal freedoms alongside a freer society and gender participation: “Estonia is progressing towards gender equality faster than other EU Member States” (Gender Equality Index Report 2022, p.6). The impulse to express greater female freedom through their commercial action seems apparent.

The inverse is also a question, do freer markets facilitate greater personal freedoms for women? Boettke & Candela (2017) suggest that there is broadening of tolerance within social norms as commercial returns are generated. Their 2017 article proposes market development as the generator of liberty as a social level phenomenon. Cumulative building of institutional norms gradually extend liberty to the individual as social prosperity increases in an intertwined positive spiral. This is an echo of McCloskey’s (2016) analysis but more specifically sees this link between flourishing of innovation and experimentation of entrepreneurship and loosening social norms. This starts to answer the question of which comes first: the social norms for enterprise or informal social norms of liberty to allow the ideas of such enterprises to develop. It is difficult to discern how this might affect the gendered structure of norms, but one can speculate that constraints come as an aggregate bundle, a framework of adherence to certain norms. If one aspect of freedom opens up, other norms may loosen.

Aristotle maintains that we cannot determine what a just constitution is. Formal institutional norms of a society for its citizens first require reflecting on what constitutes a desirable life. Rawls (1971) argued that the principles of justice that define our rights should not rest on any conception of virtue as the best way to live. A just society respects each person's freedom to choose his or her own conception of what is good and there is no moral framework that supersedes all others. In the axiology of valuing how we make choices, Nussbaum (2011) could choose between the three main traditions of thinking

about the benefits of female entrepreneurship: advancing social welfare (Bentham, 1843) advancing freedom (Kant, 1785) or advancing virtue (Aristotle in Ferguson, 1972). The values espoused by Rawls (1971) on considering policy that is not redistributive but prioritises the improvement to the wellbeing of the most disadvantaged, is another.

This leads us back to the women themselves subject to these considerations. What is the point, the telos, of freedom for women? Is it to improve contextual welfare, their own economic standard of living and that of the wider society? Throughout the literature, this view prevails. Women in business are good for business (Bandiera et al., 2022) and good for society as it lifts living standards (Bruton et al., 2013). This is the utilitarian rationale given by governments and policy makers with the assumption that entrepreneurship would make us better off than we otherwise would be. It is unclear here whether women in this thinking are the means, the end, or both. Nussbaum (2011) rejects the view that virtue or morality should be an influence on who gains or who loses so prioritising female entrepreneurship over male participation would be wrong as it negates the dignity of all people to equally reach their potential. Gender is irrelevant when inner capability and dignity for all is the objective. Even if gender preference militates against progress in either direction, perhaps advancing entrepreneurship overall might have a moral quality if it advances capability development for all.

This is viewed sceptically by some (Anderson & Smith, 2007; Dodd et al., 2013) and explored positively by others (Nordstrom et al., 2020). At a macro level, McCloskey (2010) identified the social shift to value trade, traders, and by extension entrepreneurship, as a virtuous act, a manifestation of new bourgeois values. Reputation shifts are theorised as the motive force for the economic and social emergence of Northwest Europe since the Middle Ages. By embodying these bourgeois values of dignity and prudence, values shifted to valorise those not just born into wealth but who create it. This is an entrepreneurial identity based on the improvements to society brought through their actions. Advancing these values of prudence, justice, courage, temperance, faith, hope, and love is McCloskey's (2010) prescription for unlocking entrepreneurship in a country. It is proposed as expanding associated liberties for citizens through "trade tested betterment". Similar to Nussbaum (2006), McCloskey focuses on personal freedom or liberty as a principle based on the dignity of the individual. Pettit (2016) also

sees the larger aspiration as freedom from dominance by others but does not see this as releasing dignity but more an escape from the oppression of others' will.

Even with such emergent reputational freedoms, women face gender-based constraints related to reputation (Evans, 2022). If the act of starting a business itself was seen to generate more positive social reputation value within her community, would this result in more freedom for her? Or is it a feature of patriarchal societies that reputation either for women or for all is found elsewhere, outside of the arena of the marketplace? Therefore, is there less valorisation of these entrepreneurial characteristics in such societies and so all therein have less ability to carve out freedom through their expression? It is unclear which came first: trade affecting attitudes or attitudes affecting trade, but McCloskey proposes the latter. This means no situation is deterministic and trade may enhance the reputational value for women at some point. The challenge is how to lift her status within her social context if there is now less social regard for such venturing success. There may be a similar trade-off in workforce participation between women as an economic asset versus reputational asset. However, perhaps the trade-off in social weighting of values for female entrepreneurs is different. The trade-off might be purely reputational: the balance between reputation of a women within society and reputation as an embodiment of bourgeois virtues (McCloskey, 2010). These values are sufficiently broad that they may encompass values within traditional societies but “repackaged” for acceptability. This would be a future line of research.

Women also need to assess the risk of social backlash when starting a venture. Do family, primarily male members, feel they have more to lose to their own reputation by her acting as an entrepreneur than to gain? It is an open question whether an increase in her personal dignity (Nussbaum, 2011, McCloskey, 2010) is of weight to others. Current research exploring the rational economic trade-offs would say “of course female entrepreneurship is a net positive” as it allows women more autonomy and financial independence with other non-material gains in autonomy (confidence, skills). However, economics is not all. Shifts in the social order that shift her from subservience to a more equal position might be resisted. Her gain may be perceived as a male members immediate loss or perhaps presented as a reduction of unpaid care services to the wider family. That will be positioned as an active harm to others, either directly or reputationally. Research that

explores group-level expression of “why” there is male resistance on social loss grounds to her economic empowerment is absent in the literature.

Nussbaum (2006) rejects any approach to freedom that tells people how they should live their lives. In saying that morality and views on relative virtue are not pertinent, this represents a clear stance but sets up a clash of axiology. Nussbaum is projecting a judgment-neutral view of freedom onto many culturally conservative societies whose social norms run contrary to this. There, female freedom, and access to reputational assets are contingent on subjective judgments within the social context. Mill’s (1859) viewed that “to act because it is the custom makes no choice. He gains no practice, either in discerning or to discover what is best” (Mill, 1859, Ch 3). This idea could be extended to suggest that any action that enables a woman to make choices outside of the custom expected of her is gaining in practice developing discernment and that entrepreneurship is one such vehicle through which this could develop.

In her concept of freedom, Nussbaum (2006) references Mill (1859), that ultimate freedom is the full development of one’s faculties. She does not go as far as a libertarian view of unfettered markets with active intervention to remedy deficits in human capability. Instead, she adopts the core idea that if you do no harm to others, then institutions should not interfere with individual liberty. This includes protection from the majority trying to coerce you into how you ought to live and that “in body and mind the individual is sovereign” (Sandel, 2010, p. 51).

Nussbaum navigates through these points by relying heavily on Kant’s view of freedom, on the innate rights of man as a reasoning being, rooted neither in morality nor in the satisfaction of desires. We are free beings as our reason makes us capable of acting and choosing freely (Kant, 1785). According to Nussbaum (2011), that which amplifies our ability to act freely is an additional tool for emancipation, allowing us the freedom to be ourselves. Kant views us acting without autonomy as heteronomy where we act in accordance with social norms in a non-reflective way which does not advance our freedom.

What none of these thinkers considered is the level of frustration expressed by female entrepreneurs (Dheer et al., 2019). Women know they are capable of acting outside of the norms. However, she chooses not to because she makes a brutal calculation of the

difficulties that might ensue. Not acting outside of social norms is not being irrational but a measured response to the confines of her embedded social context. It is patronising to assume that she is *ad idem* with her social norms. She may be well aware of the gap between her path to freer expression and the social norms that would lead to a counteraction against it. Her desire to be free is matched by equal but opposing forces that work to contain her. Some compassion for her position is called for. It is helpful that she is seen in policy terms as the end point of politics. She has a life maximised and is not the means through which others gain empowerment, a handmaiden of sorts to others' goals: family, government, or society.

7.11 The Capabilities Framework

Instead of considering all of us to have equal potential and capacity, Nussbaum examines how each of us has a unique endowment. At a macro, social level, each person in society is an end rather than a means for the benefit of others. Freedom involves gaining personal freedom: the freedom to choose between opportunities, and the role of society is to maximize those opportunities for citizens to live free lives. Each may decide for themselves as an act of self-determination and unequal access to this freedom is evidence of structural inequalities that require change to advance social justice. To Nussbaum (2011), it falls to government and policy to intervene to correct this and the burden of change. "Political labour" is not upon the disadvantaged themselves to solve their own inequalities on the receiving end. This also implies that governments should not take a neutral stance or withdraw from their role in keeping the balance between people's right to pursue freedoms in their lives and other pressures of conformity or authority over them. Nussbaum proposes an international framework for social justice built upon thresholds of minimum acceptability. These thresholds are not absolute rights but indicate a gradation in which this would be the minimum accepted standard for women to obtain within a culture. It provides a novel framework of substantial freedoms for researchers to evaluate the level of emancipation emerging from female entrepreneurship in the context of "what is the person able to do and to be" (Nussbaum, 2011, pg. 20).

There is a parallel dynamic familiar to practitioners of institutional theory. The internal freedoms and capabilities blend interacting internal and external factors. The external institution is not seen as a cumulative barrier, a norm that is hard to change. Nussbaum instead focuses on the corresponding constraint or opportunity to function that can be

challenged . This will allow the inner freedom to choose to be expressed. It is the freedom itself that is of intrinsic value (Nussbaum, 2006, pg. 25) not just the action associated with it.

7.12 Priority freedoms

Apart from the dual parsing of freedom from domination and freedom from interference (Pettit, 2016), which freedoms most embody emancipation, empowerment or indeed release from subjugation? Do we need to privilege financial freedom over non-material freedom in entrepreneurship or the converse? Sen and Nussbaum valorise individual freedoms under the axiology of social justice founded upon the principle of equal dignity (Stanford, 2022). This would be a common threshold that society should meet under which no citizen should fall. It is this nuance of a minimum threshold and the ability to resolve inter-value conflict around maximising dignity that differentiates capabilities from human rights. If gendered social norms conflict with achieving dignity for women, then legislative support would take precedence over the constraining norms. Nussbaum is clear that traditions that curtail female dignity need to be challenged whilst accepting and respecting the wider tenets of local faith or culture. Freedoms are rooted in the person as part of their entrepreneurial empowerment and not in the collective.

Table 7.1: Adaptation of Capability Theory to Entrepreneurship

Capability or Freedom	Helps enter entrepreneurship	Boosted by entrepreneurship
Sense, imagination and thought	Using the imaginative capacity of the mind to envisage a new commercial entity, market opportunity and competitive edge.	Freedom to envision
Emotions	To navigate by human emotion to understand underlying needs both to meet them commercially and personally. To recognise colleagues as holistic people in a venture motivated by non-material affective needs beyond material gains	Freedom to express hopes and aspirations more widely both in exchange with others, family but also increased emotional literacy from the experience of dealing with others holistically. Perhaps an ability to better navigate the fears and concerns within the private domain as venture results progress.
Practical reason	Executive functioning to attract and organise resources into a structured venture	Increased confidence in the freedom to use one cognitive capacities and problem solve
Affiliation	Ability to attract others to an initiative and give affirmation of their human value as part a collective identity. To treat and treat others on the basis of being a fellow person of dignity regardless of social differentiators	Freedom and experience to collaborate and support other women; greater empathetic capability to network and build partnership within and outwith the existing social context; having a better sense of person identity
Play	To bring an element of joy and pleasure, of shared endeavour to a venture to motivate and maintain group spirit	To express the positives of change in a way that engages others and so overcomes resistance by bringing them along though joy and emotional engagement.
Control over environment: a) Political b) Material	a) Advocating by using one's voice to represent oneself and others. Not being afraid to enter the public domain. b) Having access to finance, assets, or other forms of capital on an equal basis; entering contracts on an equal basis; retaining and dispersing of financial gains as one chooses within gender legal equal laws	A) Using one's voice to promote and share with others in the public domain, not because they are politically conscious per se but as an expression of experience and empathy to speak out B) Participating in shared institutions with a united female voice - Ability to share in commonly held assets either private and financial or natural in the public commons

7.13 Control over environment

The next challenge would be to ask what would be the minimum threshold for a female entrepreneur, not as an effect but as an opportunity to enhance capability? The literature

lays out many of the curtailments the female entrepreneur must overcome but if we are to adopt the capabilities approach; it requires us to be context agnostic in terms of minimums. Therefore, this chapter proposes a model for debate:

- **Sense imagination and thought:** the freedom to dream of what might be as a commercial or social venture and have this peer-reviewed independent of any immediate social scrutiny and no associated limitations placed upon her aspiration.
- **Emotions:** freedom to have hope and to be motivated by the desire to achieve her commercial potential and to bring benefit from so doing to herself and others she cares about as an expression of love.
- **Practical reason:** freedom to develop at least one commercial venture idea, development of practical applied skills in early-stage venturing, provision of basic enterprise education in secondary school.
- **Affiliation:** freedom to contact other women entrepreneurs or others seeking to create new social ventures, freedom to create or join a community-based self-help group with other women
- **Play:** the freedom to enjoy the contacts, time, and relationships that may flow from her venturing activities.
- **Political** – freedom to use her voice in the public domain on matters relating to her business endeavour, freedom to influence formal and informal norms as part of any public participatory process on an equal basis
- **Material** – freedom to equal access to microfinance and growth capital as required and on equal commercial terms, freedom to retain assets as earned under her own control; freedom to disperse assets within external or family undue influence

7.14 Confronting informal social norms through a capabilities approach

Nussbaum's (2011) emphasis within her philosophy is to optimise potential. Emancipation is to see human abilities as nascent, requiring further development to optimise human dignity. Income is not for the sake of income, but for the sake of expanding capabilities. Structural inequalities are viewed as a direct reduction in the capabilities of affected individuals and therefore must be remedied to enable emancipation. The challenge Nussbaum (2011) makes is to assert that the private family domain is no longer off-limits to public scrutiny and sanction. She directly confronts the "obstacles to women's equality caused by an uncritical adherence to tradition". In this she rejects cultural relativism. To not do so was "to leave a little piece of feudal history uncriticized and liberalism is rightly subversive of all hierarchies based on birth or status" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 147). In parts of the developing world, the gendered structural arrangements are still more feudal in character in that women are under the will of another with their freedom of choice significantly curtailed (Yunis et al., 2018). To adopt the stance that the advance of female emancipation is to challenge the family structures within which women operate may be blindingly self-evident but is fraught with difficulty. Who should do this? Is it for women themselves? By role models? By collective action? What has worked elsewhere? Nussbaum's (2006) proposal is to extend to all women the principles of universal rights and where there is a conflict between private domain morality and public institutional support for developing their human capabilities, the latter must prevail.

Nussbaum (2000) sets out this framework for the delicate reduction of constraining social norms in the private domain and a pathway to support economic and social development practice. It is no less pertinent when applied to entrepreneurship. Recognizing that religion should be protected at a state level and that is it "usually in alliance with longstanding traditions and ...is often the source of difficult dilemmas as certain religious demands may run afoul of the demands of sex equality" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 147). Where these are in conflict, the protection of central human capabilities should pull rank, they are "a compelling state interest" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 147). She sees no accommodation of gender repression for religious or cultural reasons. It is for local religious leaders to parse their practice as a free exercise of faith but that which enforces gender inequality is

challenged at a state level. Gender equality laws would then take precedence. It is naïve to think this will change gender inequality “just like that”. There cannot be coercion. Informal norms often prevail if laws are too culturally distant to those affected making enforcement notoriously difficult without a shared social consensus. However, the state framing its laws to protect human potential is an intellectually coherent way to address all religious, cultural, and secular traditions consistently. This is not to say the family private domain is to under public scrutiny but those elements at odds with human potential are not immune from legal regulation. Reputational norms such as shame or disapproval are deeply embedded cultural norms and will be challenged by the capability approach as will the scope of control being drawn outside of non-material harms. The state should not therefore be using its authority to endorse inequality by inaction or passivity.

Nussbaum (2006) proposes that a studied neutrality between authority and liberty will not advance economic development nor gender equality. It requires an active stance furthering the principles of developing human capabilities. This must delicately reconcile conflicts with socially contextualised resistance by choosing what advances liberty. If that includes supporting female entrepreneurship as a pathway to emancipating a woman’s inner dignity, there is now a coherent rationale for challenging the informal norms that constrain it. There are additional difficulties within a theocracy. It is unclear how the capabilities approach, which is essentially to privilege public law over private faith, will succeed when faith and state authority are as one. That challenge is beyond the scope of this chapter’s bailiwick of framing the general principles for female entrepreneurship.

7.15 Applied to research.

Current research on emancipation through female entrepreneurship within socially embedded contexts identifies the dynamics within various locations. Where apt, it highlights gender injustice and encourages a collective policy response. Underweighted in the literature is the role of the state as a purveyor and enforcer of many formal institutional influences reflecting both constraining and liberating forces. There is little to indicate how policy development regarding formal norms has resulted in more deregulation or freedoms for women on the ground pursuing entrepreneurship. Yet this remains a policy objective of many governments: policy and legislative support to

advance the rate of female venturing within society. The literature is silent as to how policy development navigates the informal and formal norms that reflect that society's axiology. Nussbaum (2006) references the need for state level legal and policy changes to better shift the balance towards female liberty and away with the veil of authority over women. Scholarship could identify which capabilities could be developed through a practice of entrepreneurship. It could also identify how to protect a fledging expression of women making a choice to grasp an opportunity at inception. These priorities align with Nussbaum pursuit of releasing inner human potential.

There is much to understand about how women may use a shift or a change at the formal legislative level to overcome the informal norms when they are in conflict. An informal norm may seem insurmountable for the woman in her social context even if the law supports her. An example might be her right to family assets through inheritance: the law says she has a fair proportion, but formal practice may exclude her (Zameen, 2022). How does a woman invoke this law when conflict arises in the private domain of the home? This is fraught with difficulty but understanding the nuances of family resistance to her emancipation, be it reputational or navigating other forms of conflicting demands upon her and her role, would be a welcome contribution to policy makers interested in female emancipation. This shifts the research agenda from identification and problematization to practice. It can explore ways the UNSDG's can be met through seeing female entrepreneurship as a life exercise in releasing human capability and potential whilst meeting the minimum thresholds in upholding female dignity.

7.16 Applying the Human Capabilities approach to Female Emancipation through Entrepreneurship

To use the vignette approach of Nussbaum, let us to imagine the entrepreneur and see her as a person, "what would we think is salient about her story?" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 4). We will observe a female entrepreneur as a concerned observer might see her. We may see a woman of 35 who was married with one son and was running a sustainable venture in Jaipur, Rajasthan in partnership with her mother (Ripples in Time, Whitfield 2022). We would observe new enablers and constraints to her level of empowerment. A suggestion of Nussbaum's framework is applied on her life: (author's analysis).

Table 7.2: Applied example of capability theory on venture analysis

Capability or Freedom	Enabler of freedom	Constraint of freedom
Sense, imagination and thought	- bubbling with new ideas which are rapidly trialled. - entre business is a manifestation of her creative capability.	- Her business decisions are made with a view to her Hindu influenced concept of a Karma balance sheet which will be carried into her next reincarnation.
Emotions	- Extremely happy when being creative, - Pride: Refused to take on a new client when he asked her for her turnover for “due diligence” purpose. -	- Backlash: Marriage broken in the background, husband is with several other women, she is not pursuing other relationships. - Her parents in law resent her success as somehow shaming / showing up their son and so publicly belittle her work - Her husband was embarrassed that his wife started off selling 10-rupee recycled cotton bags
Practical reason	- Very tough and logical in building her business across digital platforms	- Challenged by family and male peers as to her organic growth strategy, no external finance
Affiliation	- Building a network of local women workers - Looks after children of workers. - Increasing amount of time spent looking to pass on skills to other women start-ups, particularly on low-cost digital marketing. - Creates a range of products at a breakeven / loss as it would bring in more poor female artisans	- day is structured around dropping her son off the school having lunch with her parents. - Her workers all work within the confines of their own homes (as does she) -
Play	- Very playful dress, creation of Instagram posts and with others	- Non apparent.
Control over environment: a) Political b) Material	a) Voice: not active in public politics but very visible in the public sphere in podcasts, marketing promotions - Seen as an exemplar of new venture creation by the Indian government	A) No men in business, cannot hire a male to help expand (social norm) B) Assets are held in husbands name though she created the economic value. - Personal presentation: Her attire is a mix of casual western clothes but at other times traditional sari/ kurti. Her mother is always dressed in kurti.

7.17 Conclusion

This chapter proposes a deeper conceptualisation of female emancipation to enrich the literature on the question as to how entrepreneurship may expand person and collective agency. It offers a detailed framework developed from the capabilities thinking of Nussbaum. Shifts in agency bring shifts towards the fuller release of human potential. That in turn is a graduated process from being subject to the will of another to full liberatory capacity. The sub-categories of how agentic expression is made manifest from play, emotion, and affiliation are set out and then applied against a known case study in female entrepreneurship. This approach gives scholars a more granulated level of description to assess the impact of entrepreneurship and use examples to demonstrate how it is identified in empirical research practice. This also provides a theoretical foundation to guide policy makers to maximize the social and emancipatory effect of venturing and inclusion initiatives, as well as measures of financial impact for the founder and economic impacts for the wider economy.

If we accept the argument that entrepreneurship policy and endeavours would primarily be for the benefit of the economic and social well-being of the woman herself rather than using her as a conduit for others' betterment, the question of the macro purpose of entrepreneurship becomes clearer. It is a force for public advancement not only for economic well-being but for the release of the collective potential of its citizens. This is akin to other "public goods" where policy is guided by the goal of nurturing public resources for the benefit of all. Although this would be gender neutral, the capacity of women's ventures to bring economic diversification and social transformation shifts their efforts from being a source of conflict with their social production roles to a revered role in the regeneration and preservation of economic and social capability on which the future generations would thrive. To release a woman's potential to create new value is both to aid herself and expand her agency but also expands the potential for all.

This is consistent with the vision of Ostrom (2012) in the management of shared external resources, the commons of local resources. Applying a capabilities framework is a first step to supporting and developing the intangible pool of human potential for mutual benefit of both society and the individual.

CHAPTER 8

CHALLENGING THE ORTHODOXY OF POWER DYNAMICS IN THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF INFORMAL NORMS WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Chapter 8

Challenging the orthodoxy of power dynamics in the epistemology of informal norms within Institutional Theory

8.1 Purpose and Structure

This chapter contends that institutional theory places excessive emphasis on the dynamics of power and conflict as a theorised mechanism behind changing informal norms. The scope of this chapter is pertinent to literature on female emancipation thorough entrepreneurship, but observations are applicable beyond this. Expanding from North's (1990) proposals on power dynamics, prominent scholars such as Scott (2001) have added a significant corpus to institutional theory. Their thinking that power dynamics shape institutional norms is a dominant thesis within the social sciences. In Google Scholar, North's 1990 book has over 73,000 citations and Scott's book, 37,000 citations. Both authors works are applied as a lens to examine different contextual factors that enable or inhibit entrepreneurship to emerge. A dynamic of different powers competing for influence is applied at micro (entrepreneur, firm), meso (local context, sector) and macro (government, supranational institutions) levels. The current theory privileges power and there appears to be a lack of heterodox approaches applied to extend conceptualisation of norms. Scott (2001) expresses the difficulties and cultural nuances that informal norms present, confirming that further theorisation may be required.

This chapter is a response to that call for theoretical plurality on conceptualising how informal norms are created and changed. A start point is to note that power is used as a mechanism of change, but little is proposed in the literature as to the purpose of informal norms and the role of group intent they reflect. The accretion of power, as proposed by North (1990) is not accepted as an adequate dominant narrative supporting institutional theory. Power to do what, over whom is the logical query, and this requires understanding deeper group purpose. This chapter explores how plurality of purpose behind informal norms might contribute to an understanding of the social constraints upon female entrepreneurship.

The assumptions in the literature are that the pursuit of power leads to contestation between groups as foremost expressed through formal institutions. Researchers analyse

changes in policy, power groups and subsequent shifts in formal norms through the interplay of many related factors. Rarely is the question asked of "why?" It might seem self-evident that power is an end in itself, but this is an assumption challenged by this chapter. Findings in other research fields exploring norm formation theorise an orientation around a social group purpose beyond power. A premise of institutional theory is to advance the understanding of social progress through institutional change and the combination of forces which interact to change social norms. This premise of a structured and power orientated mechanism of change is inadequate to explain the phenomenon. A plurality of approaches would assist knowledge creation.

We begin this section with an imaginary thought experiment, a consideration of how to include such innovative approaches. This is followed by a reprise of knowledge on how informal norms are considered in institutional theory, noting the underweighting of feminist epistemology. A number of scholarly additions to the field of group norm formation are proposed. These contributions converge on an interpretivist, socially constructed epistemology that may broaden the discourse on emancipation in socially embedded female entrepreneurship. This chapter concludes with suggestions of how scholars may expand the underlying epistemology of informal norm formation within institutional theory and so offers a plurality of approaches that broadens the field. It invites scholar to investigate the underlying social motivations beyond the original conceptualisations of North (1990).

8.2 An introduction (to contrarian thinking).

Imagine if our perception of the world was not as it is as together we enter a playful thought experiment. Is our understanding of how the social world functions more of a reflection of our own imagination? Are we casting ourselves as sole actors blind to observing that we exist in an environment where our agency is integrated with others? This alternative view does not propose we are within a false reality or simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1981). Rather, maybe we have been looking at the wrong unit of analysis as our ontology. We see the individual as the source of knowledge, adding up each person's insight from their own perspective. This ontology rests upon the accumulation of individual insights as being representative of social reality. This is not the same as an ontology of the collective group beyond the interests or perspective of any one member. We see reality as based within the individual person rather than as multiple interactions

at a group-level beyond the individual. Furthermore, let us imagine that our decisions are more reflective of what advances the interests of the group we belong to. This is so even if group interests are unwitting and in conflict with what you think you wish or how to serve your individual interests. Imagine you are fine with the following trade-off: tight group membership in exchange for some lost decision-making autonomy. In such a scenario we may see social norms that swoop around the group. They do not actually shift but just evade capture. They emerge in other forms to constrain us within the group in other ways. Suppose also that an individual's private views are largely constant across the course of life and are hidden preferences hiding behind normative behaviour. And finally, what if those hidden preferences are largely impervious to persuasion, political advertising, government invective or social trends (Brown et al., 2022)?

Might this scenario, group-level valence over constant individual interests, be a partial explanation as to why socially constructed practices, beliefs and customs embedded in place do not alter substantively over time? External circumstances or outstandingly logical arguments appealing to either self or group interest seem to “fall on deaf ears.” Not much of substance changes although it might over generations as the population itself shifts. It is the case that initiatives to change gender practices in entrepreneurship have had a marginal but not fundamental impact (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). As Nussbaum states (2000, p. 11): “there is no country that treats its women as well as its men”. Because the efforts to change informal norms have had marginal impact, we might consider the limits that policy and research have made in generating norms change. This may be difficult to admit: that genuine and consistent efforts to improve social constraints on women may not have led to persisting change. The answer to this should not be to “try harder” in the same vein but to step back and consider: have we got this the wrong way round? Instead of looking at norms as if we could further shift them, why not ask what if it is impossible to do so? How do we then make social progress? In this case, how can we advance female empowerment through entrepreneurship (or otherwise)?

Assuming that informal norms do not shift other than at the margins, what would be the driving force for progressive social change in this scenario? New institutional norms imposed by force of legislation would cause a shift. Introducing official regulations, strict enforcement of legislation, structural changes with individual accountability, or a suitable sanction for non-compliance would be a top-down pressure for change. This would mean

that specific social or economic costs were associated with noncompliance with new, officially sanctioned norms. If the UN or other funding NGO's make development funding overtly contingent on the changing of laws that allow for gender equality, that would be an example of formal institutional influence that is currently observable. The UNSDG's as external supranational institution with reputational weight and financial might has brought a comparative spotlight on aligning legislative proposals on female equality across countries. The progress of how such gender equality laws are adopted is subject to a public dashboard comparing one country to another and is highly prescriptive as to the measures required to advance female empowerment (UN, 2022). What would one expect to see in this situation of superimposed formal norms as an external set of measures when it is at odds with informal cultural norms generating resistance. Slow adoption, limited enforcement, backlash, laggard dragging of feet as the cultural dissonance between formal and informal norms is expressed socially and informally.

We see examples of just such resistance through informal norms persisting when in conflict with new formal institutional norms. The continued passing of land in Pakistan and India to sons over daughters despite legal changes to the contrary (Zameen, 2022) is one. The laggard inclusion of women in male-only groups in Shetland, Scotland based on the highly disputable argument that it does not contradict the Equalities Act 2010 (BBC, 2022) is another. We also see the lack of police enforcement of a range of laws that protect women's freedom of movement and from assault in India (Narayanan, 2020). Informal norms persist even when it is in conflict with the new formal norms. This is not enough to change the practices affecting women's daily lived within social contexts dominated by constraining informal norms. Discussion on how to shape formal norms, whether through power dynamics or other means, are rather arcane when the informal norms remain the prime impediment.

This speculative world might be another level of deeper perception of reality, or it might be a misconception. However, there are striking similarities between it and our own. This research explores interdisciplinary and theoretical perspectives on shifting informal norms. A plurality of perspectives on informal social norms can assist us in understanding how they operate in female entrepreneurship.

8.3 Brief reprise of Informal Norms in Institutional theory

8.3.1 *Social norms and the market*

The core tenants of institutional theory as it relates to informal social norms were set out in the work of North (1990) and Scott (2001) as the primarily cited works used by scholars in the entrepreneurship field when applying institutional theory. More formal institutions were envisaged to function as part of a vision for an internationally accountable, rules-based world post-WW2 in a wave of modernist thinking. At local or national levels, a combination of political and economic laws plus secondary legislation and regulation (North, 1990) shaped the entrepreneurial environment. Informal institutions, where informality implies a lack of a definitive written codes and so more mutability in interpretation and change, may be no less binding upon an entrepreneur's actions. Opportunities are recognized, novel ideas are developed and access to resources is required to progress. Recognition of potential entrepreneurs and the exploitation of opportunities are also shaped by social norms (North, 1990).

Previously, one conceptualisation of how social context shapes the development of an economy, and so by extension its entrepreneurial players therein, was suggested by Polanyi (1957). The economy and its economic players were conceptualised not as static but collectively participating in the arc of historical change towards modern social structures. A prior epoch saw society contained and mediated the market through a mix of formal and informal institutional influences. Polanyi observed that the economy had started to outstrip the contextual limits of society. The economy now dominated and encompassed society with its inhabitants wielding a dwindling influence. This has advanced to the current state where the same engulfing mechanics of modern market systems (Tisdell, 2017) help maintain a pro-economic growth mentality beyond the hesitancy of its citizenry. In a socially embedded and controlled environment, the market may overpower previous local decision-making that relied on internal social norms to govern behavior. Weber (1920) suggested capitalism was a change agent within society but did not foresee that the wider market might encompass its makers. In such circumstances, formal and informal norms are “playing catch up” as they seek to contain economic interests greater than their constraining powers to do so. The horse was feared to have outgrown the rider and was dragging the rider behind it, as it were. Welter (2011) and those with more sociological sensitivity (McKeever et al. (2015) may disagree. In

many contexts, they illustrate how informal social norms continue to pervade entrepreneurship (Baker & Welter, 2020; Smallbone et al., 2010). Formal institutions still shape the framework of entrepreneurial endeavour (Davidsson et al., 2006; Acs & Karlsson, 2002) and a collective understanding within a society remains the underpinning of economic activity (Denzau & North, 1994). Yet a group-level view of society, ancient or modern, is under-applied within entrepreneurship or institutional theory more widely.

8.3.2 An androcentric perspective on competition for power

North (1990) positions progress as moving from social to legal contracts, from the impersonal to the formal as a motor of economic progress. Institutional thinking privileges this as the rational actor sanctifying decisions in structured contracts. This is “homo economicus” or “homo entrepreneurus” (Patriotta & Siegel, 2019) who navigates arrangements “between economic units that govern the ways in which these units can cooperate and/or compete” (Davis & North, 1971, p. 7). The hinterland of these rational actors also assumes male norms and values as universal and reproduce “the rational autonomous male subject of liberal polity” (Taylor & Vintges, 2004, p. 170). Modernity, as expressed through institutional theory is interactions proceeding on the basis of power displays between assumed males politely negotiating agreements between institutional structures. A gentlemanly discourse based on a relative weighting of positions over time leads to a change in formal, legislative norms. Is this the only model we should accept? Even in the early descriptions by North he allowed for doubt:

“When conflict of interest exists ... two sides of nearly equal strength, their model fails to predict well... the model yields particularly poor results: when the potential gains and losses are large and relatively equal but received and/or incurred by different groups.”

(David & North, 1971, p. 6).

Kalantaridis (2014, p. 154) observes the impact of powerplays in reducing social cohesiveness as this may “erode a culture of collectivity and satisfaction, which may delimit the political ambitions of reaching emancipation.” The desired rational power exchanges proposed by North see progress as moving away from these informal social arrangements to formal contracts as positive upon society. This is positive only if one ignores organic reality: the embedded nature of social contexts and its informal norms

in preference for a "cleaner" power structure. This presuming progress is to move away from informal human relationships to instead enter a simpler multi-nodal world structured through rational power trade-offs. He also accepts that informal norms are extremely difficult to understand or shift. This reveals a tendency to confuse the formal normative process, which is structured, with the informal normative process, which is messy, organic, and deeply embedded. This might be the preference of literate, rationally oriented academics but this does not mean it should be advanced as a preferred social reality. This is also diminishing the world of social production, traditionally the realm of the "female" relational rather than economic system. The drive to rationality is also driving out of female epistemology (Kauffman, 2021). As a basis for future research, wishing this cat's cradle of a construction away as an explanatory factor will not suffice. The conventional North inspired analysis sees power enmeshed and built through cumulative individual practices, in the tradition of Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. This misapplies an individual, person-by-person, practice-by-practice orderly explanation for what is fluid and social. Clarity might better come from accepting the limits of the power analysis and rather asking what other perspectives might illuminate the operation of informal norms.

8.3.3 Social relationships as the purpose of exchange are underweighted.

Scott (2001), referencing North (1990), also frames progress in terms of power exchanges but he is more nuanced in suggesting a three-pillar framework of segmenting cognitive structures from normative and informal institutions. He accepts that much remains unknown about informal norms and on cultural practices (Ute et al., 2015). A start is to see that the mutuality within social obligations that shape informal norms may have various intents beyond power. Participation in a venture involves a pluralistic matrix of cultural values. For example, affiliation or alliances might enable a venture to connect conflicting parties who have competing economic interests and allow them to explore what else might be of value to the group beyond individual interests.

By returning to Granovetter's embeddedness work, we can examine economic exchange as of social purpose as well as a power relationship. The "nature of relations that individuals have with specific other individuals. . . has typically quite direct effects on individual economic action" (Granovetter 2017, p. 17). There is a partial conceptual reconciliation through Scott (2001, p. 58) who suggests that there is a duality with

Giddens (1984) between material power stressed by North (1990) and individual economic action within society with an interdependence between the two. Legros and Cislighi (2020) expand beyond the dual-party networked exchange of Granovetter (2017) to the concept of more diffuse societal gains. One can conceptualise informal social norms as beneficial to group cooperation and social order. It is the nature of relationships to have multiple facets besides the unidimensional quality of power. Therefore, the context in which informal norms are constructed and will change requires a plurality of perspectives on the axiology and intentionality of the embedded social actors.

8.4 A reprise of the feminist perspective on norms in entrepreneurship

8.4.1 *Beyond the power narrative*

The epistemology of institutional theory sits within the relativist tradition of social construction. One major tone dominates how it structures and interprets relationships: that of male power dynamics. Gender justice is assumed to emerge as institutional change “where the power of those pursuing change exceeds that of those opposing it... institutional change, it is argued, will occur only in those instances where the power of those pursuing change exceeds that of those opposing” (North, 1990, Section 3). This is comparable to boxers weighting each other up for fitness and strength prior to a physical bout. The current literature presents an overly androcentric view. It sees competition, not cooperation, as ascendent. This leads to a feminist epistemological approach to enquire what else might structure institutional relations within the female experience beyond power battles (Kaufmann, 2021). North (1990) also is challenged by wider theory emerging in modern critical studies in entrepreneurship research (Dey et al., 2021). By embracing a mix of political perspectives of participants within the social context, we will be able to see beyond power as a primary motivator. Power may be involved but the wider motivations by women for increased social agency needs to be considered. An example would be the work of Inglis (1997) looking at the how, but not the why, of a drive for greater agency. It demonstrates a “resistance to power” narrative rather than a gradual change of informal norms or other underlying motivations.

“Emancipation, on the other hand, concerns a critical analysis of power that might bring about resistance through which existing systems of power can be subverted” (Inglis, 1997, p. 3).

The perspective of Polanyi (1957) or Weber (1920) also lacks a feminist voice (Ahearn, 2001; Kauffman, 2021). A feminist epistemology would contribute to an expanded view that women experience life mediated by a myriad of social and legal institutions that affect many aspects of their lives and significantly constrain entrepreneurial aspirations (Bastian, 2019; Nelson, 2020). This is noticeably so in developing economies (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018; Eshun, 2018) with gendered structures of market participation (Henry et al, 2015). Female emancipation requires overcoming entrenched gendered norms (Castellanza, 2020; Minniti and Naudé, 2010) and may coexist alongside tough economic constraints and societal prejudices to then bring tremendous empowerment:

“Across developed and developing contexts, women report the positive impact entrepreneurship has brought to their lives in the form of economic security, self-identity, challenging gender inequalities and patriarchal norms”

(Datta et al, 2012).

8.4.2 Entrepreneurship for female emancipation from social norms

The “yearning for collective emancipation” (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) by women is largely absent from this narrative of the contested power between market and society. There is no acknowledgement in North’s view that female generated economic activity may have an emancipatory intentionality as a distinguishing feature nor that such ventures may have a wider intentionality toward others. Perhaps absent as it is not a male requirement or worldview.

“Entrepreneurship as a means to ‘break free’ from something, and when they achieved this freedom, they wanted to continue by freeing another woman”

(Gupta & Fernandez, 2009).

There is an absence in North’s work regarding female participation and perspectives upon the norms that may shape a good life within a liveable society embracing a socially protected commons (Ostrom et al., 2012; Raworth, 2018). This may be the omitted factor explaining North’s proposed social malaise. His response was to formalise his thinking

more rigidly by removing the social contextual factors, rather than accepting there was a limit to rational self-interest. Women's entrepreneurship may generate the institutional change (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018) that would counterweigh Polanyi's (1957) argument about the market drifting beyond the reach of the populace. Women's collective orientation might be the brakes to market excess.

This critical theory stance is consistent with North (1990), but inconsistent with wider conceptualizations of emancipation or empowerment theory that look beyond subversion to enact extensions of agency (Pettit, 2016), particularly the focus on norms as centred on "coercive control" (North, 1990, p. 108). Similarly, Alkhaled and Berglund (2018) suggest women integrate empowerment (everyday practices to deal with structures of power) and emancipation (activities that change structures of power). Yet this is to conflate the changing of informal social norms with power, and these do not necessarily equate. They may but it is an overly loose and unidimensional construction of the term. This calls for researchers to be close to the research project (Baker & Welter, 2020) and consider one's standpoint. This criticality should also include reflections of how similar or different political views might be compared to the environment under review, the host country compared to one's country of origin, or how any significant deviation might limit a researcher's perspective.

8.4.3 *Limited understanding of the interplay between formal and informal norms*

There are gaps in understanding the intractability of informal social norms and more specifically how norms change for women through participation in entrepreneurship (Kalantaridis, 2014). Institutional theory is the approach to studying formal and informal institutions or norms and how they interact with each other. They are part of the entire milieu in which individuals, ventures and other institutions are situated. There is no set gradation between what constitutes formal and informal, nor how strong or weak are the mechanisms for monitoring and compliance. The summative context is influential upon entrepreneurial activity (Bruton, Ahlstrom & Li, 2010) but subtlety and variance between them is hard to discern. Many of the institutional "pillars" (Scott 2001, p.15) will be supportive of new enterprises and differences. Yet their influence and weighting over informal norms will differ between countries. This differential weighting between the formal and informal might help explain the differential emergence of rates and styles of entrepreneurship (GEM, 2021).

Whilst there is no detailed evidence of the movability of formal versus informal norms, it is accepted that informal norms can be particularly intractable. Informal norms are steeped in strongly embedded belief systems relating to family, place, the role of women or even the value placed upon entrepreneurship as a social contribution. From legislative or theological texts, formal norms can be sighted. Institutions with a building and a door can be visited, supplication sought, and minutes of meetings taken. Informal norms have a shifting and invisible quality that makes identifying whether or not they enable or constrain female entrepreneurs particularly challenging. Their impact on her as an entrepreneur might be a secondary effect to its primary effect of their impact on her as a woman. The level of her personal agency is contingent on her context. As per Shumaila et al. (2015, p. 591), “the cultural and religious-based societal attitudes in some countries lead to a lack of support for working women in general and for women’s entrepreneurship in particular.”

One question missing in the literature is “do formal norms encourage a woman to emerge as an entrepreneur, but informal norms then push her back?” More pointedly, we could ask “do formal norms push forward her empowerment through entrepreneurship but informal norms stifle and cause a retraction of that empowerment?” These are uncomfortable questions. A worldwide shift (GEM, 2022, UN, 2022) has seen governments adopt policy at the formal legislative level to advance female entrepreneurship. There has been a notable lift in venture participation rates over the last 10 years (UNDP, 2022; World Bank, 2022) yet the gender gap remain as does a gap between countries in rates of male entrepreneurship. The informal norms surrounding gender relations and female agency continue to precede the expression of female entrepreneurship. This “chicken and egg” conundrum is recognized, and research called for to better understand the social context in which the venture is located (Ahl, 2004, Welter & Smallbone, 2008). This interplay between the influence of the entrepreneur, the venture, and the context may be envisaged as a Celtic knot of continuously flowing influence from outer fields to inner curvatures and back again. This includes impacts potentially flowing out to the structural characteristics of the nation state (Welter, 2011).

8.4.4 *Understanding social context to understand informal norms.*

To understand how the contextual embeddedness of female entrepreneurship operates in practice, more research is required (Hughes et al., 2012). A venture cannot be seen in

isolation nor can she. Rather the legal, social, cultural, historical, and legislative structures will all mediate her personal experience and the function of the venture. Understanding how gendered power structures work is a gap that scholars are exploring (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018). The entrepreneurial literature saw women as needing to adapt rather than see that the structures in society that were inhibiting her actions in gender-defined ways (Marlow, 2020). A feature of institutional theory is that the female entrepreneur is “contextually embedded in the social, cultural, and political institutions which influence the values, norms, motives, and behaviours of individuals (Shumaila et al, 2015; Steyaert & Katz 2004). Even when ventures emerge from women, informal norms can then constrain her potential expanded agency compared to a male equivalent. This is informal norms acting as double containment: inhibiting her from starting a venture plus inhibiting her from gaining emancipation from so doing. Society curtails both. Xheneti et al. (2019) identified this in Nepal observing women gained limited scope for emancipation through entrepreneurship.

“Choosing to run a business conflicted with predominant views in masculine societies about women’s skills and abilities and their societal roles more broadly. As a result, women’s engagement in entrepreneurial activities required the consent/approval of the husband, or the household.” (Xheneti, et al p. .273).

Strictures formed around informal norms which may curtail her starting a venture are more readily identifiable. Shumaila et al. (2015) found that self-efficacy, social capital, and social networks all affected the level of female entrepreneurship in a 92-country study. This was confirmation of the view that “the presence or lack of entrepreneurial networks and role models, and their capability to encourage and maintain a platform for taking part in entrepreneurial activity, is more important than regulatory institutions” (Shumaila et al., 2015, p. 591). The range of informal norms varies. Muralidharan and Pathak (2017, p. 288) define the main three as "desirability of entrepreneurship, performance orientation and self-expression" in the context of ventures expanding internationally. There are a number of informal norms that influence a woman's ability to "negotiate consent" within her social boundaries of religious belief, ethnic identity, and familial values (Xheneti et al., 2019). Informal norms pervade society and their dampening effect on her cannot be limited to one or two factors but affect venture

opportunity identification, social capital access and then her ability to maintain increased agency. She is constrained on many levels which leads one to speculate that upholding an abiding, constrained social agency is indeed their objective.

8.4.5 *Time is an under researched factor on norm adherence.*

Time as a dimension is also under-theorized. There may be trade-off between relationships that are of a short-term contextual nature compared to those that are long-term and deeply embedded. What might seem an irrational or relationally driven decision may be a highly calculated view of “risks and returns” from that relationship viewed over a longer time period. Within this context, family and closely related kin represent “long-term relationships rather than short-term transactions” (Viswanathan et al., 2008, p. 221). Opportunities might therefore operate within a different timeline. Entrepreneurship is the discovery, by an individual or a small group, of an opportunity but operationalising it does not always follow a formal institutional process or linear time limit. For women, it may involve waiting or accelerating due to other social factors. In seeing an opportunity as shaped by fluid, liminal, often intuitive observations of the world, time as a window is also a resource. Commercial opportunities develop through novel resource combinations (Kirzner, 1997; Schumpeter, 1934) but, for women, need to be enacted in parallel with other responsibilities when the timing of the two is opportune. This is underdiscussed in the literature given that competing demands on a woman’s time require such nuances. Entrepreneurship can also express defiance (Yousafzai et al., 2019) of one’s social position. Venturing is also a way to challenge and subvert existing social norms in order to change the social or commercial context and a woman made need to literally bide her time until such action can be taken.

8.4.6 *Interim conclusion*

Throughout the female entrepreneurship literature, the vignettes discussed often outline the immense struggles of women overcoming informal social norms through entrepreneurship. There is tension between emancipation and oppression (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018). They may succeed but informal norms or formal institutional power (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020) continue to impede women as women and as entrepreneurs. The above challenge to existing institutional theory by feminist epistemology suggests extending broader questions beyond power as structuring informal norms. The next level

of enquiry is to explore other fields that advance our understanding of female emancipation and informal norms to supplement the original considerations of North (1990) and Scott (2001).

- What are the ends, the telos of these informal group norms as this might explain their intractability?
- How do informal norms influence the ebb and flow of the ability of a woman to expand her agency, and the agency of other women, through female entrepreneurship.

To apply this within a woman's journey, a sample vignette of a typical research subject in female entrepreneurship may be helpful. This is to propose an alternative more neutral start point to assuming a power-based narrative must dominate an institutional theory analysis.

8.5 Constructing a journey

Continuing our thought experiment, imagine a woman starting a small business. She seeks to take the initiative beyond her current situation (Johns, 2006) to advance her emancipation. This is not the narrative of a heroic entrepreneur (Ogbor, 2000). It is rather of a woman who creates a gendered entrepreneurial space (Yilang, 2021), that is situated in her cultural, social, and geographical milieu (Welter, 2010). We look through her eyes to grasp her perspective.

It is imaginable that her venture will be run at home. A family context would be standard as would trading within the local community. In this scenario, we call her Ava, 35, a mother of two, married, living in an extended family. She is in a country where the GDP per head is at the global average of approximately \$15-16,000 per head (World Bank, 2022). This is comparable to Costa Rica, Poland, Turkey, Malaysia, or Brazil. We see an extending social spiral extending outwards spreading beyond herself to family, co-workers, community, and society. In the spirit of Campbell's (1958) "Hero's Journey," we see how she progresses along her journey. Informal norms are traversed as she begins from where she stands, working within the confines and opportunities of her own life. This is to echo the "life stories on their 'road to freedom'" (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018).

How can she overcome the challenges? As she begins, how does the venture affect her personally, how does it affect the rest of the community, and how might it impact society at large (Feldman et al., 2022)? Different times and different interconnected levels of observation may give a deeper insight (West, 2003) to the extent of her empowerment and the degree to which is it limited, or “bounded” (Gill & Ganesh, 2007). She will face informal social norms that resist her attempt to enter the public domain of trade within a socially embedded context (Welter & Smallbone, 2008). This may include a necessary shift in interpersonal relationships with male family members (Gurnani, 2016; Gray & Finley-Hervey, 2005; Marlow & Macadam, 2012) to overcome family constraints on expanding her agency into economic production from social production.

A second set of informal norms for navigating the external world, the public arena, are gendered formal social norms more familiar to institutional theory. She may have less access to the market or finance than male entrepreneurs who hold institutional affiliations at the same location. There are social norms that enable or encourage the empowerment of other women who are seeking her guidance, support, and inspiration in an effort to emulate her: She may develop an expanded personal agency within her immediate societal context (Haugh & Talwar, 2018; Macadam et al, 2020; Weber, 1920).

As a third possibility, her emancipation may then shift informal social norms that have been barriers to other women (Goss et al., 2011). This may enable wider emancipation in her place and challenge embedded socio-structures of dominance (Gill & Ganesh, 2007). This may extend into conditions shifting over time due to her interactions (Steyaert & Hjorth, 2006; Steyaert & Katz, 2004) to make a societal impact (Noor et al., 2021).

In the next section of this chapter, we examine new inter-disciplinary findings that can help expand our understanding of informal norms and offer a plurality of lenses suitable for institutional theory. These approaches should be resonate with Ava on her journey.

8.6 Expanded Perspectives beyond Power

8.6.1 *The language of politics: from one strand into three*

To adopt the analysis of Kling (2013), there are three strands of mainstream political thinking of which just one, the progressive strand of the political left, uses an oppressor: oppressed narrative. Social advances are conceptualised as a battle to seize power from

the former to disperse it the latter. Such a progressive voice suffuses the work of North (1990) and Scott (2001) of power battles between differentially weighted parties. This casts light on underlying structural reasons for social inequalities. Yet there are three strands: progressive, conservative, and libertarian with each unrealistically claiming moral superiority over each other. A critique of the progressive stance is that progressives diminish the agency (Kling, 2013) of the “victim” and so underrepresent alternative forms of volition in the world. They may overemphasise the redistribution of power as a solution to more complex or so called “wicked problems” (Gras et al, 2020) which require multiple, often interdisciplinary perspective of a social situation. Viewpoints from the two other political streams are not positioned as being better or worse: just alternatives. One is the concept of social conservatism which is to argue on the axis of civilization-barbarism (Kling, 2013). This sees change as a slippery slope to the destruction of social norms to which many adhere and value. The third stream of libertarianism views social actions as either generating greater liberty or being a force of coercion to be resisted. All three have a distinct axiology, are present in distributions across the population in most countries (Kling, 2013). Only the first progressive formulation around structural power shifts is present (as far as this review can deduce) within the foundational literature on institutional theory.

The resistance to shifts in social norms would, *prima facie*, benefit from an analysis that accords with social conservatism as an explanatory factor given its concern for continuity and order. This is not meant as a pejorative description, but as an explanation for the inertia of informal norms. Conservatism concurs with a limited appetite for change. This point works on two levels. One is that academics may fall into coalition behaviour (Tooby, 2017) of being a progressive force seeing themselves as challenging oppressive conservative social forces with neither academics nor subjects understanding the local axiology of belief. The second is at the level of the interaction of institutional forces in the field. Those who agitate for change are set against those who wish to maintain the status quo. Conservatives are concerned that further destabilizing change could occur and resist it.

It is essential for research to be critically reflective to maintain multiple perspectives. This includes applying political axiologies that may feel as uncomfortable as ill-fitting shoes. Shifting away from victim: oppressor paradigms may unlock other questions.

What would cause conservatives to seek to change informal norms and what policy initiatives would embed such social change. Widening this research perspective from wondering “why don’t they change” to “what do they fear they will lose from change” would open up a much more diverse set of research questions on institutional change.

Kling explores political language as a manifestation of differing inner values. This is a pertinent perspective on personal norms and preferences when considering interactions with others.

“Progressives view most favourably ..., those groups... oppressed or standing with the oppressed... unfavourably those groups that can be regarded as oppressors. Conservatives use the civilization-barbarism axis ... view favourably the institutions that they believe constrain and guide people toward civilized behaviour... unfavourably those people who they see as trying to tear down such institutions. Libertarians use the liberty-coercion axis.... favourably those people who defer to decisions that are made on the basis of personal choice and voluntary agreement... unfavourably those people who favour government interventions that restrict personal choice.”

(Kling, 2013, p. 25-26)

There is a signalling function to others within our “tribe” of co-believers. It seeks to elevate our own and denigrate the other. “Framing issues in terms of our preferred axis” achieves that (Kling, 2013, p. 29).

As regards our Ava, a plural approach would be to expand beyond the victim: oppressor narrative as this implicitly reduces her agency. A social context perspective through libertarian eyes would ask questions of how giving her additional agency might enhance, rather than diminish the perceived agency of others. It would also recognise that any sense of coercion upon others to change their norms to accommodate her would be met with resistance over fear of loss of their own liberty. A conservative perspective would be that she might fear social repercussions from her entrepreneurial activity. It could also be pragmatic such as time pressures on other family responsibilities, as well as loss of perceived male honour. It is to ask what is it that people are most looking to conserve or defend and how might her expanded agency be seen as a threat of loss. These social norms

are invisible and embedded within local cultural dynamics. An example of this is a study on the effectiveness of social campaigns to reduce FGM on girls in Egypt. The campaign was a success but by looking at the underlying fear of change, research uncovered that the underlying fear of loss was the possible reduction in marriage market returns for parents of girls. This was the hidden reason for resistance to norm change which would obviously protect girls' health: parents economic loss (Khalifa, 2022). While this Kling's (2013) three-way view of political perspectives does not indicate the end purpose of norms or how they shift, it may enable the opening up of a wider set of research questions towards that end.

8.6.2 *Concealed preferences of norms*

We assume that obviously physically and emotionally harmful norms as FGM may shift with persuasion or formal institutional pressure. However, scholars argue that privately held norms underlying such behaviour do not change and their expression may manifest in other ways. In the example above, (Khalifa, 2022), girls who were spared FGM found themselves being put into the bride price market at an earlier than usual age as her parents sought to recoup some of the lost value she represented. The norm had shifted but the underlying rationale of seeing the girl's future determining parental returns as set by the marriage market economics, had remained. Public expression and interactions may change, but private preferences remained the same. This would also explain the reversion to old ways as the social "cage of norms" asserts itself. Underlying attitudes are unmoved (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2019).

Brown et al. (2022) propose that a social norm is not a median of one generally accepted practice on which people's ideas converge and have built up by repetition over time. Rather it is conceived as a broad distribution of different values within a community but there is convergence on overt expression. What looks like consensus hides a wider variety of hidden preferences contained by the desire to be seen to be within the socially acceptable range of behaviour. Using Social Sampling Theory [SST] there are differences in the way people express their constant norms based on how divergent they are from the average. This is determined by how broad the spread of opinions and where they sit within that distribution. Expressing a view or belief is then rational behaviour. It balances between how others will see you compared to the average and your private concealed preferences. People try to minimise that inner view to dissonance with external action. It

is assumed that people dislike behaving in ways that are seen to be extreme within their neighbourhood. Even if Ava thinks she would be capable as an entrepreneur, she may not express this until it appears that others are doing the same. Likewise, family norms may be liberal privately yet in public action they do not diverge from the social averages of their context.

Such conformity may only breakdown dependent on who is presenting an alternative perspective. The suggestions of norm change proposed by someone outside of the group or who is distrusted or disliked will have minimal influence (Sunstein, 2019b). Yet suppressing one's own instinct about what is true, stifling one's own urge to dissent so as not to appear as selfish or too individualistic, may advance social harm. Such dissent against informal social norms can "correct the natural human tendency toward conformity and has enormous social benefits in reducing extremism, encouraging critical thinking, and protecting freedom itself" (Sunstein, 2019a, p. 11). The most powerful force is a voice from the inside. "People are extremely vulnerable to the unanimous views of others and hence a single dissenter or voice of sanity is likely to have enormous impact" (Sunstein, 2019a, p. 11). Individuals may follow the crowd, but society requires dissent to advance collective social interests, and "democracy depends on it" (Sunstein 2019a, p. 12). This position of hidden norm preferences is further complicated by considering possible consequences on the individual if they voice dissent. Unconscious expectations are that we will be punished for sharing reasonable dissenting views but rewarded for adhering to the unreasonable (Williams, 2019).

8.6.3 *What determines the punishment of dissent?*

Considering the view that concealed preferences may need to be revealed for social norm change to adhere in wider society makes us consider under what conditions will such dissent be tolerated? This is explored by Gelfand (2018) in tight: loose theory in social psychology. This proposes that a cumulative impact of a number of historical sociological and geographical factors determine how open or closed a society is to its dissenters. The higher the level of such threats upon the population, the more current culture is characterised by severe sanction to dissent or behaviours that breach informal social norms. Across 33 countries (Gelfand et al., 2011) a spectrum is given between those who live within broad versus narrow societal norms of self-expression. The social purpose proposed behind the level of norm adherence is that it matches the level of social

cooperation required for long-term survival in that location. “Ecological and human-made threats increase the need for strong norms and punishment of deviant behavior in the service of social coordination” (Gelfand et al., 2011, p. 1101).

Thus, we have a model of “norms about norm change” which is applicable to informal norms. The telos is clear: group survival is the aim of social norms. The specific norms flow from this overarching purpose. The level of punishment to dissenters reflects the level of “tightness” that has historically been of benefit to those living in that area but might not be applicable today. This historical benefit would have accrued to the overall group more than any individual member. A female entrepreneur will be engaging with local social norms that have existing prior to the rise of female entrepreneurship. This might assist her in cultures that are open to change and dissent such as Estonia or Australia (Gelfand et al., 2011). Those seeking to start ventures, or express extensive female agency in places where dissent to group norms is punished more than welcomed would find difficulty (Pakistan, India, or South Korea - Gelfand et al., 2011). Although an extensive analysis is a matter for later research, the initial pattern of female entrepreneurship as shown in the GEM (2021) dataset is roughly consistent with Gelfand’s model of tight: loose societies. The lingering impact of such distal factors might also explain why policy may shift formal institutional structures but long standing, socially embedded informal norms are so resistant to change. Gelfand in other work (De et al., 2018. p.1) explored how “a population reacts when conditions make a change in norms desirable.” This suggested a tipping point of 25% of the population expressing the new social norm is required for a new norm to change an old practice. The rate at which this point is reached varies. It is much slower to reach 25% in tight versus loose societies as perceived risks from change are weighted more than advantages from change. A culture resistant to dissent finds difficulty in building consensus on how and why change should occur, and this impedes norm changes. The deeper point is to telos: norms change when it suits the population as a whole not when it suits an individual. The purpose of norms is the flourishing of the population and what serves the group will drive the group.

There are similar findings by Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) identifying countries that swing towards either liberty or authoritarianism. They conclude that valence is driven by the relative strength of formal institutions compared to local informal social structures. However, it does not deal expressly with informal norms or that formal norms may be an

institutionalised reification of informal norms. They argue that certain countries are caught in a "cage of norms" with limited ability to shift internally. Strong repercussions are triggered against agents of change, such as in Saudi Arabia. Their findings add further consideration to the intractability of norms constraining female agency in highly patriarchal contexts.

8.6.4 *Bicchieri and a Schemata of informal norm change*

Gelfand (2018) explores the macro level telos of norm existence and change. Bicchieri complements this by exploring the micro level perspective of how norm change might occur. Her model of individual norm change (Bicchieri, 2017) includes consideration of concealed preferences. It considers how norms are bundled into a wider schema. One norm can trigger another as they sit within a wider "grammar for social interactions" (Bicchieri & McNally, 2015, p. 2). This would explain why those seeking to conserve and resist change would be correct to fear that one norm might lead to a cascade of other changes. It also explains the frustration progressives have when one norm change is resisted to preserve the panoply of contextual social structures.

Bicchieri's research focuses on finding the cognitive underpinnings that prevent the removal of egregious informal social norms. Her core insight is not surprising: people consider whether to break norms by weighing up other people's opinions. Norm adherence is therefore relational. An individual's social expectations interfere with normative behaviour. New situations trigger old scripts rather than a blank canvas onto which novel norms will be formed. However, "even seemingly small changes to scripts and schemata can have a major impact on catalysing broader norm change ... [and] should take into account the cognitive underpinnings of social norms in their designs" (Bicchieri & McNally, 2015, p. 5).

Where there are conflicting axiologies within society, then the challenge is how to reconcile the old versus the new values (Nussbaum, 2006). Bicchieri suggests one can change the underlying schema by appealing to a still deeper axiology that advances change. An example (Bicchieri, 2017) is honour killings of girls in Sicily in the 1950's. Daughters were murdered to avenge perceived social infractions of the father or other male family members that were considered to slight male honour. Changes to such male codes of behaviour shifted when another equally powerful code of honour was triggered: the

duty to care for all children. After significant public debate, the old norm gave way to the new, and girls were protected. This was the process used as set out in the flow chart below. Norms changes from a collective agreement to do so, and change was enacted by altering the negative expectation of expressing that norm, not just shifting or reconsidering private belief.

8.6.5 The steps taken when introducing a new norm. Ref “Norms in the Wild” (Bicchieri, 2017)

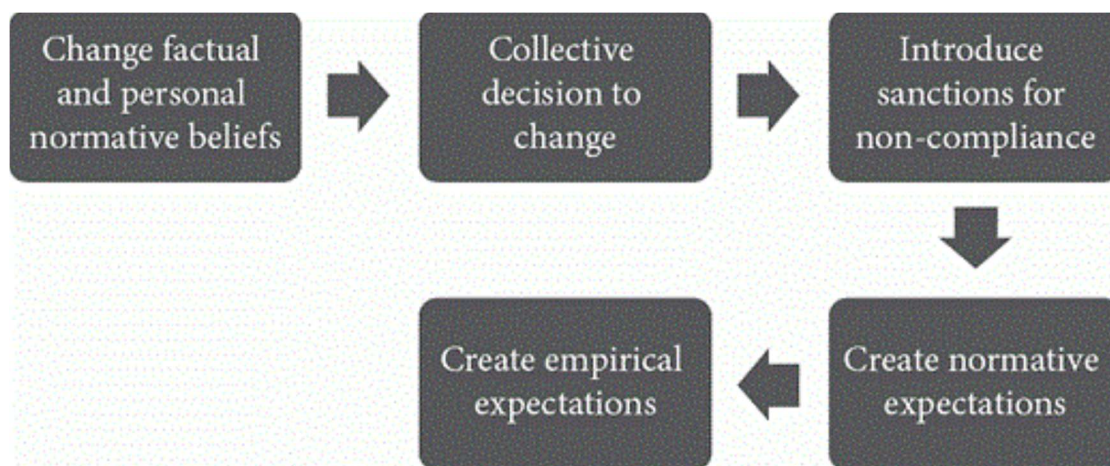


Figure 8.1: The steps taken when introducing a new norm. Ref “Norms in the Wild”

This model of abandoning the old and adopting the novel gives a research framework for female entrepreneurship. Gelfand (2018) suggests group purpose in norms. Bicchieri provides a model for qualitative change through policy intervention. It would suggest that for Ava, her challenge is finding an environment where consensus can be debated and then reached about her activity. If her actions pose too much of a breach of informal norms, then she may make minimal progress and face resistance to her agency as a result. Looking at a country such as India or Pakistan, norm adherence is high (Gelfand et al., 2011) yet at a formal institutional level, the policy preference for female entrepreneurship is also high. One can theorise that rather than internal power balances seen within conventional institutional theory, it is the formal versus informal that are counteracting each other. The low level of female venturing is due to the strength of the opposing informal norms compared to formal legislation. This is not so much a power battle as a conflict of axiologies. Resolution is unclear until it emerges how her activity benefits the group's goals which fits the axiology of group valence. Bicchieri's model would suggest that if there is already a collective positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, then this

will help accelerate her acceptance as an entrepreneur. This is consistent with findings that female entrepreneurship is higher where male venturing already exists (Baughn et al., 2006).

Bicchieri (2017) offers intriguing prospects for female entrepreneurship and job market participation despite a slow rate of informal norm change in "tight" countries. The values against which women are judged, and by extension, informal norms are set, are slowly shifting. The schema of a "good wife" has been set out as the cognitive underpinning of a woman's value in more patriarchal societies. Anything contrary to these interrelated expectations would be challenged and most likely resisted. This is notwithstanding legislative support at the institutional level. The prospect of a wife being valued as a "good provider" is now emerging as an addition rather than a conflict to informal norms. This suggests an expansion of a woman's traditional role from social to include economic production is emerging.

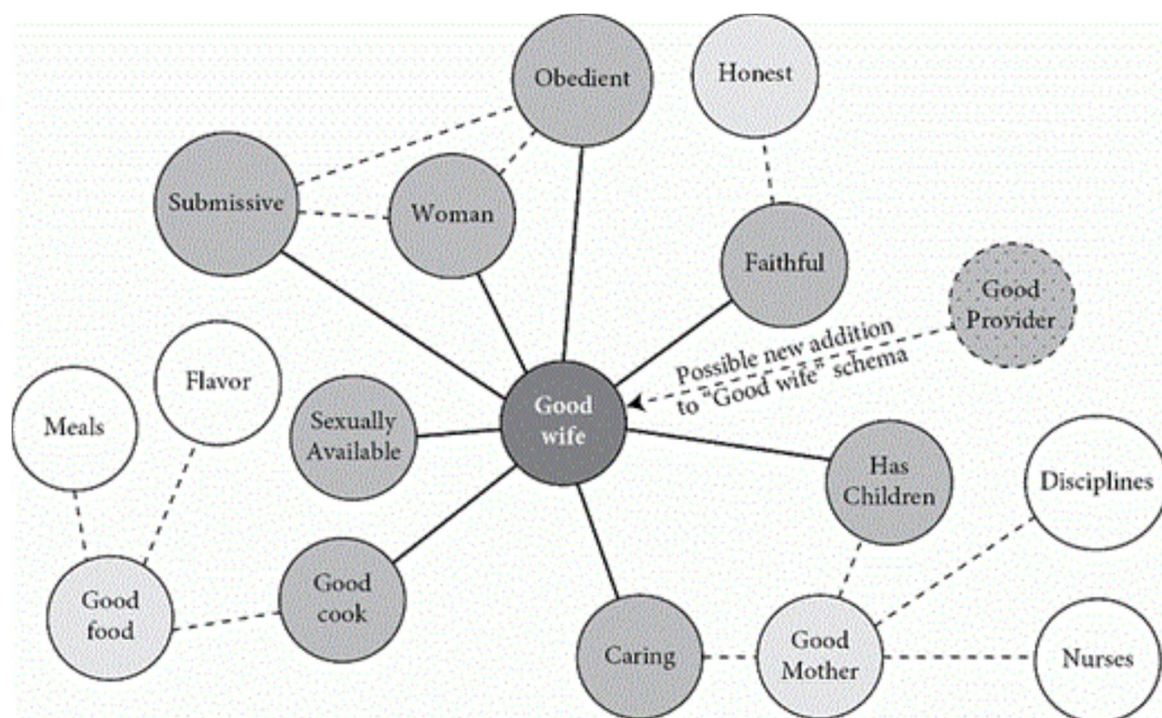


Figure 8.2: Elements of social schema for a "good wife" and their relations in a semantic network Ref Bicchieri (2017, p. 135).

A change to include a woman's economic value may be gradual or discontinuous. It does foreshadow a future where society values the contribution made by extending female economic agency beyond its particular value to herself.

8.7 Models of cooperation rather than competition

A focus on group-level survival is also expressed in theories about informal norms by a number of social science scholars. Advancing social cooperation as an orientating principle in norms formation is emerging as a unifying theory. These scholars often assert that humans are essentially good in nature and have an instinct to cooperate and trust rather than suspect and defect (Bregman, 2020). Christakis (2019) proposes that people cooperate as much as compete. Our conception of a Hobbesian world may be misplaced. In our urge to cooperate, humans are like other species thriving through group formation and cooperation (Raihani, 2021). What makes humans distinctive is that we can recognize strangers and build social cooperation with known members of a group (Moffatt, 2019). There are tensions in the search for status (Storr, 2021) which drive the power games as envisaged by North (1990). But these scholars propose it has a deeper purpose to the dominant drive for cooperation including between men and women. Indeed Buss et al. (2020) suggest that the highest allocation of status is given to those who are trusted group members. There is therefore nuance but not a conflict between the two points of competition for status and cooperation. Competition may illuminate how cooperative a group member may be.

Milliken and Schreiber (2012) echo these scholars by seeing the symbolism in normative behaviour. They link this to symbolic interactionism in grounded theory as they reflect upon how symbolic meaning was constructed at a group-level and to what purpose. The social psychology scholars have advanced this line of thinking onwards to generate new theory.

“Cooperation is necessary for survival... Each individual must come to understand the intention of the acts of others and be able to guide his or her own response on the basis of that intention (Mead, 1934/1967; Meltzer, 1972) ... to understand the symbols and gestures used... human society is viewed as consensus [of] shared meanings - common understandings (Meltzer, 1972) that provide for patterned activity and predictability. Nevertheless, people engaged in joint action and collective processes can introduce adjustments ... society is perceived as a framework for interaction, rather than a determining structure (Katovich & Maines, 2003).” (Milliken & Schreiber, 2012, p. 692)

Cooperative norms also become cooperative practices as the store of human capability within groups and structure civilization (Henrich, 2017). It is through collective pooling of our actions and memories that each generation learns from the next and much of this social exchange is structured within informal norms. As a heuristic, norms accelerate learning of humans from each other, and one observes the actions of another. Schemata of interconnected behaviours (Bicchieri & McNally, 2015) structure norms into activatable bundles. Boyer (2018) has similarly shown how religious norms function as a cooperative mechanism for the group. Adding “religion” may keep informal norms tighter and survival of the group more probable in the minds of the group members. This same capability to moralise norms may inhibit change unless it is in the group’s interest. Yet the value of entrepreneurship to society is also apparent as a way to bring change in practices to a wider group. It is the collectivity of innovative ideas and cooperation to exploit innovation that brings collective gain to society. This is partly through trade and partly directly through whatever the novelty it brings forth. The challenge for a female entrepreneur is when the positive benefit to society she brings meets the social resistance to expanded informal norms and female agency. Cooperation is seen as the means and group survival as the end. Therefore, resolution of the challenge of expanding the informal norms around female agency is observed that it occurs when it is more in the group’s interest to include her than exclude her. Appeals to rights or individual circumstances are unlikely to be effective. Yet such challenges are essential as both women and men within the group need to show dissent and seek their own individuation from group norms to ensure group survival. Change as well as continuity are both needed at differing times. This allows choice for society. When external circumstances change and new threats or opportunities are seen for the group, there are now response options. The new norms that will spread through the group to advance their comparative success (Henrich, 2016; Pagel, 2013). This reconciles both the aims of individuals to have influence and societies to thrive.

“Common practices and customs may be crucial to the defence of a group, but the margin of initiative and creativity among its members to emancipate themselves from the group is invariably large, and individual differences prevail over collective traits when individuals are examined on their own terms, and not as mere peripheral elements of collectivity” (Vargas Llosa, 2000. p.3).

8.8 Exposure to the Market and Morality

Informal social norms suffuse our everyday actions with others: how we meet, greet, trade, or socialise with each other. Assuming Ava brings something to market, we can observe how interpersonal norms may shift, why and to what end these norms serve. Agneman and Chevrot-Bianco (2022) have challenged the assumption that we apply cooperative behaviours or moral norms consistently. They appear to vary and be expressed within a range as supported by Brown et al's work (2022). Rather than be an inner fixed compass or rigid schemata (Bicchieri & McNally, 2015) we shift norms when interacting with different people. In particular, and of most relevance for entrepreneurship, people who are used to trading in open markets show universal moral behaviour to others as if the market itself became the framework of neutrality and equality of treatment. Trading in a market meant they were less likely to cheat anonymous strangers. Conversely, participants were more likely to cheat on the anonymous individual when in the context of co-villagers. This distinction of normative behaviour between market participants was held regardless of wider socio-economic, religious, or institutional variables. The rest of the institutional norms, formal or informal appeared to be irrelevant. One question would be if market freedom amplifies person freedom, for the ability of the anonymous or new entrants to be included. Perhaps a female entrepreneur might be treated more equally if she enters a market trading context distant to established neighbours. She would be then there as a participant of market trade rather than as a woman acting within her known community. This would also suggest trade in more anonymous cities might gain more momentum than trade with known and socially conservative neighbours. This accords with the view of Evans (2022) that urban environments accelerate gender norm relaxation.

8.9 Morality as Cooperation

From the above, the literature suggests that norms change when it is in the interest of the group to do so. Group survival is the common underlying orientating principle. Informal norms have a role in structuring knowledge in society which gives an insight as to why they can be intractable in form and in substance. Changes in socially conservative societies happen but are slow and female agency shows limited advancement when it is in conflict with established informal norms about her role in society. The weight of norms

on women comes enveloped in morality. Dress codes are monitored by the “morality police” in Iran (Engelbrecht & Fassihi, 2022). Religion is used as the narrative to control private female behaviour (Abbott et al., 2016). Adding in powerful moral attributes of “right and wrong,” let alone heaven and hell, makes expanding the norms containing female agency particularly difficult. The question then is why is morality added on top of informal norms? A traditional North (1990) or Scott (2001) view of institutional theory might propose a review of the historical influence of church and the waning or increasing view of theocracy in local context. This chapter sees that conventional analysis as marginal to the purpose of group flourishing shaping the social dynamics.

Work by Curry et al. (2018) suggests morality as a framework is similar across cultures with the common purpose being to advance group cooperation. The benefit of group cooperation is in turn to advance group survival. Thus, keeping women compliant is partly achieved though adding morality as further persuasion. This makes breaking the agentic limits around female agency and therefore entrepreneurship as an expression of that, additionally difficult. Morality is yet another cultural innovation, alongside that of institutional norms and rules that bolster cooperation. Church structures might be an additional vehicle to that and their institutional; nature might occlude their deeper social impact.

“The moral valence of these behaviors is uniformly positive, and the majority of these cooperative morals are observed in the majority of cultures, with equal frequency across all regions of the world. We conclude that these seven cooperative behaviors are plausible candidates for universal moral rules, and that morality-as-cooperation could provide the unified theory of morality” (Curry et al., 2018, p. 47).

8.10 Discussion

The review of informal norms in female entrepreneurship suggests pathways beyond the limited conceptualisation of power as exemplified by North (1990). By adopting a group-level perspective, other social sciences have explored the construction and application of informal social norms, how they change and interact. They have also started to ask the deeper question: what is their purpose, their telos in human society?

Entrepreneurship research applying institutional theory can expand by adopting the unit of analysis of the human group beyond that of the individual. The shared premise of the social science scholars cited is that no individual is master of their own destiny in terms of freedom of action. Rather it is the group influence that will prevail. It is in the interests of the individual that this is the case on one takes a longitudinal multi-generational perspective. This is often to maximise the chance of the group's survival, notwithstanding the fate or free will of individual members. This is observable if one extends the timeline of observable impact from a few years to over several generations. Individuals within the social group are subject to the wider influence of the group in which they are located, unwittingly or not. This is contrary to the traditional research approach, which is looking at society more as atomized individuals over short timeframes and building up cumulative practices to create practices within a group and then society. This is most frequently explored through the theories of structuration (Giddens, 1984) and practices (Hechavarría & Brieger, 2020) that constitute informal norms.

Institutions as seen by newer theorists, see the valence of agentic will as more than the sum of its member's volition. Group norms prevail beyond individual's sense of agency. They are answering the question as to why such group embedded informal norms prevail or develop a direction that seems at odds with formal norms and institutional power structures. This gives pluralism and nuance to the theories of structuration which presume that our informal social norms are constructed from the bottom up to group-level. It is a sociological chicken and egg question: which came first, the group dominance upon the individuals or the individuals building up social practices into the whole which later reified into informal or formal norms. It appears to be the former. The new bonus question from the chicken of why the flock is also a force upon its members, as theorised by cooperative theory.

A second question is how the entrepreneurship field might, particularly as relates to female emancipation, engage with social sciences theories given they are in adjunct fields. Perhaps we should be open house, consider them as potential guests to an informal dinner party where ideas are shared, and connections made. The goal in exploring a wider range of insights from across the social sciences. Perhaps there is a compelling way forward, one way or another, where scholars have started to understand how the dynamic of informal norm change can happen. There is some duplication, a certain consilience of

thinking but impetus to advancing female entrepreneurship studies will follow by inviting them all in. Some challenge social constructivism, some embrace it, some are agnostic. All face the future with a view to human agency as partly a picture of a collective phenomenon from which individual will is derived.

8.11 Conclusion

The start point of this chapter is the literature considering group-level influences on the norms that affect female entrepreneurship as a heterodox contribution to advancing institutional theory. There are multiple factors within the social context upon her emancipation as in business. A women starting a venture can overcome many of these norms (Al-Dajani et al., 2013; 2007). Alkhaled and Berglund (2018) also observe that the hope of Rindova et al.(2009) is limited in the effect of ventures shifting female agency embedded informal norms. This review suggests new pathways to advance this vision of female emancipation. Three aspects stand out for further scholarly investigation:

- Morality as cooperation across cultural norms as an aid or brake on female agency
- Novelty and invention rewarded as social norm breaches to accelerate female entrepreneurship
- The emerging contribution of female economic agency as a complement to social production

The observation of new directions around politics, time, norm formation and the ultimate purpose of a womens contribution to society are but a first set of suggestions on this topic. The unifying theme is to shift our observational lens from that of the individual to that of the group in which the woman is socially embedded. This fits squarely back to the calls within the entrepreneurship literature (Baker & Welter, 2020) to advance research avenues which better allow us to understand the socio-spatial and socio-cultural factors that drive entrepreneurship. It also offers a wider menu of choices beyond that of power as a method of applying institutional theory as an analytical lens.

CHAPTER 9

GROUNDED THEORY OUTPUTS

Chapter 9

Grounded Theory Outputs

Chapter 2 set out the methodology and processes for Grounded Theory as applied in this thesis. Chapter 9 lays out the scope of data, the final analytical approach taken. It then records out the combination of sub-theories and grand theory that emerged as a result.

The data on which the grounded theory is generated included the first eight chapters of this thesis including an introduction to the topic, reflections on methodology and then pertinent literature. This embraces the approach of Informed Grounded Theory (Thornburg, 2012) as explained in Chapter 2. Other material included two theory chapters: conceptualisations of freedom and group-level volition in entrepreneurship explored through institutional theory. The three empirical studies examine female entrepreneurship from the social-spatial perspective within sharply differing contexts. Three interpretivist approaches are applied: institutional theory, practice theory and case study. Also included are extracts from researcher diary memos. Various country profile and statistical reports were already examined in the preparation of the individual chapters. In terms of weight of data this is approximately 150,000 words of material.

9.1 Researcher's Diary on how this Thesis can Be Read

For those looking at for a set of minimum three publishable studies there is a conflict inherent in the methodology. Grounded theory needs all the material, so the integrity of the process requires long form version of each chapter to be included. A shorter version for publication submission will be extracted. Seven chapters are available, all under 8,000 words: three context studies, two theory chapters, and one literature review. A list of other developmental article idea emerging from the thesis conclusions is also prepared. There is an abundance of publishable material beyond the three required to meet the overall goal of meta-theory generation.

In the main, you will read this PhD as a monograph grounded theory thesis answering a central research question by sourcing data from chapters produced as PhD research outputs.

9.2 Body of Literature

The body of literature in which these outputs sits is entrepreneurship with sub-emphasis on female and socially embedded scholarship leading to greater emancipation. Of 609 references, the largest grouping is from the core entrepreneurship literature followed by literature on the three locations of Shetland, Pakistan, and India. Feminist literature is significantly cited. Additional citations are primarily from philosophy with lesser supports from economics, economic history, anthropology, psychology, and law making up 25% of the total. There is interdisciplinary value in introducing these works but 75% are citations used in entrepreneurship scholarship when exploring new socio-spatial contexts for entrepreneurship. The articles cited repeatedly all fall with this focus: Anderson, Jack, Kibler, Korsgaard, McKeever, Marlow, Dodd and Welter. Female entrepreneurship scholars are also highly cited: Marlow, Rindova, Calás, Smircich, Datta, Minniti, Al-Dajani, Alkhaled & Berglund. These two groups also overlap significantly as they explore female entrepreneurship in place with Welter, Anderson and Marlow being notable in this breadth.

Table 9.1: Origination of Cited Literature

Citings per Field of Literature	Number	%
Entrepreneurship	281	46
Context information each location	75	12
Philosophy	56	9
Feminist studies	54	9
Method	41	7
Economics	16	3
Economic History	13	2
Religion	14	2
Sociology	13	2
Literature	10	2
Anthropology	8	1
Law	8	1
Psychology	8	1
Org Studies	6	1
Science	4	1
History	2	0
Total	609	100
Infusion from New disciplines	152	25
Core of Entrep+ feminist + methods	397	65

9.3 Coding the Material

The research question against which this data is presented is:

“Can new theory advance our understanding of how informal social norms modulate the expansion of female agency in places of female entrepreneurship?”

Following the guidance of Strauss and Corbin (1994) and Charmaz (2014), a first order coding across the material was taken. Practically this was done by marking thesis text line by line in an Excel spreadsheet, thematically coded and then grouped per chapter. This analysis results in 1400 lines of data. Additional notes on emerging axial coded were added. However, this also led to a pause to consider what really stood out from such a close textual analysis of the material. Several points emerge more prominently pertaining to the research question. There were nine major reflections on theory and one major perspective on methodology.

Among the 60 coding options generated, a decision was made to apply Scott-Curry’s framework as a pattern of overlaps findings with his was quickly observed. Ten more axial codes were used in the second round to see how the analysis developed. This is in the spirit of recursive relationship between coding and text and exploring how the coding develops as one is engrossed within the text as data. This was exploring what group purpose the data supported. This interim reflective step generated ten structuring insights as a contribution from the “informed grounded theory” process. This is the enhancement brought from using chapters as the source material rather than transcripts from a single context. From this macro coding a Gioia analysis was made which indicated meta practices of venture formation. The analysis then narrowed into theoretical insights focused on the research question. In shifting to abstraction, an interim synopsis of nine ideas of genuine novelty was prepared, many emerging from integration of philosophical scholarship into the venturing literature and findings. This was a start point for abduction.

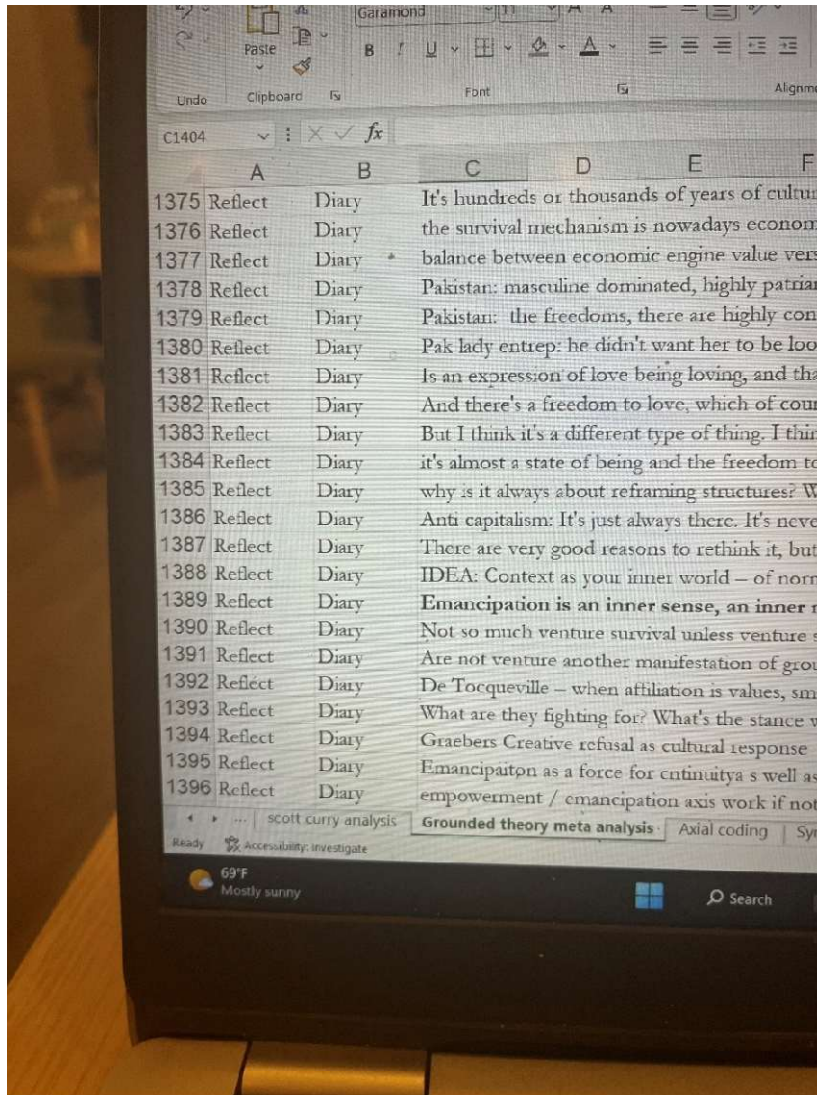


Figure 9.1: Raw excel capture of material across all chapters and researcher diaries.

Pic Authors own.

The primary findings that stand across the coding are:

- Nussbaum's (2000) principles that freedom is advanced by enhancing the dignity of women, bodily freedom, emotional self-expression and that these should supersede informal social norms when they conflict.
- Scott-Curry moral cooperation theory of seven social norms consistent across human cultures with slight variations. This theory and later citations, gives ideas as to what the social norms in each context might mean and what might be common.

- Graber's concept of Creative Refusal (2013) suggesting that many cultures consciously push away the "other" by resisting the cultural influences from neighbours to differentiate group identity.
- That *libertas* and "*cum permissio*" is a more granular and clear way to delineate the scope of personal agency around what one can do without the consent of another or the degree to which you can refuse attempted authority over you.
- Understanding of interdependence agency as separate to independent agency. The concept of freedom is found on top of responsibilities that are also freely accepted. Female agency does not start in a responsibility free zone is not the apex freedom presumed to be existence as an atomised individual.
- The community / family gains orientation of female entrepreneurship prevails. Its purpose beyond profit consistently seems to be the advancing of community well-being.
- Informal social norms have some form of orientating principle about the overall community.
- The process of emancipation itself is also a question as it appears as much to be about constant daily struggle to maintain position as much as the challenge to change it. Emancipation processes stop slippage backwards of agentic scope: women are running hard to stand still. There appears a force of "dark mutualism" where women are constantly fighting to be (re) included.
- A context we rarely explore in female entrepreneurship is her inner world. We may be so aware of external limitations that the inner spirit is not seen. We see what she is escaping and think the "to" is external change but perhaps the "from: to" is a feeling of constriction to a feeling of less constriction. This is Frankel's (1964) point on the indomitability of the human spirit in adversity. Looking at the material might occlude the internal non-material meaning.
- That women's activity is creative and transformative and does not necessarily need to start with business skills. This power is within her. It appears that the male model within the community is externally orientated but women's is the

transformation within. Family business gets transformed by women; cultural boundaries are maintained and transformed from within.

- The methodological insight is the assumption that practices are built bottom up or have an origin lost in the midst of time. There are some suggestions in Giddens' work of an openness to alternatives to this in his considerations on structuration. However, the core insight is that practices do create norms, then formal norms and then institutions. The difference of perspective emerging in this thesis is that they are shaped by top-down intent and not bottom-up historical practice. Informal norms are not random but the expression of orientating principles important to the group, most frequently to support mutualism or kin support.

Other points for coding were recorded such as purpose of the activity, how female entrepreneurs made an impact, the nature of the impact, agency, politicisation, methods, norms, and historical influences. Other codes emerged as a subset such as the constraints and opportunities of reputation, egalitarian vs hierarchical structures, the centrality of narrative and the social-economic structures in which norms were situated. It is with these points in mind that some pragmatic choices were made regarding coding.

The contexts presented are not a tripartite comparative study. The aim of the research chapters, both theoretical and empirical, was to reach this juncture. It is the point for departure for new theoretical development. In many ways, the PhD starts here. What evolves is abductive at the heart of the methods proposed in grounded theory. One difference, perhaps as it is an informed approach, is the hierarchy of ideas that emerge. Charmaz (2006) advises that sub-themes emerge first then aggregates these into a meta theme. Here it is the obverse: sub-themes fall out of the meta theme. This is more in the spirit of abduction within this method as it does not follow a strict linearity, induction or deduction imposed on the end stage of theory development. Here an abduction approach is followed from start to end.

9.4 Outputs from Grounded Theory Coding and Abstraction

What can we conclude about causal link between entrepreneurship and emancipation?

The conclusion on the empirical findings, both in the prior literature and the additional findings in this thesis is that the scope for female entrepreneurship mirrors the existing

scope of female agency in that social context. It is not the social mechanism that will, on its own, deliver female emancipation (Rindova et al., 2009). A woman starting a venture may be able to expand her personal agency with her current social conditions to a marginal degree but her “restricted agency” (Anderson & Ojediran, 2021) remains. What she can expand is her reputation for social production through greater community and family contribution and for economic production through bringing income to the family. Building on existing scholarship, the factors predicting female entrepreneurship are located in the human development index, the Gender Inequality Index, plus the national religious composition (Maniyalath & Narendran, 2016).

9.5 Meta Theory 1: Norms pathway to Female emancipation

Introduction to Meta Theory 1: The concept of “restricted agency” (Anderson & Ojediran, 2021) is advanced by understanding what may lie behind the informal norms that undergird her restrictions. The inhibitor underlying other expressed informal norms in the implicit unifying concern for her reputation. Below is the initial sketched idea presented to illustrate the integration of reputation norms and emancipation. The greater separation of male and female realms is itself a potential inhibitor to emancipation. The more men and women both have recognition and value for economic and social production, the more they may advance together toward a balanced egalitarian society. Not only is female agency constrained but men’s opportunities are less as it is indeed the Chinese proverb “women hold up half the sky.”

Meta Theory 1: The pathway to female emancipation lies in a balance of recognizing her contributions in both social and economic production. The more a culture weighs both factors, the greater the conditions are set for the fullest expression of her agency as manifest in choosing from the opportunities within her context, including the opportunity to start and run a venture. Entrepreneurship is a manifestation of her choices within her cultural context as a primary indicator of her agency rather than a propeller of that agency.

When both are low, male economic interests evolve into a “dark mutualism” of self-reinforcing male dominated groups that determine economic activity and are difficult for women to enter. Equally, as her value is in social production, the currency of value remains reputational and is not balanced by economic value. This she is trapped by norms that both contain her economic value, and her social value is to serve the separated male

sphere. The more participation in both advances, it would appear that her agency is enhanced. Her ability to enter the economic sphere expands and her value as a producer of social value also expands.

The Norms Pathway to Female Emancipation

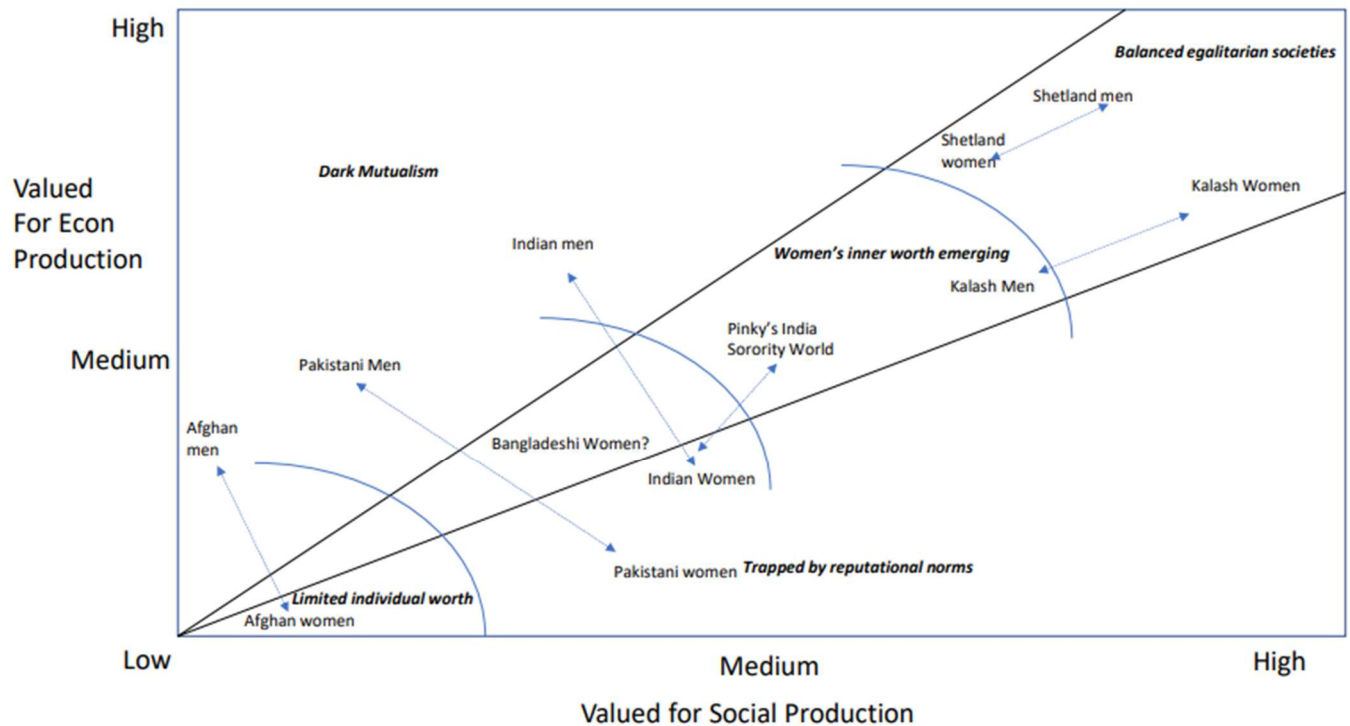


Figure 9.2 Theory of Norms Pathway and Female Emancipation

There are other cultural forces that might also reinforce the position of women when the men in society also sense precarity of existence. Teng et al. (2022) theorizes that hostile sexist behavior (i.e., containing of her agency) could be predicted by a relative male sense of deprivation when he has a reduced sense of control within his own life. This adds a twist to the findings that in place where male entrepreneurship is high, female levels are also higher. Perhaps the conditions for agency for men envelop the agency for women and when men are downtrodden, the women are additionally constrained.

The emergent theory proposed is that the pathway to female emancipation advances in expanding a womens value for economic production as well as for social production. Where both are low, life of either gender is of little value and little economic value is being created.

9.6 Meta Theory 2: Differential concepts of ethereal time influence the constraining weight of female reputation in curtailing female agency.

Introduction to Meta Theory 2: Perhaps value of life for both sexes in terms of social and economic value and so of life agency is curtailed at the lower end because of a third variable. That is investing in the afterlife or any other channel for the use of human time and resources predominates over investment in this earthly life. Investing in the spiritual domain will take precedence over economic contribution by either gender. The net result for women is to be trapped with extraordinarily little agency. This echoes the view of V.S Naipaul (1997) reflecting on 50 years post-independence and partition of Pakistan and India. He proposes that the difference in the social weight placed on religiosity of whatever genre as a reason for the differential economic and social development between the two countries in the subsequent years post 1947. It does not however explain the more recent rapid economic ascent of Muslim dominated Bangladesh. Nor does it explain similar patterns of constraint about reputation in Hinduism. Nor does it explain the prominent levels of female employment and public engagement by Alevi Muslim women in Türkiye (Akyol & Ökten, 2022). Thus, the assertion by Naipaul and others that different religions bring different result on female agency is rejected as lacking nuance. It is also potentially a view conflicted by motivated reasoning.

Instead, this thesis posits a sub-theory on norms of reputation that suggests that its power varies not due to religion per se holding women back. Rather there is something deeper that frames each religious practice subtly differently: concepts of timely existence on earth versus the afterlife. Below is the initial sketched idea presented to illustrate this as a new factor.

Meta Theory 2 Where ethereal time is weighted more than earthly time then reputational concerns will be amplified. It will have an impact that is immensely greater than economic value which is weighted within a single lifetime, possibly slightly more for the next generation. By contrast, if earthy time outweighs ethereal time in that it is just this life – a one shot game. Economic production value as weighted against female reputation both have an effect in this life alone. There will be gradations as this chart suggests but there is a direction. As the balance of time is more one life earthy than eternal, so the reputational weight of women is more easily counterbalanced against her economic

production possibility. The reputation effect is a secondary “spandrel” impact on wider female agency:

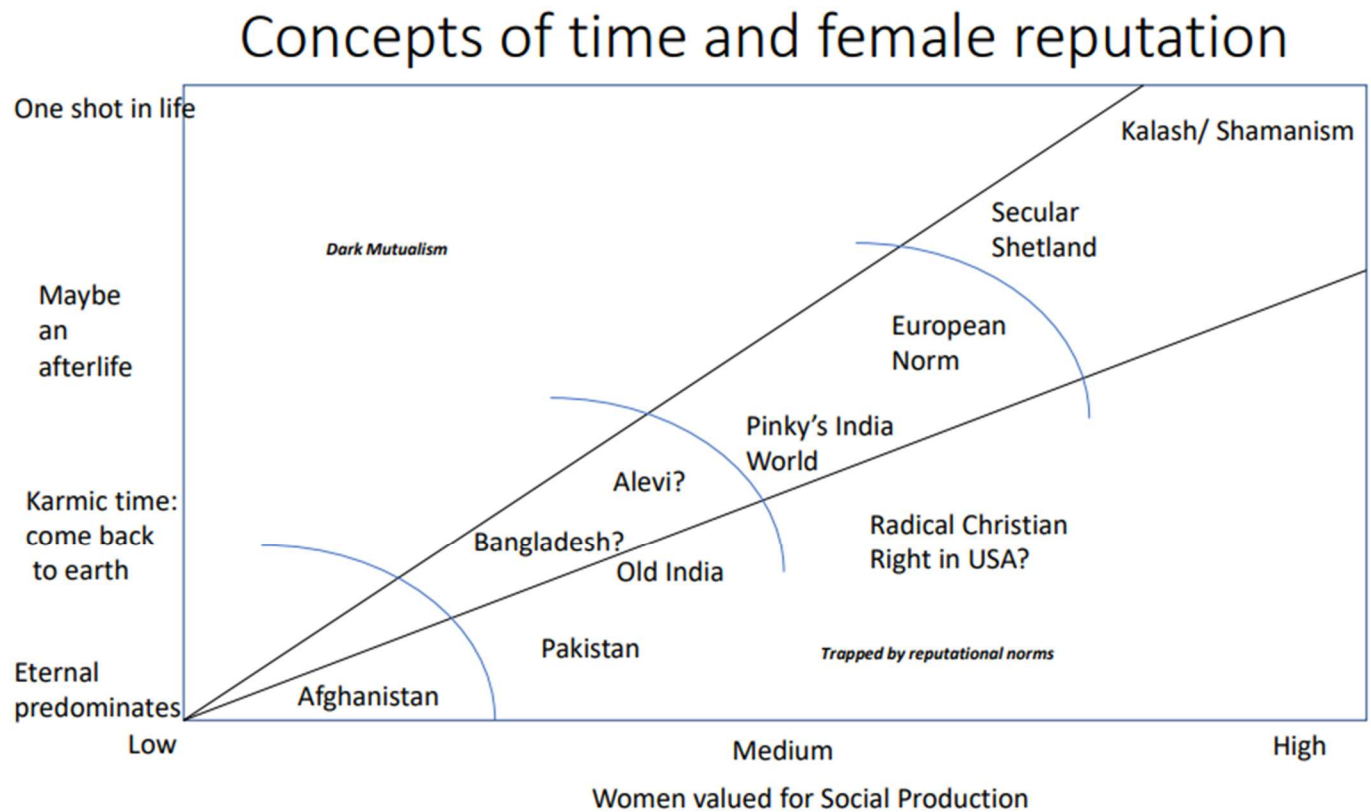


Figure 9.3: Theoretical Model of Time vs Reputation

Researcher Diary in Heidegger’s Concept of Time Collides with Reputational Infinity

The concept of past present and future all existing in a single moment is a perfect analogy for the all-pervasive influence of female reputation. It exists in past, present, and future in the current moment. It is tied into to family and relationship in a womens life. She is shaped by her family past that certainly in India and Pakistan overwhelmingly also shapes her future marriage prospects. The sense of men carrying forward family connection and family destiny from the past to now and into the future (Dharma) also exists in the three times. The insight is that factors which advances her reputation advance her value in social production and conversely that which diminished reputation reduces this same value. It is also not just her personal value but an interdependent social structure, reputational value spreads across siblings, cousins, clan as lateral relatives and thereafter, to their offspring. A woman’s agency is framed within this context of kin interdependence. These social norms are themselves a reflection of the master “morality

as cooperation” norms of advancing the welfare of Kin and of group mutualism. These not only dominate the findings in Pakistan and India but also are shown throughout the literature on womens’ agency in the developing world. Yet the value of her reputation is not her own: it is shared with kin. This is the Heidegger point about indivisibility of time and reputation. She is simultaneously herself but also interdependent on those who are past and those that will come. The reputational of all affects each other past present and future. This means risks for reputational harm are strongly policed and avoided.

The Kalash do not believe in an afterlife apart from possible interaction with recently departed souls. Their aim is to be remembered as having been a good community member. Those that have been, maintain that reputation after death. Their time scale is of a single life. Their religious practices are shaped by the agricultural year. They have a crop to plant, fields to maintain and work to be done to ensure their community survives and norms of female agency are around that mutual task. Womens are responsibility for a sizable portion of the social production of the spiritual realms in which they live but time is of a single life. Secular Shetland has seen an unequal shift in responsibility for social production to men allied with their economic production. Women want their historically equally contribution to both social and economic production restored. The Scottish churches on Shetland have limited influence are less Protestant in adherence than mainland Scotland but there is some lingering religiosity to suggest reverence for a possible afterlife. India’s concept of Karmic time extends for aeons and is circular. However, people do not leave forever unless they ascend to nirvana. They are normally conceived as returning to the earthy world or adopting a more secular view. Karma is a multiple-shot opportunity to exist on earth. Reputation extends from this life to the next but not for eternity and redress and improving actions can be taken.

In Pakistan, a primarily Sunni Muslim country, there is a theocratic influence on the state through Islamic practices being taught in schools. It is still balanced by secular activities and state structures. It would be fair to characterize religious practice as strong and the timeline of religious practice stretching out significantly further than temporal life on earth. The followers of Wahhabi Islam, supported to stronger degrees in Afghanistan, have little emphasis on current time. Like other such Wahhabi influenced social contexts (Saudi Arabia for example), social practices are partly orientated to preparation for the afterlife. Thus, promoting female entrepreneurship around economic benefits and

generating agency which would potentially cause a reputational negative on social production with an eternal effect will not be persuasive.

How to escape the traps of Dark Materialism and Reputational Norms on Agency

There are three sub-theories of how to turn this situation around. One is about personal reputation and the other on the reputation of venturing generation, but they are related. The third related to new socio-spatial resources as an untapped asset for women.

a) Early, even minimal exposure to market trading may amplify female emancipation.

What made the reputation of entrepreneurship rise in social esteem and advance the developing world? The rise of values associated with trade were seen as a social good and the economic effects being of “trade-tested betterment” (McCloskey, 2016). The values that were enhanced were courage, justice, temperance, prudence, faith, hope, and love. Work was given a dignity related to its social benefits not just its economic gain. The “moral norms as cooperation” categories coding show that women's ventures feature strongly in advancing Fairness and Exchange rather than their traditional role of advancing kin relations and supporting male mutualism. Given this has been proposed as a successful route for enhancing male agency in history within society, then one consideration is that there may be a reputational enhancement for women. The trade trade-off might be purely reputational: the balance between reputation of a woman within society and reputation as an embodiment of bourgeois virtues (McCloskey, 2016). These values were the basis of transforming lives for the merchant (entrepreneurial class) and were effective by the power of social recognition of the betterment they bought.

The findings in the thesis coding show that the market does shift norms for participants confirms the observation of Kalantaridis (2014) that market exchange can also be the fulcrum of institutional change as trading erodes “a culture of collectivity and satisfaction”. Combining this with the literature from Brown et al. (2022) on the median of norms shifting and Agneman and Chevrot-Bianco, (2022) leads to a wider observation. Putting women in any situation of trade she will then meet new norms based on exchange that shift her awareness to be beyond those based on kin. The norms dealing with strangers might be fairer than those within the local community. The sub-theory is therefore that when women are exposed to the market, even in small transactions, they

will observe how the value is based on the transaction and not on her social role. This will build her ability and value in economic transactions to start to balance out constraints of social reputational value.

There are powerful counter arguments on the deleterious effect of the market, not least by the emergent unfair distribution of past and newly created wealth (Picketty, 2017). However, trade itself has been a motor for poverty reduction (Ourworldindata, 2022). Female entrepreneurship is also linked to reduced poverty for the women concerned (Bruton et al, 2013; Duflo, 2012).

b) Reputation for transforming society for future generations.

Throughout the coding, the data suggested that women emerged as transformers of situations. This could be an existing family business, an opportunity, or socio-religious practices. They also impact economic transformation in their ventures generating greater sectoral diversification (Bandiera et al., 2022). The pattern is that of collective female action to transform one's environment and move it forward and in parallel generate a sorority which counterbalances the mutualism of male structures. The sub-theory is that women's businesses which have an orientation that included the social production of social betterment are more likely to succeed and be encouraged as they are adding rather than subtracting to her role as transformative social agent within social production. Women have the agency to try whatever they like but the findings suggest that the social and family acceptance will be higher if the goal is orientated towards creating a fairly, more sustainable world and that promotes gains for the next generation. This will amplify her reputation for social production as well as economic contribution which should advance her along the pathway to further emancipation. Pinky is a good example of this as a person whose reputation is amplified along both dimensions. Her increased personal agency is such that she can lessen the influence of her husband and his family and carve out more social space for herself.

The example of shifting honour norms in Sicily by appealing to social value of collectively caring for the next generation (Bicchieri, 2026) and the argument of fairness for the next generation on Shetland both shift gender agreement to shaping a future, fairer society. Pinky does this orientating around a future that is a more sustainable and equitable world. Old patterns are rethought around considering what is best for the next

generation. The Kalash society see womens venturing as their efforts to help secure identity and prosperity for the next generation of children. The annoying observation is that men in the data can justify their collective actions if it furthers their collective interests or their individual goals. Together in a sorority women can counterbalance this to justify their actions if it is in the interests of wider group of children. Rarely is it accepted if she is generating benefits for herself as this is seen as skewing the role of social production. This is annoying and uncomfortable from a feminist perspective but a consistent result in all three contexts. Further, women being seen to help other women within a loose sorority also boosts their reptation for social production so long as it carries a modesty and so avoids both male and female backlash.

Collective action by women appears to succeed in all three empirical contexts but external politicization of their activity can be problematic. They need be seen as helping their local kin or closely related community. All three succeed by orientating around improving the welfare of future children. Men appear willing to align to this goal perhaps as it is not an existing tradeoff against their interests today but a jointly imagined better world for their shared offspring.

Researcher diary: On social production orientation

Do not shoot me. I am pointing out what is coming through and simultaneously not suggesting a restriction on female agency on developing ventures that have a more overt economic focus. I just want them to succeed and going with the grain of social acceptance might assist.

c) Expanding socio-spatial contexts into the spiritual and psychological domains

Women have a relatively unexploited resource for venture formation: their shared psychological spaces. It might be shared spiritual realms of understanding or collaboration around expressions of inner shared identity as in the Kalash or indeed on what it means to be a Shetlandic woman. Orientation of a venture goes beyond the individual to shared values that are more than individual, or family based. The aspirations and values may also align with male interests, particularly when future focused. Observing the identification and creation of shared psychological spaces is a novel area for further entrepreneurship research.

9.7 Meta Theory 3 Moral Structuration: Adding Intent to the principles of structuration.

Meta Theory 3: Introduction

The prevailing view on informal norms is that they are a sociological feature that emerges from individual practices. These can be observed, and “praxis” or a pattern and body of practice builds beyond any individual participant. Through a pattern of bottom-up accretion, these then emerge as accepted or adopted informal norms. There is no definitive view on the formation of formal norms. Some may emerge reified from custom as informal norms that then took on additional weight and became formalized through complex forms of social engagement from discussion to legislation. Institutional theory sees the interplay of different powerful players determining how formal norms emerge and change. There is a disconnect between the apparently organic spontaneous or historical informal norms and the North (1990) privileging of power determined formal norms. It is unclear but implicit that norms are representative of groups thinking. Informal norms of one group might influence another and a structure more veering towards rule of law, a legislative process may see these emerge as formal norms. The fluidity between these is unclear. This may be as it assumes no other orientating principle that either power or random interactions. A lack of valence is contrary to the research findings which sees purposeful collective intent driving social action and entrepreneurship.

What is missing from this sociological perspective that informs both institutional theory and practice theory is this perspective on valence. It missed the hunt for human intentionality. As Giddens states “societies do not have needs other than those of individuals, therefore notions such as adaptation cannot properly be applied to them” (Giddens, 1981, conclusion). He further states “in pre-modern societies, it was the elders who possessed the knowledge as they were definable in time and space. In modern societies, we must rely on expert systems.” Although this work is now forty plus years old, it is seminal and remains influential. Giddens perspective has been updated as to how knowledge is carried and dispersed across communities (Henrich, 2017). Likewise, to observe societies as not having a group-level purpose has been challenged by many scholars in social psychology as cited herein They identify contextual influences as shaping group valence.

Given the premises of the structuration theory appear to be now too narrowly drawn, what are the theoretical implications of updating these assumptions in line with more recent scholarship?

Meta Theory 2: As social practices follow purpose, just as form follows function, structuration is top down and not formed bottom up. The purpose of practices is group flourishing so creates a quasi-magnetic top-down orientation of practices, norms, and structures to advance that purpose. These social structures are not built in a vacuum conditioned by political struggle but have a deeper valence of human group advancement.

Classical Structuration: Structure and Agency

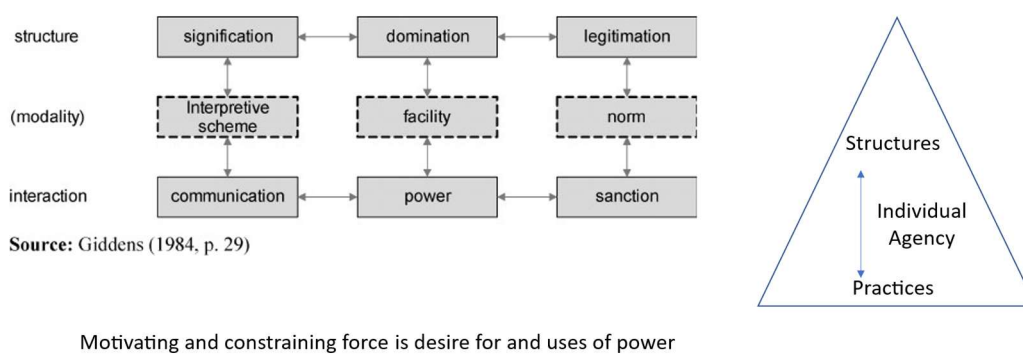


Fig. 9. Classical structuration: structure and agency

How does that overall purpose get translated top down into norms, practices, and other forms of institutional structures? This is an area of ongoing scholarship but for the purposes of illustration and what accords with the coding results in this thesis, the “morality as cooperation” seven social norms are adopted as a working hypothesis. The theory generated by this combination is “moral structuration” as it accepts that mechanism of structuration but now gives the power of group human intent as the reason norms develop as they do. “Moral” is the envelop in which many of these norms are conveyed through society, possibly to add to the strength of their adherence.

Comparison: Inversion of theoretical direction

• Classical Structuration

- Articulated by Giddens as practices determine social structures, but it is recursive and fluid
- Human creativity gives unpredictability and change
- Knowledge, including “pre-conscious” awareness informs action
- Informed action drives either reproduction of practices and social structures or it drives their transformation
- Lacks a group level orientation to purpose of social structures and sees change as result of unintended consequences of action
- Lacks an explanation as to selectivity of practices but seen as historical legacy, human interaction with existing structures
- Power as a sub-text driver between players when applied within institutional theory
- Influenced by Marx dialectic of struggle and by Goffman on transformative action & dramaturgy
- Central engine of change or maintenance is interaction between constraints of structure and creative fluidity of agency.
- Bourdieu “doxa” or awareness of durable limits and content of “habitas” lacks answer to why these practices, these limits and assumes a trajectory of historical loosening leading to postmodernist identity creation and bricolage.
- Society as a world within itself– inherently solipsistic
- Social constructivism epistemology

In terms of venturing and female emancipation, a new enterprise is also a collaborative human creation. As a structure, surrounded by other human created structures, is it contiguous with other such cultural forms. There is no reason to suppose that it does not also fit as another solution to advancing group purpose. This gives added weight to the analysis and theories above that where women’s businesses are seen to advance social production on behalf of the community, they may find more social support for their endeavors. Norms may align and expand rather than stand in their way.

To reprise, these orientating principles align with the results in the three research contexts and are proposed as a theory as to why the norms are shaped in context. They further align with the other models discussed in this thesis as to what values advance female emancipation and also entrepreneurship. The effect of venturing on female emancipation is proposed as a pathway that maintains but expands upon the social norms of kin support and mutualism. Added onto this is female mutualism to counter male group power. The role of venturing in particular is to add norms of exchange (trade) and fairness (equality) into her interactions beyond her immediate social context. This enhances her reputation for both economic and social production. It is in alignment with advancing her capabilities and doing so in a way which makes her the telos. Female advancement, supported by data from within this thesis, is the fulcrum of overall social and economic development. She is both the ends and the means.

Moral Structuration Theory: valence driven agency shapes group structures

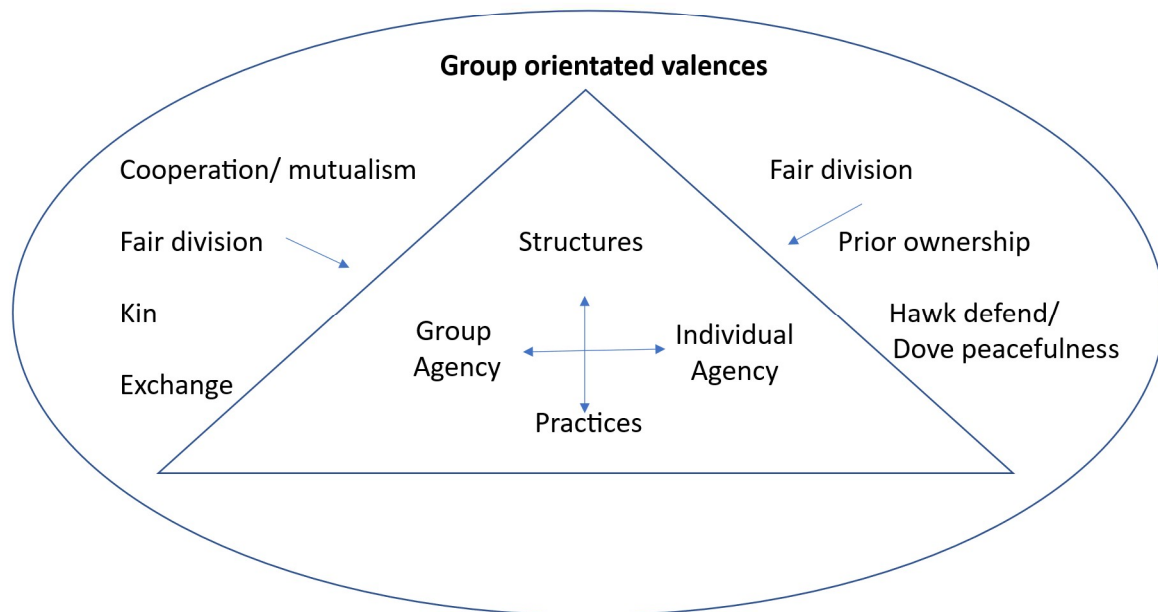


Fig 9.5 Moral Structuration Theory

Comparison: Inversion of theoretical direction

• Moral Structuration

- Practices reflect a deeper group valence which align (in theory) with one of the seven moral norms found across societies *
- Social structures orientate to group purpose and practices iterate between individuals and structures to align with purpose
- Individual agency is incentivized to align with group valency through social norms. Religious practices add weight to norm compliance but also align with moral norms, specifically cooperation with others vs free agency.
- Reproduction of practices occurs as a balance between individual agency and that which advances group survival. Past practices reflect the cumulative results of those past tradeoffs and social norms enforce past decisions.
- Change in practices occurs through individual choice but within the context of changing external factors that require groups to update or re-enforce practices to better advance or protect themselves.
- Influenced by social and evolutionary psychology that societies are shaped by universal incentives that align individuals to group purpose (Henrich, Gelfand, and within this, moral norms theory (Scott-Curry)).
- Central engine of change or maintenance is alignment to advance the group through one or more moral norms. Structure aligns to purpose and practices are the manifestations of that shift or maintenance of structure.
- Society as a construction of cumulative human action driven by group level forces in interaction with its environment and practices are its adaptive feature.
- Evolutionary theory epistemology and this determines and shapes social constructivism.

Table 9.2: Comparison of Moral Norms with Findings

Cooperation	How do the empirical papers map against these morality as cooperation values to explain social norms?						
	Kinship	Mutualism	Exchange	Hawk	Dove	Division	Possession
Morality	Family Values	Group Loyalty	Reciprocity	Heroism	Deference	Fairness	Property Rights
Basic Idea	Give your family special treatment	Work together rather than work alone	Return favours and injuries	Display your power	Submit to your superiors	Divide disputed resources	Respect first possession
		Loyalty, unity, solidarity, conformity	Reciprocity, trustworthiness, forgiveness	Bravery, fortitude, largesse	Respect, humility, awe, reverence	Fairness, impartiality, equality	Respect for property, property rights
Virtues	Duty of care, personal obligation to kin						
Up Helly AA clash	Both genders view	Male View	n/a	Male view	No	Female view	n/a
Gendered spiritual space India	Both genders view	Female sorority Male fraternity	n/a	Male role of heroism	Female to male is the norm	Within gender realms only	Male dominance over female rights
Kalash in Pakistan	Both genders view	Both genders view	n/a	Female role of heroism	Respect	Both genders view	Both genders view
<i>Framework of seven principles taken from Curry et al. (2021)</i>							
<i>Mapping is authors own interpretation</i>							
McCloskey Virtues (2013)	Love		Prudence	Courage	Faith	Justice	Prudence
Nussbaum Capabilities (2000)	Emotions	Affiliation	Practical reason	Sense Imagination Thought	Play		Control over environment: a) Political b) Material
Pettit (2016)	Cum Permisso	Varies	Libertas	Libertas (is the result)	Cum Permisso (may result)	Libertas	Freedom to grant permission

9.8 New Research Developments emerging from Thesis.

There is also a strong sub-theme of material on how venturing is used as a form of creative refusal : a weapon of identity protection and protection by a group in the shadow on a much larger presence. This is outwith the scope of answering this research question and will be developed in subsequent work. Venturing as an act of creative refusal in an unexplored avenue within the entrepreneurial literature. There is also scope to deliver the comparative contextual influences between female entrepreneurship in Pakistan and India and a case study is under preparation to compare a female entrepreneur operating a craft-based business employing over 100 women in rural areas around Peshawar in Pakistan. This will extend to a comparison to the similar venture of Surprise Someone in India. Methods also emerged as effective in asking deeper questions. Visual material

generated more insight of symbolic material than would be found in a solely textual discourse.

Table 9.3: New research streams emerging from thesis.

New research directions	Authors	Added discipline?	Publication focus	Type of Paper
1. Restructuring Structuration	Sole	Sociology	Management	Theoretical
2. Voice as a tool of venture emancipation	Sole	Feminist theory	Entrepreneurship	Theoretical but drawing on empirical studies
3. Rethinking Entrepreneurship as the curation of future social potential to be managed as a public good	Sole	Philosophy	Entrepreneurship	Theoretical
4. Applying Graeber's concepts of creative refusal to social contexts of venture operation	Sole	Anthropology	Entrepreneurship	Three existing empirical papers plus other published examples
5. Extending to concepts of time in Entrepreneurship to include the spiritual dimensions	Joint	Theology	Entrepreneurship	Theoretical
6. Context or venture in female Entrepreneurship: answering the chicken vs egg conundrum	Sole	Economic development	Entrepreneurship	Theoretical
7. Applying credulous trust to Entrepreneurship contexts as a macro socio-cultural influence	Sole	Political theory	Entrepreneurship	Theoretical
8a. Lassuna Textiles: Case study of female enterprise in a socially constrained context of Peshawar, Pakistan	Joint	Feminist theory	Entrepreneurship	Empirical
8b. plus a comparison with India case study and similar industry, age,	Sole	Feminist theory	Entrepreneurship	Empirical
9. Material symbolism: investigating the hidden narratives within Kalash costume	Joint	Anthropology	Cultural Anthropology	Empirical
10. Oryx as sustainable income resource fuelling female entrepreneurship in Gilgitistan, K-P, Pakistan	Joint	Sociology	Entrepreneurship	Empirical
11. Moral Valences of Venturing - expanding conclusion	Sole	Anthropology	Entrepreneurship	Theoretical
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13. Compiling collection 6-8 essays on female emancipation in entrepreneurship	Sole	Philosophy	Entrepreneurship	Points 2,3,5,6,15 plus two existing essays
14. Breaking out of Bourdieu when considering community capital : the need a broadened framework when researching egalitarian societies	Joint	Sociology	Management	Theoretical
15. The norms pathway to female emancipation	Sole	Political philosophy	Entrepreneurship	Theoretical
16. Visual methodology techniques for use in business research	Sole	Anthropology	Management	Mixed theoretical with reference to thesis
17. Papers repurposed: Extending grounded theory methodology to multiple contexts and publications	Sole	Research methodology	Management	Theoretical from own thesis
18. Pakistan bifurcated identity, credulous trust and the implications	Joint	Sociology/ politics	Politics	Second author using thesis sources
19. The Venturing women of Khasi, India: an investigation of the socio-cultural influences within a matrilineal location	Sole	Ethnography (anthropology)	Entrepreneurship	Empirical

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1 Conclusion

As this thesis is long, its conclusion will be short.

The research question was:

“Can new theory advance our understanding of how informal social norms modulate the expansion of female agency in places of female entrepreneurship?”

Several theories are presented in response to this question. The first is that informal norms around a woman’s social reputation have a profound effect on her ability to start a venture. By demonstrating how her actions advance her reputation for social reproduction on behalf of family and close community, informal norm might be circumvented. By pursuing ventures that also are in alignment with her role as a contributing member to society in transforming the future for their children gives an added impetus by leveraging reputational norms.

It is further theorised that the cause of reputational focus is as it advanced a primary “morality as cooperation” norm of supporting the priorities of family and near kin. It is however exacerbated in social contexts where earthly time is of less value than ethereal time. Limited earthly time value means it is difficult for earthly economic gains to be given balancing weight against the orientation towards an eternal, non-material life.

It is further theorised that any exposure a woman may have to trade will begin to shift her own awareness of these constraints and move her framework of social norms from a focus on kin and supporting male mutualism to the more liberating principles of fairness and reciprocity through market exchange. These are also likely to shift her agency from that defined by cum permissio to one of being able to refuse the authority of another, libertas. These are subtle shifts that need to be made in the context of social interdependence rather than seeking an atomised independent existence. Women bring social responsibilities and adding to this in a way that advances dignity and capability (Nussbaum, 2020) is the essence of a female model of entrepreneurship rather than an adapted androcentric model (Marlow, 2020).

To place this within the mainstream literature on how norms shape society, the following extract is offered from a critique of “The Narrow Corridor”(Acemoglu & Robinson, 2019) :

“Liberal-democratic states exist in between the alternatives of lawlessness and authoritarianism. The state is needed to protect people from domination at the hands of others in society, but the state can also become an instrument of violence and repression. When social groups contest state power and harness it to help ordinary citizens, liberty expands.” (Dizikes, 2019 on Acemoglu & Robinson, 2019).

It is an imperfect analogy but consider this theory about the “cage of norm” rewritten from a micro and feminist perspective based on coding analysis in this thesis:

“Extended families and the economies in which they sit exist in between the alternatives of lawlessness (chaos, creativity, feminine) and authoritarianism (order, structure, masculine). The male mutualism is needed to protect people from domination at the hands of others in society, but male mutualism can also become an instrument of violence and repression. When sorority contests male mutualism’s power and harnesses it to help ordinary citizens (other women and non-allied males), liberty expands. Females on their own cannot do this but collectively in a sorority they can, particularly when allied with men when considering the future” (author’s own interpretation).

When female entrepreneurship is allied in this manner, to the future, to group contribution and in collective support in sorority, we all gain. Society itself progresses.

Lastly, from a methodological perspective, it is theorised that the sociological analysis of Giddens that implied a bottom-up approach to social practices, norms formation and institutional development can be advanced by inverting this order of influence. By identifying that societies operate around orientating principles at a group-level, this means that sub-activities have a valence and so creates a top-down dynamic. The seven “morality as cooperation” principles are adopted as a best example of such implicit valences. This means that practice theory (Nicolini, 2013; Ortner, 2001) can be advanced by identifying what the overall contribution is to group flourishing and then observing how this disperses through individual practices. Informal norms within institutional theory (North, 1990; Scott, 2001) would also have orientating principles beyond that of

power. A battle for power might be apparent in public but the motivation for the search for power or influence should be explored as it may also reveal more about group direction and optimal survival.

This answers the questions raised as to why informal norms are so hard to shift. The answer is that until the group purpose changes, then the informal norms in society that are structured to pursue that purpose, will also be difficult to shift. Other contextual factors may be a factor such as the desire to maintain identity and distance from neighbouring societies (Graeber, 2013). Gender emancipation or even the impulse to create a better world by separation through personal achievement away from the group (Lhosa Vargos, 1991) are also dynamics. There is a dynamic of individual desires and group valence, of bottom-up response and top-down intent. This will not be a simplistic phenomenon or uni-directional but will be complex, messy, and multi-directional, just like humans. The overall arc of valence is clear. Over time, group dominates individual agency, but that group intent can change as context and threats or opportunities emerge. Nothing is assumed to be deterministic.

Thus, female venturing will advance when it is seen to contribute to social flourishing, at both an economic and social level of contribution. Informal norms curtailing her revolve about the resistance to allowing women to move beyond a narrower interpretation of social production. Subverting the dominance of reputational concerns on this matter through collective sorority and using venturing are ways to advance rather than detract from this traditional role. This will open up a pathway towards female emancipation through venturing (Rindova et al, 2009) but only lifting her value for social and economic production will shift this forward for society and from condition of *cum permissio* to a life of liberty.

Table 10.1 Notable contributions to Literature in response to Research question

Theoretical:

1. A norms pathway to female emancipation is theorised which considers the balance of social and economic production society seeks from women.
2. The extended impact on female entrepreneurship of concepts of religiosity, time, and values which enhance a woman's reputation is proposed, *specifically informal norms around a woman's social reputation have a profound effect on her ability to start a venture*
3. Theory of moral structuration - group-level agency often precedes and takes precedence over individual female choices and that informal norms are structured "top down" to enforce group-level economic and social interests
4. That it is less religious mores but perceptions of time that curtail female economic participation as being worthwhile. *Limited earthly time value means it is difficult for earthly economic gains to be given balancing weight against the orientation towards an eternal, non-material life.*
5. The line separating the sacred and the profane has collapsed to create a new bounded socio-spatial context of both new female entrepreneurship and spiritual advancement .
6. *That until the group purpose changes, then the informal norms in society that are structured to pursue that purpose, will also be difficult to shift resistance to female entrepreneurship. If it's in men's interests, they will then shift.*

Methodological:

1. The expansion of grounded theory to include prior empirical and theoretical work to provide additional depth of insights beyond individual research projects
2. The adaptation of visual anthropology into entrepreneurship empirical research to generate deeper socio-spatial and socio-cultural meaning
3. Supports the of the ontological framework of "affirmative foundations" quartile (Dey)

Empirical:

1. Empirical field research in three remote and liminal spaces to expand the research context for female entrepreneurship within unique socio-cultural places including in the Global South.
2. Redresses the focus on the heroic male in entrepreneurship as dominant narrative and so boosts the representation of women venturing in diverse social context

Philosophical:

1. Adaptation of Nussbaum's' Capability Theory to Entrepreneurship to minimise human potential
2. Extends the concepts of female agency based on principles of female epistemology
3. Extends the concepts of dual definitions of moderated agency, *libertas* and *conmissio*, within female entrepreneurship
4. Extends to scope of practice theory to include the wider concepts on informal social norms of Bicchieri to theorise reasons for resistance to female participation.

Multidisciplinary

1. Given the role on expanding agency and human potential, that entrepreneurship support be considered as a public good.
2. A consilience between anthropological theory of "Morality as cooperation" and venture areas women find social support for their contribution and how fairness and reciprocity expand her personal agency.
3. The cultural identity can be used for differentiation from geographic neighbours and that female entrepreneurship is one method of exhibiting that differentiation
4. Consideration of how markets can be repurposed, specifically by women, for collective good.

10.2 Limitations

The primary limitation is one of thesis length. To include a literature review, methodology, research output chapters, and space for the grounded theory outputs and conclusions has been an immense challenge given a 100,000-word limit. A comparative study of three context studies would not have led to the creation of the additional two theory chapters nor such extensive memoing. Cut-down chapters would have lost some of the “thick description” that generated theory. This was part of the learning from novel application of grounded theory that word length is a constraining factor.

The use of different interpretivist methodologies might have been conflicting but the results within each chapter are robust. The grounded theory coding of the first eight chapters appears to have smoothed out all the data as equivalent, easily handleable and is consistent with an overall interpretivist approach. This was a concern at the beginning but ebbed to be less pertinent as the thesis progressed.

10.3 Future Research Directions

The purpose of the thesis is to generate theory to answer the research question and not to test it or seek new information. The insights and theory generated have led to a significant number of new research directions, some of which are ready for development. These are outlined below. This reflects a strong sub-theme of material on how venturing is used as a form of creative refusal : a weapon of identity protection and protection by a group in the shadow on a much larger presence. This is outwith the scope of answering this research question and will be developed in subsequent work. Venturing as an act of creative refusal in an unexplored avenue within the entrepreneurial literature. There is also scope to deliver the comparative contextual influences between female entrepreneurship in Pakistan and India and a case study is under preparation to compare a female entrepreneur operating a craft-based business employing over 100 women in rural areas around Peshawar in Pakistan. Methods also emerged as effective in asking deeper questions. Visual material generated more insight of symbolic material than would be found in a solely textual discourse. Lastly, a more recent research trip identified how contemporary changing societies may embrace female entrepreneurship as an act of political resistance to extend personal liberty in areas such as the Caucasus regions of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

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ADDITIONAL APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

August 2022 while travelling, as reflections on layers of power behind the scenes.

Reflective Journal Extract: Notes on Powers behind the scenes “Who does it serve”?

Other thoughts on power. I need to read more on the North stuff, but there is an assumption of what is the battle over. What are they fighting for?

What is What is behind what they are looking for, what determines what their goals are. Are they fighting over the nonmaterial basically. And is non-material fighting the wrong word? Are they trying to find influence over the non-material? Well, honour is one source, reputation is another. Um, and what about money and power? And again, perhaps reputation. And how does that fit within what serves the group?

How is it determined? Is it status, in which case, how is status determined in Shetland? One thought is community contribution, not through class, social hierarchy. So, you do not get status by taking for yourself or projecting yourself. Your hierarchical status for yourself, you get status by being a good community member. Well, isn't that exactly what the moral norm stuff is about. So, yeah, I have just lost my train of thoughts, slightly: North and power. What is it that people value and why do they think it is worth shifting? So, from the female perspective, what is it? What does gender representation mean? Is it to be who they are? Is it to be away from the physical oppression? That is obviously a significant part of it, but the non-material element. Why is it important to people? Why is it important for someone to resist? I mean, it is clearly serving somebody to continue to act in a certain way. Is it serving as somebody individually or is it serving the group? People don't do things just for the sake of it. There will be a

reason: you could say it is inertia, but again, that is too simplistic. There will be more to it. So, in the Shetland case, it is serving. it is serving people's sense of identity. t's serving particularly male sense of identity and some women's sense of identity. What else is it serving? Well, in the past, it is served institutional powers, the local political power to try and pull apart the place from the rest of Scotland somewhat to be different to the surrounding area and from the Scandinavian islands (Faroe). It is all part of independence, debate of control over the oil money, et cetera. So, it was serving outside yet local powers.

Is anyone else being served by this through outside powers? Who does it serve for the Pakistan government to change its mind and say, actually we should protect the Kalash rather than see them rapidly assimilate under aggressive Islamic influence and attack and death, certainly by the Taliban. Who does it serve or was it just lip service to say they will be protected? And it doesn't really serve anyone it would be better if they were gone? Well, it certainly serves them to have as distinctive tourist offering and economic benefit coming from that. And in Pinky's case, who does it serve to allow her to flourish? And who does it not serve? Well, it does not serve her husband. That is for sure. But it does serve her, her family. What about the rest of society? Well, to see her emerge certainly serves the Indian government is a female representative and it serves other women who would be seeking to have a life like hers or a semblance. Although she is an affluent high-caste lady, it is an opportunity for others to start something, to have a bit more control over their lives. That is what it is. Is it control over your life ultimately? So, yeah, it is all very well to say it is a power struggle (North), but who is behind the power? Who is defining the terms of it. It is like Walsingham behind. Queen Elizabeth. Her

presence served other's interests, benefit. So, whom do these women serve besides themselves- it's not so simple.

Appendix 2:

Researcher's Reflexive Journal Entry: Sampling

The trip to the Kalash was driven by the identification of the women by Dr. Alice Evans. This was part of her ongoing tweeting of cultural anthropology records on female empowerment. This led to some basic research and enquiries through local guides as to the prevalence of female entrepreneurship within the tribe given that Pakistan has one of the lowest records of female labour force participation (Evans, 2022) and venture participation at 1% (Yousafzai et al., 2015). Arrangements were then made so that a trip to India to see Pinky would coincide with a trip to Northern Pakistan on the same long trip. This was done in July / August 2022. An invitation to return has been extended by several of the Kalash women to observe their Spring festival in May 2023. This is a key religious time in which many of the gender-affirming stories are retold and female-led spiritual life is most to the fore. The lack of language on both sides (Kholwar / Chitrali and English) means a heavy dependence on translation and to mitigate these risks, strong emphasis is placed on the visual records taken and reviewed using the principles of visual anthropology. Some additional research on the musical, dance and symbolism in dress decorations has also been undertaken as this gives complementary insight to the women's direct stories of female assertion.

Through it all, I immersed myself as much as possible with the Kalash women. This meant living with a local family, playing with their children, and using serendipity within the villages to meet more people as well as the

agreed local female entrepreneurs. Time does not run a fixed schedule, but rather a series of welcoming tea sessions whereby trust is created and then the conversation flows. A number of times, other women were invited to join the discussion, such as mothers, sisters, and cousins who all contributed to the discussion. As detailed in a separate travel report, my position as a free travelling, White western British passport bearing women came to the attention of the Pakistan security services. Although this did not affect data collection during the time with the Kalash women, it was a major contextualising factor of the trip. This is because I became the object of scrutiny and continuous police enquiry from my guide. The trip ended with a rapid scramble to leave the region due to the re-emergence of the Taliban nearby and the request by the security services for me to leave, as a Western woman to be outside the orbit of potential terrorism risk in the mountains.

Appendix 3

Reflexive Researcher Diary extract: Coding Shetland visuals

This sample visual of the male domain presents a repeating pattern in the way that men appear to embody the Viking re-enactment of identity. The men all grow beards if they are in squads. This will be made clear to the public in September when shaving stops. This builds upon the confraternal links within the community as a representation of belonging to a squad. The presence of young boys also dressed in similar regalia also shows the level of identity formation that is taking place from an early age and explains the reports of ex-Shetlands returning with their sons for a holiday specifically so they can participate and so take their place in the squads and understand what it means to belong to the community. The picture of the boat in front of the sea brings many meanings to mind. The first is that the order in which they are standing in rows is the order of seniority. This

is based on longevity from boy to man and throughout adulthood. This takes about 15 years from being in the squad to becoming Jarl for the year. A clear indication of this strong seniority, reminiscent of guild structures and time served, is not clear from the textual sources. The level of detail and quality of the costumes is extremely high, I have heard it costs hundreds of pounds. This indicates the time and money invested by the individual. These would be made in the galley shed , along with the boats and torches throughout the year showing prevalence of this male group activity across the seasons. The sea is the dominant environmental factor and the sheer force and danger that this represents is nearly impossible to understand unless seen. Getting on and off the island can be difficult. Boats get cancelled in storms; planes are cancelled . The sense of being an isolated, but resilient community is related to the literal threat of the sea. It is in itself a dominant character within the place, neither malevolent nor benign but certainly uncontrolled by man. The picture of the men in the open boat, a traditional fishing boat used in inland waters is an echo of the ranks of men in the squad. This is an echo of the sense of pulling together. With the similarity in clothes, wearing Shetland woollen sweaters, and the unity of purpose, this helps demonstrate how putting effort into your boat generates community capital. Pulling together, relying on each other, respecting each other, and building an identity of resistance.

Visual Anthropology: Triangulation of Observation (*Banks, 2018*)

- Patterns of behaviour?
- Social Roles
- Environmental Constraints

E.g., Masculine related Imagery,
Shetland Islands



Visual Anthropology: Triangulation of Observation (*Banks, 2018*)

- Patterns of behaviour?
- Social Roles
- Environmental Constraints

E.g., Feminine related Imagery,
Shetland Islands



Women on Shetland are no less dominated by landscapes and framed by the sea, yet portray more land-based imagery, reflecting their traditional role in running the croft as a joint marine household, while men were at

sea. The image of the little girl looks sweet but she in an "economic engine in training," learning to knit complex pattern from an early age in preparation for her being involved in the production, sale, and distribution of woollen garments from the islands. Such items were sought after, certainly since the period of the Hanseatic league, possibly before. Women dominated woollen production, and up to a third of households engaged in it until wider industrial production took over after the 1950's. The traditions remain including knitting being part of the school curriculum, as is fiddling, to maintain cultural and economic activity. Both women are exemplifying the male and female sources of enterprise: knitting while walking and doing other chores. The shawls on their head are also locally fine handmade examples, warm but strong. Almost all the old photos depict women knitting at all times of the day and moving around the landscape alone or in small groups and fits with Abrams (2012) description of them being highly independent. The women dancing symbolizes the sorority that exists in Up Helly AA halls. That is their space, their place for displaying their fun and dominance, organizing, and participating. Another image portrays a traditional relationship and social role, in which the female supports the heroic male, as also observed by King (2010). It is only recently with the advent of Lesley Simpson, pictured, as the first woman Jarl in the modern facing squad in the South Mainland, that images of female iconography have been seen and a new social role being displayed. The costume, which is similar in pattern to the men's attire, accords with a larger movement among female activists, by a local women's group that aims to "reclaim the raven" and other symbolic elements of Shetland identity, which were overwhelmingly used by men in representation. The pictures are also outdoors, in the public space and so breaking down the divide which has been masculine in the outer sea facing world (she and her squad are on a beach) and women being land or household based. This

reclaiming of physical space is also seen in some of the other activism, e.g., reclaiming the public parks where processions gather to make them gender inclusive once more.

Appendix 4:

Researcher Reflexive Journal Entry: A Critical Process Approach

Following the suggestion of a Critical Process Approach (Baker & Welter, 2020), the following is made as disclosure to allow the reader to take their own view of this thesis as to how bias or objectivity might be a weight upon the research analysis and so moderate its conclusions. As a researcher, I bring several experiences to the fore. I am a female, I am an entrepreneur, I am a mother, I am Western, I am highly educated, I am very free thinking and challenging in temperament, I am Catholic in religion and catholic in tastes, I am of a high social class, I probably have high-functioning but unmedicated ADHD. Other aspects unseen are that I have had severe financial stress, have had the trauma of a child nearly dying, am of many diverse cultures but skewed towards Northern Europe, my unanglicized name is Scandinavian, I do not have colonial ancestors. I have lived close to Arctic Indigenous peoples for the early part of my life, I speak several languages, I am an extreme abductive thinker that sees patterns others do not but that is often misunderstood, I “read” imagery as much as words. I am politically centrist so not of the left nor right, I have been involved in sustainability initiatives for 20+ years, I am a competitive tennis player. I have a relaxed warm and informal style which allows trust to be built. Both grandparents ran family enterprises in which the grandmothers were also active involved or valued as equal life partners. My paternal grandmother was a classical musician who contributed to the family economy by teaching private lessons. The maternal grandmother was the inner commercial engine, responsible for accounts and smooth operations of

both the family dairy business and the family. Both were known for their kindness and openness to strangers. One grandfather was both a Nordic aristocrat and a subversive freedom fighter. My mother was a teacher who travelled widely, spoke several languages, and embraced learning until old age. My father was an innovator, inventor and explorer who pioneered where others had not been before both physically and in challenging the vexatious actions of others. He spoke up for principle, always. I am an only child.

In the context of these types of situations, some caution is required. I had a business on Shetland and so as an entrepreneur also made an impact upon the social and economic context of the Islands. I am not a native but had 5 years close association with the area with significant portions of time living in the local community. UP Helly Aa was an arrangement where I did not participate other than to donate to the local squad, as was expected of all other local operating businesses. Thus, the analysis is based on secondary material, since asking questions locally would place me back in the frame of analysis. This would distort responses to reflect my own experiences as well as their experiences of me. It has also been almost 20 years since I founded the business and 15 since all my links ended with Shetland, so time has provided additional distance. I am no longer embedded, but I bring a more informed eye as the institutional layers and norms within the region and how they may vary both compared to mainland Scotland and Scandinavia.

My relationship with Pinky began when she was introduced as a possible research subject for a collaborative paper on sustainable venturing practices in India. During the zoom discussion in 2021, topics extended beyond the formal. She felt comfortable discussing matters of a personal nature with me as a fellow woman entrepreneur working within a family

context. This led to discussions about conducting an in-depth case study on her, but the informal agenda was that I was the only person she could find who she could be open with, and who has some similar experiences of, the challenges of being a female entrepreneur and the strain that is placed upon her family and marriage. Thus, great care is required in separating observations from revealing details of her private life that are not for the public domain. This was managed by recording all conversations but by the more sensitive material being excised from the transcripts as this was what was promised.

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Appendix 5 : Inspired by Goffman: Structuring Institutional Components as Players upon the Shetland Stage

**“The play’s the Thing,
Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King”
(Hamlet, Shakespeare, 1601)**

The presentation of the study as dramaturgy is deliberate, reflecting both the influence of Goffman, and the scripted nature of the spectacle. It is also a practical structure to convey with more clarity the role of different institutional players

To provide a more nuanced understanding of the structure and agency relationships within the formal and informal institutions of this period, inspiration has been taken from Erving Goffman’s extensive time living with locals on the Island of Unst from whence his concepts of “dramaturgy” were first presented in his PhD (1959). He used scripts he recorded while living in this most northerly, and possibly most Nordic, corner of Shetland. Goffman's methods and manner of setting out his PhD, which were in the form of set pieces of dialect upon the Shetland stage, are

used as a conceptual device in this study to envision Up Helly Aa as an example of modern public theatre (King, 2010) Thus, in Goffman's honour, the debates and events documented in the netnographic records (Kozinets, 2019) between 2018 and 2022 are presented as if they happened on the stage of Shetland. As such, we see each institution operating as one of a multitude of "dramatis personae" playing out their roles in an immersive manner, and occasionally we see external writers and directors attempting to influence plot development for their own ends. This dramatic device also enables the reader to see the holistic nature of institutional influences as a scene of many players with various levels of influence at different points of time and whose content and valence may, as the Scots say "swither."

Setting out the institutional influences as a set of interacting players removes the reductionism that has hitherto bifurcated the Shetland gender debate uncomfortably into inaccurate binaries: male: female, Norse: Scottish, "Soothmoother": Shetlander, public accountability: private unaccountability, progressive: traditional. It is to adopt the reflection of:

.....

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts
(*"As You Like It"*, Shakespeare, 1623)

Dramatic Personae

The Unst Boat Song (in Norn as sung)

Starka virna vestalie, obadeea, obadeea

Starka virna vestalie, obadia, money

*Stala, stoita, stonga raero,
Whit saes du, da bunshka bearo?
Whit saes du, da bunshka bearo?
Litra maevi, drenghe.
Saina papa, wara, obadeea, obadeea
Saina papa, wara, obadeea monya.*

Translation

*Strong winds blow from the West;
They may bring trouble and damage the boat, men.
Put in order, brace the mast
O what say you, the boat will be able to carry her sail?
I'm pleased with it boys.
Holy father, watch over us
They may bring trouble and damage the boat.*

Role: Pervasive influence on all other players. Practically and metaphorically a reminder that in this terraqueous landscape, whatever locals or others might decide about the affairs of Shetland life, nature will remain in charge and is the substrate on which the stage is poised.

Nordicity Outwith the Nordic region

As with other European cultures, cultural expansion means that the norms and social dynamics of the host culture are carried forth into other regions: the English to the Commonwealth, French to Canada and parts of Africa, the Dutch to South Africa Norse exploration, by which we might commonly mean “The Vikings” was sourced from a cultural region extending primarily from Western Norway, extended across Scandinavia, and was linked to historical patterns of seafaring travel for trade and settlement from the 8th Century. Norse, historically, relates to the

expansionary reach of Viking settlement in the North Atlantic as a set of staging posts: Norway to Shetland and Orkney then onwards to Faroe, then Iceland and finally Greenland. Forays further afield were made such as to Lance aux meadows in Newfoundland and potentially further down the Eastern seaboard of North America. Settlers brought with them a Nordic societal model & community identity with permutations & adaptations per location (Browning, 2007). Some thrived with the strict code of social norms they brought with them including strong religiosity and daily practices which reinforced the Viking (Norse) identity. Having faced adversity as part of a cohesive group, the Norse settlers prospered in Iceland (Diamond, 2011). Even so, the very fixity of Viking social norms, born of the belief in the supremacy of culture in the face of changing circumstances undermined their survival elsewhere. A situation that required local adaptation rather than cultural fixity to support their unanimity of purpose and perseverance may have led to their demise as in Greenland during the Little Ice Age. Families starved whilst fish swam nearby, and the Inuit thrived all as to be a Viking was to raise cattle and sheep and not bend to local ways (Diamond, 2011).

Pictish Identity

As identified by his work on Shetland folklore, Grydehøj (2009). Picts and possibly other pre-Norse settlers lived on the islands and were present during the arrival of the Vikings in the 790's with settlements emerging in the early in the 800's. This community of Picts, probably of P-Celtic ancestry, established since Neolithic times, 4300 B.C., appears not to have resonance in this play, nor does the later Celtic iconography. Their society disappeared, its people "either slaughtered or enslaved and worked to

death” and now “every single place name on Shetland is Viking” (Viking Museum Val Turner)

Exit stage left.

Norse identity

Shetland identity and community social capital draw heavily on the Nordic narrative reflecting the pre-eminence of Viking influence in the period 800 a.d. to 1471, being Norse longer than Scottish. Land law is still Norse or Udal, and place names are still almost entirely reflecting the communities whose forebearers spoke the now extinct language of Norn. This is similar to Faroese which was settled concurrently. Through a twist of 15th C regal deal making, the archipelago of Shetland was given to Scotland and that of Faroe, to Denmark. Some 60% of male DNA (BBC, 2018; Leslie et al., 2015; Scotsman, 2016) shows direct Norse descent alongside those of Pictish origin who preceded Viking settlement and later Scottish settlers. There is a duality of identity revealed through bidialectalism: a Shetlander speaks in a warm quasi-Scottish accent to an outsider but switches to a different, strongly lilting Norse-inflected dialect when speaking amongst locals (Smith & Durham, 2012). These contemporary forms of “Nordicity” are not a Disneyfied retelling of the past, of Shetland’s pivotal role in the Orkneyinga Saga, but localised adaptations of cultural inheritance in many forms beyond dialect: iconography, building styles, community practices, festivals, and a liberal ideology that both incorporates yet resists Scottish influences. This is also co-opted as an institutional shield for a strong streak of independence, echoing the “long-running call for Gothic and Saxon freedom.” (Grydehøj, 2009, p. 49) and elevating the retention of Norse law as a legal and cultural differentiator that says, “we are different, our laws are different, and this proves we are separate”.



Lerwick Town Hall: Norway, Shetland, UK. No Scottish flag

Similar to society on Orkney, (Lange, 2008) a narrative of identity is a powerful force in itself based on being “other”, fostered by resourceful communities surviving in isolation and with a strong anti-Scottish, rebellious, egalitarian, and independent streak that is a fortuitous fit with an overlay of a Viking masculine identity. There is a sub-theme of loyalty to each other, the “cootin’ kin” of a close-knit community and so of being committed to local living long term. The music of Up Helly Aa is an expression of these norms of identity.

Shetland's fragmented Nordic identity is also positioned as a tool of resistance to a Scottish identity. It is also reflected in the political sphere, the resilience of community activities, and the differentiation of organizational structures. Consequently, the island's heritage is suffused with Nordic identity and affiliation, represented visually through aggressive gendered iconography. The levels of identification of this Norse heritage vary as per Cohen (1987) symbolic rituals increase with external pressure and so too has this risen as Up Helly Aa structures come under external scrutiny.

Role: Primary actor with a grith that, like Falstaff, expands as age and action progresses.



A culture of subversion of institutions

Shetland is geographically positioned in the middle of the North Sea at 60 degrees North. This may seem remote to most, but Shetland has been a sailing pitstop for many centuries for pelagic fishing, supplies and trade. The original Viking visitors were pirates in the 790's. Lerwick was built on trading with all comers and was familiar with both illegal smuggling, particularly gin or Genever from the Netherlands, and prostitution. Illegal salt customs were occasionally collected from passing ships (Holterman, 2020, p. 358). While the routes allowed to Norwegian traders by the Norwegian Crown were disputed by the Hanseatic League, Shetland continued to trade with the Norse. They spoke to them in Norn; a dialect related to Norse. The locals, therefore, were used to subverting distant authorities in order to suit their economic interests. From 1294, German Hanseatic merchants had been forbidden by the Norwegian king to travel anywhere in Norway north of Bergen and that meant prohibition on visiting the "Scotland of Orkney, Shetland, the Faroes, Iceland, and Greenland. There were no obstacles to the German and Dutch traders nor

to the Shetlands both before and after the move to Scotland. Trade continued as it had done with the weight of an isolated geography dominating any shifting of external control. What is a remote set of islands to do when you are on the direct sea highway from Western Europe to the outer regions of the Atlantic and have dried fish and woollens to sell? They were pragmatic and selectively ignored the authority of remote jurisdictions. This was equally the stance of the Norwegian and Hanseatic traders for “As was usual, the interdiction was neglected” (Hammel-Kiesow, 2019, p. 35.) and “while trade with Shetland, Orkney and the Faroes, although officially prohibited, continued unimpeded” (Hammel-Kiesow, 2019, p. 37) and “was covertly conducted from non-Hanseatic ports.” (Hammel-Kiesow, 2019. P. 38). The local commercial merchants in Shetland also managed local justice beyond the arm of officialdom “the local authorities continued to tolerate a certain degree of merchant-administered justice, possibly because they simply did not have the power to control it... Shetland court books emphasise ... the special place of trading sites in Shetlandic society” (Holterman, 2020, p. 153). There is a culture of subversion apparent on the stage in the hall festivities during Up Helly Aa “People were setting things on fire and smashing windows (Leslie 2016, BBC) in the 1820’s at the Yuletide festivals. Today, this is seen in the various scripts used in guising, notable in their mockery of authority and attempts at external control, the pompous, and the socially stratified (Ferrari-Nunes, 2016). This is a “topical satirical attack on local worthies, designed to expose suspected corruption and humbug in general” (King, 2010, p. 246).



Guising troupes in the Community Halls

A lighter version of subservience is the call to collective fun and spirited merriment as an escape from both winter and from a life of precarity on a resource poor land for women and harsh labour at sea for me. Yes “fun” has an edge in satire as a form of dismissal of criticism. “The criticism is more heathenish than the festival. It is an attempt to interfere with innocent hearts' enjoyment” (BBC Radio Scotland, March 2019). Viking identity had been overlaid onto it as “it was all about going along people’s houses, eating drinking and dancing - it was nothing to do with the Vikings at all” (BBC, Jan 2020; Byron 1994). Rather the ultimate subversion of tradition for politics in Up Helly Aa might have been by song writer and narrative creator Haldane Burgess himself who was a socialist. His vision was that “the Viking ideal and Marxism seemed to dovetail – he saw the Viking as a freedom fighter and standing up for their rights.

Role: similar to that of the court Jester, an informal social norm always pops up as part of Up Helly Aa in the tone of discourse and in public activism.

Scottish identity

Although officially Scottish since 1469, it was not until the Stewarts earldom arrived in 1581 that shifts would be felt and cultural duality continued well into the 1800's with "The common dialect is a mixture of Norwegian, Scotch, Dutch, and English" (Arthur Edmondston, 1809, Unst) as "English would have been the language of the officialdom, Dutch of trade, and Norn of family and social life" (Grydehøj, 2009, p. 40) with family patronymics still in use. "The Dutch are not popularly reckoned as having left much of a cultural imprint on Shetland... from around 1800 on, the focus in descriptive writing on Shetland's Norse history increased dramatically" (Grydehøj, 2009, p. 41).

There was lingering resentment at the Scottish feudal system and its use to marginalise the already impoverished on land and sea. "It was in the laird's commercial interest to portray the Shetland crofters as set apart – both legally and culturally – from farmers and fishermen elsewhere in Britain" (Grydehøj, 2009, p. 45). Although this was also notably apparent in the communities elsewhere in the north of Scotland such as in Caithness and Sutherland with mass clearances of the land and forced emigration, the harshness meted out to tenant farmers on Shetland led to notable anti-authoritarian sentiment and a dislike of social stratification (Ferrari-Nunes, 2016).

King (2010) proposes that the influence of Victorian attitudes in Scotland influenced the idea of the separation of social lives into a public cultured realm of men and a private, nature-based realm of women at home. She posits that this was in part a way to differentiate the bourgeoisie from the working classes, and this is reflected "that is the sharp delineation between the male occupation of space in processions which operate outside and are

mobile, and the female dominated indoor places, the ha's" (King, 2010, p. 249). There is a strand of literature on the rise of such gendered spaces, and she places this (primarily Scottish / Victorian) influence in this same context noting:

"The particular form that women's roles in the ha's assume at Up Helly Aa, may be complicit generically with the culturally subsidiary role of the female, but it is also aspirational and bourgeois in the particularity of its manifestations in a manner best understood by reference to the Lerwick of a century ago"

(King, 2010, p. 249)

Although the practice of separating roles in maritime households has been in existence for centuries, the Up Helly Aa was a dramatization of this equal yet distinct split of responsibilities. This might also explain the quite vociferous opposition from local women (BBC Radio Shetland Speakeasy, 2019) to being characterised as "lesser" by fulfilling the hostesses roles in the halls over what is very clearly their own public jurisdiction. This is consistent with the exclusion of women from the Jarl squad, but the claim that it is a Scottish influence to introduce segregated realms and they are a Victorian relic is a possible mischaracterisation of the prior social structures of coastal habitations around the North Atlantic. To conflate Shetland's gender separated social structures with those of the Highland Games (The Scotsman, 2019) or the Selkirk Riding (Neville, 1994), who also recently introduced women into the proceedings, is inaccurate given the quite different spatial contexts in which these land-based events take place.



Courtesy of Gaarda. Squad meetings 1960's

There are influences as two differing cultural strands, a combination in terms of political institutions of “a Scandinavian attitude of mind that could be described as co-operative, innovative, and flexible, whereas Scots tend to be suspicious of one another, conservative and inflexible (Newby 2009, p. 209). This might be a misread of Shetland however as Goffman noted that it was part of the Shetland stoic character (Goffman, 1953) to use silence to smooth social unease, which might be why the pattern of challenge to the Up Helly Committee and other formal institutions on Shetland has been either silence or minimal comment.

There is less anti-Scottish sentiment than hitherto but being against political control by Edinburgh is strongly evident in the consistent voting record of independently minded candidates and / or those best placed to be contrary to the dominant party in Edinburgh. Cohen (1987) identified that this blended Shetlandic identity, and its associated symbolic meaning, increased when it was perceived to be under threat, from encroaching Scots influence due to the arrival of mainland-based oil workers who rotated on / off the island so were not seen as the “in group”.

The primary institutional norm brought into this play from Scotland is the Equalities Act (Scotland) 2010, which puts a duty on public bodies to

pursue equality of opportunity for all in their day-to-day work across policy formation, public service delivery and employment. This is legislation that is passed as “Regulations” by the Scottish parliament as an adoption of UK wide legislation but was originally part of the European Union’s approach to standardization of equality laws. Yet this is used as both a shield and a sword by our players. It is held as a shield by the Up Helly Aa committee (and the council) to say this does not apply to us as the organisation is private and so we are excluded from the requirements of the Act. “I have already stated that the council’s involvement with Up Helly Aa does not contravene the Equalities Act 2010” (Maggie Sandison, Shetland News, 2019). Up Helly Aa, legally, is a private party so not subject to Scottish equality legislation – people are free to invite who they like but this is tenuous when the private party dominates the “public sphere” (Habermas, 1962) as in practice, there is hardly a divide between the public and private domain on Shetland as three organisations dominate island life: galley sheds across the islands for men, the community halls for all but run by women and the Shetland Island Council. Largely secular, liberal & tolerant, the rhythm of life revolves around the modern calendar custom of Up Helly Aa and the seasons. Rather than private vs public space there is, historically, gendered space of maritime living. A challenge to exclusion based on gender may be legitimate if women are excluded from such a dominant public sphere of participation.

Other activists use this as a sword to argue that this is a public event and uses local government infrastructure such as the Town Hall and play parks for civic receptions. As Peter Hamilton, an activist for squad inclusion asks, “What legal and moral justification have the UHA committee to be allowed to use the council’s public play park while banning women and girls” (Shetland News, 25 January 2022). A major shift from 2018 to 2022

is the balance of formal norms being held to account as the informal norms of acceptability shift. There was no introduction of legislation as a result, but a much sharper rebuke of the council for its narrow interpretation, technically correct but not convincing. This took the form of activists challenging Up Helly Aa's supportive bodies. They asserted that council support was tantamount to breaching the general obligations of public bodies to promote equality of access under the 2010 Act.

Up Helly Aa's stance that it should not be subject to scrutiny because it is a private event organized by voluntary organizations is not credible.

Participation in the 12 fire festivals extends to most of society with approximately two thirds of men between the ages of 24-40 taking part in some capacity. Boys flow into the junior squads from Class P7 in schools and the festival is entwined through the curriculum from P1 in classes which include girls. As part of their holiday visits, ex-Shetlanders enrol their sons in junior squads so that their shared identity is carried forward. Funding is "by donations from local businesses and run by volunteers" in order to show local commitment (BBC, 20 Jan 2018).

It is evident that hardly any taxpayer money is involved, and the organisers are agnostic as to additional tourism revenue. However, festival preparation is a year-round activity, shaping most areas of public life including the granting of a local additional day of public holiday for all. The stance that this is a "private party" is a fragile and unsustainable position to maintain, and activists have homed in on this as the weak point in holding back gender inclusion in the squads where, if in reality this was a public activity, it would be in contravention of the Equalities 2010 Act.

Role: Supporting actor but can turn into a parent in charge when necessary. Never wears a kilt. Always on stage.

What is Nordicity?

Nordicity derives its characteristics from the pan-Nordic epistemic community that emerged from the original 19th C movement of Scandinavianism (Hemstad, 2018) reflecting a cultural duality that like Janus, “was at the same time backward-looking and future-oriented with a certain way of conceptualizing the world” (Hemstad, 2018, p. 9).

Landscape, and so memory of place, traverses these northern locations as a "boreal alterity", putting them in the midst of both "poor peasant societies surviving harsh conditions and rich and modern societies surrounded by a wealth of natural resources." (Strang et al., 2021, p. 2) This too is the transition Shetland has made. There is the older Viking centred imagery, a largely romanticised version of a bucolic idyll with “sparsely populated societies living in close relationship to nature, comparatively peaceful and consensual political cultures, or the strong, even dominant role of the state and the weak position of the family in societal affairs” (Strang et al., 2021, p. 2).

Beyond this historical imaginary, itself under revaluation on Shetland as the heightened involvement of warrior women in Viking societies is revealed (Shetland News, 2020), is a more contemporary conceptualisation of “peace-loving and rational Nordics... stood for progress, modernization and for being better than other models” (Browning, 2007. P. 27). Nordicity is notable for gender equality, leading the global index for gender development (Human Gender Development Index, 2022) and its countries were among the first to introduce universal suffrage. Yet this builds on an older cultural conceptualisation of the powerful Norse female. For all the dominant masculine iconography of the male Viking warrior it was the female Valkyries in mythology who decided who lived and died in battle (Enloe et al., 2021). It further builds on the strong role of women in

communities with absent males at sea leading to a tradition of egalitarianism in home and society. This created adjacent realms with close cooperation among men at sea and equally close filial and mixed female supporting households on land (Byron, 1994).

Another feature of Nordicity is its pattern of cultural reinvention. From intra-Nordic warfare has emerged a region known for norm entrepreneurship (Browning, 2007, p. 32) in the sphere of peace, negotiation and global norms exemplified by the Nobel Peace Prize. This model of egalitarianism and distributive justice (Browning, 2007) is a significant soft power export from the region. What has enabled this shift from Viking iconography to a suave “peacenik”? Identity is constructed in interaction with others in a particular space and time and as Browning (2007, p. 28) notes, needs to be “intersubjectively negotiated in interactions with others” to be effective in the world. Therefore, Nordicity combines a Viking / Norse narrative with a modern, gender-equality-generating, and peace-generating social structure capable of transitioning practices and institutions over time. us both authentic (history, genetic record, cultural legacy) yet imagined and identity boundaries have shifted as society, and the expectations of the content of gender roles, change.



The principal identifier of Nordicity, as identified by Browning (2007), is 'exceptionalism', a strong self-belief in being different or better than the cultural norms and values that existed prior to Nordic settlement. Their institutional structures could take many forms but reflect two defining characteristics: collaborative models of conflict resolution and a redistribution of wealth across communities. These were melded with existing European practices and processes and across the north of Scotland, Shetland and Orkney was reflected in an egalitarian democratic model, with localised power dispersed in community structures of decision making

called Tings or local parliaments, on the mainland as Ding, as in Dingwall, Highland, or the Ting on central Shetland. Influences by the Gulathing Law (12th C) from Western Norway gave a sense of shared community identity being constantly reaffirmed by ongoing participation by all citizens supported by a structured narrative relating somewhat to Norse origin. The pervading institutional norms revolved around the unity of the community. What served the community was the point of agreement as community survival physically and culturally was at stake. Such collective strength was seen to bring resilience, defiance, and success both as a living community eking out a subsistence life on land and sea as well as a masculinity unity for defence of kith and kin. Other traditions emerged that reflect a collective spirit. For example, the singing of rowing songs when out at sea in perilous conditions in open boats or in weaving, knitting or other shared activities by women.

Shetlandic Spirit of Nordicity and Independence

If Scotland sees itself as evolving into a social-democrat nation with a strong affiliation with its European neighbours combined with a still, though slight, commitment to the United Kingdom Union, Shetland's governance arrangements remain motivated by a spirit of independence and self-determination. The islands of Shetland and Orkney have distinct views on self-determination and identity and "islanders hate being dictated to by mainlanders whether from Edinburgh or London" or as Liberal leader Jo Grimond said, "The last thing the Northern Isles wants is to be ruled by Glasgow trade unionists or Edinburgh lawyers" (Stewart, 2020). In addition to the history of significant natural resource inheritance, including oil resources, there is also a sense of place implicit in that resistance. This is more an axiology of communal value than a transactional concern. As per Grimond, "devolution suggests that power is centred at the top and... some

has to be handed down but... power inheres in the people themselves and their basis communities “(Shetland News, 2014). Rule from afar, from anyone is seen as hostile, assuming that they will be “remote and uncaring about their particular needs, interests and culture” and economic self-determination is a means to liberatory self-determination more widely rather than the end. (Islanders threaten rocky road),

This spirit has arisen across time since the pawning of the islands from Norway to Scotland in 1479 but is consistently setting the tone on stage. The Treaty of Breda (1667) was an attempt to settle if the islands were really part of the UK, but that conclusion was indeterminate. In 1984, the Declaration of Wyre was made asking the King of Norway and the Queen of Denmark “to safeguard our laws, rights, and traditions until such time as our constitutional status is resolved”, being signed by many residents and community leaders. Though amusing, this also reflected the protean upsurge of spirit of people seeking more control over their own legal, economic, and social affairs and led in 2013 an “Our Island, Our Futures” collaboratively with the Western Isles. The prospect of Scottish independence is heavily disliked in a choice between “being ignored by London and discriminated against by Edinburgh” (Shetland News, 2014) and the campaign continues to seek increased powers of autonomy, including over “It’s not your oil, Alex, Its wirs” (Tavish Scott, MSP, 2013 LibDem Conference), a microcosm of independence within a wider claim for subsidiary and independence by the SNP.

In this context, uniqueness of spatial location, culture, all that is distinctive within the socially embedded characteristics of place become essential and the independent spirit rooted in Norse heritage become strategic. There is a dual emphasis on origin, “60% of the DNA of modern males in Orkney is Norwegian,” (BBC, 2013), and higher on Shetland whereas mainland

Scotland “displayed a gene pool remarkably similar to that of England, with little evidence of Norse blood” (BBC Blood of the Vikings, 2018). Kinship with Shetland’s North Atlantic neighbours, as part of the extended realm of Nordicity, is thus based on the froth and fire of a winter fire festival but is a felt reality as part of the social and heritage characteristics of the place and generates a continuing sense of divide from Scotland and a feisty response to any comment on its “internal affairs.” “I think we’d be better off on our own. Being part of the UK have never really done much for us... When Norway play Scotland at football, I definitely support Norway (Leask, BBC, 2013) although most would say they are “Baith” Shetlanders and Scots, an identity in flux. Comments on Up Helly Aa have been interpreted in this way as cultural affronts.

This independent spirit also tried to draw on a heritage of respectable self-rule. The Vikings were known as a “very organised and orderly society... settlers and traders who left their imprint on our legal system... literature, languages, place names... and appearance” (BBC, 2013) and adopted for the Our future campaign. Ministers were met with “an organised and sensible campaign largely free from the tribal political loyalties of the mainland” (BBC, 2013).

“Wir Shetland” in 2015 emerged in October 2015 arguing for British Overseas Territory status as “many people in Shetland are disillusioned at how we are governed” (BBC, 2015). This was in response to consultations on decentralising power to the island with the Common Fisheries Policy, and investment being contentious. “With self-governance we aim to robustly safeguard Shetland's future interests" and “to speak up for more power and control over island matters” (BBC, 2015). Part of this is to pivot to the Nordic neighbours with Norway as a potential source of tourism, becoming members of the Nordic Council as observers and look at Faroe

as a model of governance model and for closer cultural and economic ties. The Faroese Prime Minister was invited to Up Helly AA in 2017 and “the theme of increased autonomy was repeatedly raised by both leaders” (Shetland News 2017). The Nordic affinity and spirit of tolerance demonstrated when the “Shetland Bus” brought Norwegians to safety during WW2 was invoked (Shetland News, letter, June 2020) “when “Shetlanders defended the right that every human is equal – regardless of race religion or gender” to challenge the mindset of allowing unjust traditions towards female inclusion and “blackface” to continue in Up Helly Aa.

“Many Viking travellers (and indeed warriors) were women – perhaps we took the wrong turn in the intervening 500 years” (Comment in Shetland Times, March 2015).

Origins of Up Helly Aa

While not diminishing the individual agency of the players, there are common assumptions they hold regarding who they are and how the script should be interpreted in Up Helly Aa. Sir Walter Scott romanticised a Nordic past through “The Pirate” (1822) during the period of the 19th C when Highland Scottish and Viking romanticism was an emerging trend in literature. The Norse heritage of Shetland is a direct influence, but the Up Helly AA narrative is originally the work of Haldane Burgess.



Courtesy Gaarda: Procession of Galley to its location for burning

His links with foreign scholars of Norse in the mid-1880s helped install Norse symbolism on an official level and insert Viking elements into the Up-Helly-Aa (Cohen, 1987, pp. 451–476). Jessie Saxby (1932) furthered romantic Nordic notions but was herself a woman of uncommon standing as a writer. Her picture shows her wearing an emblem of a Shetland woman, a fine knit wedding shawl. This is an item sought after as an export item and quintessentially an output of local female entrepreneurial labour by other Shetland women.



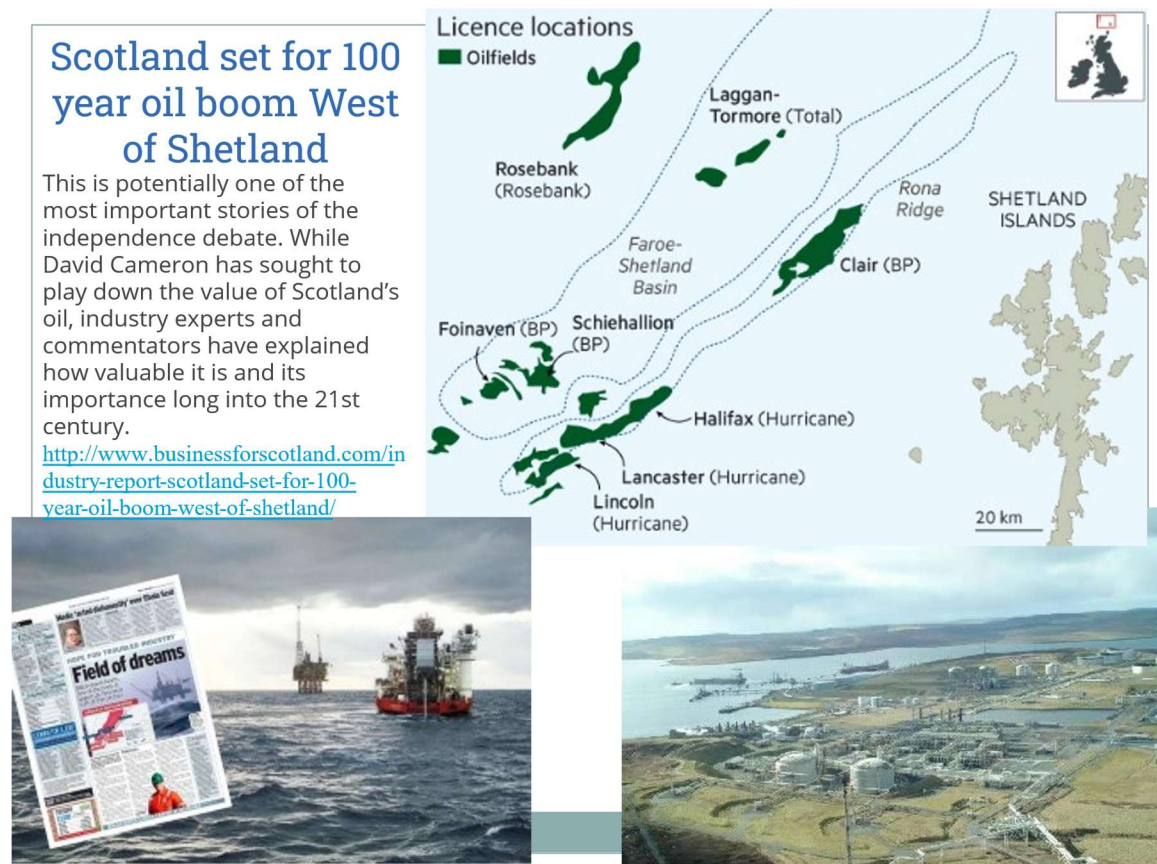
Courtesy Shetland Archives. Jessie Saxby in Shetland woollen shawl

Writers such as Mitchell (1948), Brown (1998), Abrams (2012), King (2010) and Johnson (2022) all brought theoretical contextualisation to the festival. The script is also set each year by the schemata (Bicchieri & McNally, 2018) embedded across the Shetland social network as institutional social norms and repeated in performance by the participants themselves. There is also a scripted normative response by the media (BBC, 2018-2022) who select and affirm the heroic Viking narrative, particularly through pictorial representation of the burning galley, somewhat overlooking that this is a community created drama for and by themselves, not a literal enactment. The rise of feminist voices coming onto the stage, supported by some notable male activist allies, has been met with the paraphrased response of “hang on, that’s not in the script.”

The role of Oil as an external power influence

The oil fields themselves were a key part of the narrative of the Scottish independence movement. They saw this as an economic resource for a more credible pitch to separate national governance structures from the rest of the UK. Building local ties with Nordic neighbours such as the Faroe

Islands and encouraging Nordicity in identity were part of this local political strategy to enhance differentiation. This maximised and legitimised the distance of governance from Edinburgh and so also Scottish government claims on both Shetland's local autonomy and wealth, most particularly oil wealth which is anticipated to grow further with recent oil field discoveries (Business Insider, 2018). Rather than Scotland's oil, geographically this is a reminder that it's the Shetlands' oil, just as it is their fish, salmon, and wind, mainly held within a 25-mile territorial limit around the islands. Occasional claims that Shetland could itself become an independent entity if Scotland became independent are also brought up as a way to push back “Scottish” control.



Control of the Shetland salmon industry has also now largely fallen under Norwegian rather than local hands. The ownership and distribution of significant economic gains generated by wind energy had been hotly

debated, which led to the formation of a novel partnership of Viking Energy. This is majority owned by the local community trust and is in partnership with SSE with community benefit payments flowing back into the local fund on the model of returns applied to the existing oil industry. Throughout, the increasing strength of a local Shetlandic identity has been fuelled by resistance to external "directors". In addition, it has been used to maintain a studied ambiguity in institutional relationships with the Scottish Government, outside commercial interests, and Nordic neighbours.

This might be considered the original time of the “Viking resistance narrative” being developed as a counterbalance to the encroaching norms of Scottish society and identity, many of the settlers bringing Victorian social stratification with them and cruel dominance by remote Scottish lairds preceding this. In the narrative battle between the Scots romanticism of Sir Walter Scott as Viking romanticism, the latter predominated, including Scott’s own viewing of Shetland as Scandinavia and Jarshof and its Viking hub and “Scott is really the first significant writer to refine Shetland’s “us against them” concept by portraying the local-outsider culture clash as a conflict of Norse versus Scottish sensibilities” (Grydehøj, 2009, p. 43). Callahan (1998) proposes that the call for local autonomy is seeking an institutional structure for the “restoration” of ancient political autonomy that existed under Viking rule. Subsidiarity to the village level, the function of the town councils or "Ting's", being in opposition to the Scottish tradition of centralisation of power and party in Edinburgh, and English tradition to London.

In 2022, the directors of the Shetland play are foremost the local community as expressed through its local governance institutions of Shetland Islands Council, the Shetland Trust, MP’s, and MSP’s who are Liberal Democrats rather than SNP, plus the Port Authority. Activities

related to Up Helly Aa take place 365 days a year, and squad participants operate autonomously. The voices and directors of influence, whether incomers or not, are now predominantly Shetlandic.

Detail on Methodology

Coding was by institutional player which includes both formal institutional voices such as Shetland Islands Council or the Up Helly Aa committee as well as longstanding informal norms that are expressions of local identity such as discourse as irreverent humour or the splitting of the festival into primarily gendered realms. The two flowing factors running across these are firstly characterised by the invocation of “tradition” by the players as a sort of *Deus ex Machina* arrival on stage of this godly all-encompassing force coming from on high upon the debate to intervene in proceedings. A second counteracting factor to that is the siren call of equality of opportunity. This spirit of emancipation is simply called Liberty. It has both male and female forms. Other institutional players are identified by their notable absence e.g., the church or those just sitting outside as invisible players e.g., Brexit, Covid or climate change. The interpretivist perspective is to view these as influences today on local identity narratives and axiology, not as historical events. These powerful imaginaries can be embodied as characters in our play. This is how these various forces are invoked as active influences in the minds of today’s Shetlanders as evidenced by the data records covering the debate. This is an example of living heritage, not history, the interpretation of the past that is enacted through the lens of meaning today with inevitable distortions and selectivity. The actors “transfer an inheritance from an imagined past to the present and decide what should be handed down to an imagined future” (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, p. 6). This is also the position of Brown

(1998, p. 30) who sees Up Helly AA not as a collective re-enactment of history but as “not a window onto the past, but a window on the present”.

De Beauvoir (in King, 2010, p. 255) suggested that men gained from the freedom away from the domestic to then enter the public realm of religion, politics, and social ritual. King accepts that “the role of women in Up Helly Aa, always expressed in the negative, is possibly misunderstood by many commentators “(King, 2010, p. 257). An institutional analysis indicated that men have not left women behind in maritime households to form a family base for their return. Men and women historically weaved in and out of the domestic sphere to pursue commercial activities and were both embedded in community networks to support these activities. There is scant commentary on these female networks historically.

Up Helly Aa Committee and Fraternal Capital

Up Helly Aa has a great deal of continuity, both in the ritual itself and the people who run it... some highly esteemed men, tribe elders of a sort...

Roy, 58, has been building the galley since he was 15. He knew James Smith a boatbuilder known as Boatie Jemmie who established the template for the current galley in 1949, the first Up Hella AA following the war. The skills Leask learned from the old men of his youth, he now passes on to a new generation of keen boys, and so it goes on."

(Scotland on Sunday, Jan 2011).

The committee at the center of influence has written constitution. Its highly structured norms were developed as formal rules built upon decades of informal practice. It has “no constitution... but secret rules for what the committee actually do but it generally works on the intangible spirit that is Up Helly AA which is extremely effective” (BBC Speakeasy, 2019). It

organizes “private parties” so falls outwith the jurisdiction of the equalities law yet is central to the community capital and identity generation for those on Shetland. There are comparable models of fraternal organisations.

Qualified work is explicit in the identity of male workers” (Abrams, 2010) and is implicit in reworking notions of skill when gender is at stake. Thus, ‘skilled’ work in guild shops was increasingly defined as men’s work and craft mysteries and something not to be shared with women. These concepts were deeply embedded in male workers' identity and reverberated throughout the workforce.



King sees the parallels as a committee being an “aldermanic group in charge of the festival, but he also belongs to a ‘squad’” (King 2010, p. 247). Continuity of participation determines advancement, here through fifteen years of continuous squad participation to qualify as a Jarl Squad. Those members eventually advance over time to ultimately take their turn as Jarl Squad leaders. Inclusion and advancement take place within a particular squad. It is open to returning émigrés and invited male relatives of squad members who have lived on the islands for at least five years. The galley shed is akin to a pageant house “of modern Valencia (and possibly like those of fifteenth-century Coventry and York" (King 2010, p. 245) and the processional nature of its members in their serried ranks echo those of guild festival marches in Europe. But if the structure is an echo of a centuries-old guild structure “based around the three intersecting bonds of kin, occupation, and neighbourhood” (King, 2010, p. 251) the content is resolutely modern. The guizer squads are producing their own plays, or

skits, which are “a distillation of the year’s popular culture” (King, 2010, p. 247).

Although there is relatively low stratification in wider society, as Brown (1998) notes, everybody fits together on Shetland but there appears a higher participation in the squads by manual and technical occupations and less by the middle classes. This egalitarian structure is longstanding and preceded Victorian notions of respectability. The Hanseatic League trade records include Shetland participants and with less stratification. “Specific groups can be distinguished of which some were more influential than others” but there is no sign of this “within the confraternity for specific groups, e.g., the Shetland or Faroese merchants, which did exist for the Iceland merchants within the society of England merchants” (Holterman, 2020, P. 370).

Prior to female activism on the topic, the public discourse did not articulate change as a reversion to the tradition of a more inclusive Nordicity or, potentially, a better version of a modern Up Helly Aa. The spectacle of Viking warriors has become so all pervasive, the manufactured drama being a more enticing narrative than reality. This play, Up Helly Aa, is a creation of collective imagination, a manufactured overlay onto a rambunctious, somewhat subversive society where strong women have been co-heads of many households for generations. The spectacle subsumed these longstanding roles to emerge as annual re-enactments of past gender relations.

Appendix 6: Kalash Material

In the 1800's when it was known as Peristan or "Land of the Fairies" (Russell, 2014) or in wider parlance as Kafiristan, the "Land of the unbelievers" containing a range of pre-Islamic shamanistic faiths. The Kalash as an identified grouping have the closest association with the Nuristani tribe "over the hill" in Afghanistan which was forcibly assimilated in the 1890's, now returning as refugees "as long-lost family" (Arif Senior, 2022). Trade was significant between the two communities including textiles, other woven goods, food, and seasonal contact remains across the Afghan border. The British view at the time though Robertson (1898) was that they "maintained a wild independence until 1895, when they were finally subdued by Abdur Rahman, the Amir of Kabul, who also compelled them to accept the religion of Islam". The slaughter of the population that refused to convert left only the Kalash (Kafirs) community left, protected by being in three remote valleys on the other side of the Durand line of 1893 that divided Afghanistan from British India (Dodwell, 1932).

"Before very long, they will be persuaded so gently, so blandly but so firmly, to become Mohammedans and will be bad Muslims instead of good pagans." (*Schomburg, 1938*)

They were still free to still follow their creed (Loude & Lievre, 1988) as an apparent talent for divination gave some favour to them by the rulers. Their scope of influence shrunk further from across the area of Chitral to six, and now just three valleys. The cultural identity of the Kalash is embodied in the women, who wear striking black dresses with colourful embroidery and beaded headdresses. They are daily embodiment of that culture through

freedom of movement, bold action, and the right to defy familial or male authority.

Note: The author would like to thank the people of the Kalash valley for their hospitality and engagement with this research study, held under the shadow of many local pressures and thank guides and academics familiar with the background and context. This chapter is dedicated to H. in Chitral who literally gave me the shirt off her proverbial back and her little daughter S. a curious young Pashtun girl who's loving heart that would bind us all together for a better future across religious, culture, space, and time.

Appendix 7: Ripples across the Divine: Additional Material

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Background Literature

Creatively breaking free from the narrow bands of constraint (Montessori, 2016) structuring existing social and market structures may be more necessary for women than theorised (Tobias et al., 2013). Women are short of options to escape patriarchal structures of society where the conditions of place may disproportionately advance male interests. The embedded disadvantages for a female independent, commercial-minded potential entrepreneur (Panda, 2018) lead to limitations of unequal access to finance and closed trading networks. Polarized gender structures mean that as a woman seeks to move from the social to the economic sphere, there may be backlash to her endeavours (Manne, 2018). In a developing world context women may require a conscious vision of moving carefully step by step towards a constrained situation (Berlin, 1969; Zayadin et al.) but the end destination of agency is indeterminate.

Without group impact, any shift in personal agency will be of exceptional individuals cases rather than pervasive social change (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018; Shepherd et al., 2020). Inertia of social practices within place as an impediment to female entrepreneurship in the Global South remains (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). Role models and integrated policy initiatives (Venugopalan et al., 2021) enable women to envision expanded opportunities to drive change. Shifts in the social context may follow from venturing but the literatures evidences this more with male ventures (Elter & Henrekson, 2017; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019). Social advancement and economic socialisation were envisaged at a time of a predominantly male economic world (Schumpeter, 1955) .

Fraternal capital groups in India are a constituent of the economic ecosystem focused on gains to their extended kin. They pursue ventures strengthening fraternal interests, reciprocity, and affiliative bonds. This often extends to intermarriage within jati. Such networks are studied (Iyer, 1999) as extended kin or clan groups of family businesses, omitting their primarily feature of being overwhelmingly male. Beyond structures, a preference for male-to-male socializing may further distance women, one thirds of the gender gap identifies from this in a South Asian bank (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022). Fraternal capital networks perpetuate this dominance as it is a social world within a wider economic ecosystem similar to medieval Europe (Evans, 2022a) Most are geographic in origin, subdivisions of Hinduism reified into caste or Jati groups concentrated in different sectors. Exclusion of women from commerce continues. There is little understanding of the orientating principles and rationale behind the individual male and female realms (Sperber & Linder, 2019), particularly the impact female economic exclusion. Past research suggests a mixed picture of the whole: some parts of the ecosystem are helpful to women

such as formal institutional structures (a government support, light touch legal framework, low barriers to entry) and benefit of the presence of other more informal norms (venturing culture) (Hecharia et al., 2022; Hecharia & Ingram, 2018.) Family support and links to the community are also accelerating factors for women (Welsh et al., 2019) as is exposure to local markets to spot opportunities. A women considering entrepreneurship faces a social structure antagonistic to her economic agency.

The question is, did 14% of women start businesses given that the main resources such as finance, employees and other businesses are entrenched in male dominated patriarchal structures? In India, group collectives of fraternal capital and high-power distances (Hechavarría & Brieger, 2020) along with high masculinity and institutional non-compliance (Dheer, Li & Trevino, 2019) are all egregious for female entrepreneurship. What are these Indian women doing differently? What enables them to succeed in the face of pervasive and cumulative barriers?

Situating the Venture in Place

This research is situated in Jaipur, India and examines both material and non-material values of the city. The surroundings, people, expressions of rituals and beliefs through the built environment, and a timely religious procession were observed. A tradition remains of companies making handmade paper in Sanganer, the outskirts dating from the 1520's when Moghul emperors of Rajasthan encourage us of waste cotton (Rajasthan Govt., 2022). Adding seeds to the raw pulp and using local artists and paper cutters to create paper-based products adds a modern design aesthetic and enables female home employment. Prior to this venture, the industry was traditionally male. This place is saturated with old India. Modernity is present but Jaipur is outside the contemporary powerhouses of India:

Bangalore, Mumbai, Chennai, or Delhi. The camel remains a beast of labour seen frequently on the streets alongside groups of women pedestrians, men on bicycles, women astride the backs of motorbikes. A cacophony of car horns urges them onwards.

The low level of female labour force participation in India has been static at around 18-20% for many years until COVID allowed for a shift to home working. This figure has now moved to 25% by 2022 (India Labour Office, 2022) as the shift to lock-down home working provided more work opportunities that were socially accessible to women.

Navigating Agency

Aur et al observations

Our analysis suggests that this occurs when BWEs begin the process of building a self-derived agency by consolidating upon the initially borrowed agency from male proxies. We observe that this transition involves considerable struggle and pain on the part of the BWEs. Our analysis identifies that during the consolidating process
Cope with negative or if poor, submissive to it
pg 57 tend to exercise agency in selecting who they would like to make business deals with and who they would wish to avoid.

pg 59 The realization of self-worth typically starts inside the home, and over time it extends outwards to wider business and social spheres. For quite a number of BWEs, entrepreneurship helps to nurture greater agency within the household and uplifts their social status at home.

pg 59 Entrepreneurship contributes to their personal agency by developing their social skills and self-efficacy

pg. 60 only recruits women in her company, and BWE28's business partners (suppliers) for her online catering business are mostly women who had to opt out of employment after marriage or childbirth. By offering jobs, providing earning power, and giving training and development opportunities to their "fellow sisters" within the enterprises that they run, BWEs can contribute to the nurturance and development of women's collective agency in Bangladesh
pg 60 many BWEs felt compelled to develop collective agency after they realized they possessed individual agency

pg 61 role models "e, as they become successful, a number of BWEs discover that they have become inspirational figures for other women in Bangladesh to venture into business... shared how their presence has encouraged many more women to step forward and initiate similar businesses ventures.

Pinky Observations

Pinky pain in pulling form husband / family in law in parallel

Boundaries to those (mainly) men who don't align - pushed out of orbit

Pinky refuses customers who don't accept value proposition or are demeaning

Workers see similar improvement in familial self worth and esteem
Workers similar boost to self confidence

Pinky similar in hiring all women and helping social skills, collective agency

Pinky also strongly connecting plus lead advisory as solo- help within family confines, bad marriage
Workers hiring others so bringing in more

Pinky encourage others to follow and inc. a new customer base of new biz

Comparison with Bangladesh (Wee Chan Au et al., 2018) of “borrowed agency” is problematic due to differing social-spatial contexts with predominantly Muslim rather than Hindu traditions. Yet, Bangladesh has higher female work force participation rates and higher ranking on the Human Gender Development Index (2022). The personal stories (Wee Chan Au et al., 2018) resonate: women's coping strategies, self-discovery, the transition to collective agency and navigating that enhanced agency. There is also a Bangladeshi female entrepreneur who created a network of women employees at home with extensive social impact.

Comparison of Pinky's World and Bangladeshi study (Wee Chan Au et al., 2018)

	Borrowing: Situational Agency Proxies	Consolidating: Coping Strategies	Leveraging: Discovering Oneself	Sustaining: Transitioning to Collective Agency	Navigating to enhanced agency
Bangladesh Study Au et al 2018	- Family standing/network - Male (support) (can hire male staff)	- Enduring the negative - Avoiding and deflecting the negative - Confronting the negative	- Finding independence - Finding self-worth/esteem - Finding confidence and strength	- Enabling, guiding, and providing opportunities to other women - Promoting and inspiring women - Changing attitudes and promoting women's rights and agency	Our analysis suggests that this occurs when BWEs begin the process of building a self-derived agency by consolidating upon the initially borrowed agency from male proxies. We observe that this transition involves considerable struggle and pain on the part of the BWEs. Our analysis identifies that during the consolidating process: Cope with negative or if poor, submissive to it pg 57 tend to exercise agency in selecting who they would like to make business deals with and who they would wish to avoid pg 59 The realization of self-worth typically starts inside the home, and over time it extends outwards to wider business and social spheres. For quite a number of BWEs, entrepreneurship helps to nurture greater agency within the household and uplifts their social status at home. pg 59 Entrepreneurship contributes to their personal agency by developing their social skills and self-efficacy pg 60 only recruits women in her company, and BWE28's business partners (suppliers) for her online catering business are mostly women who had to opt out of employment after marriage or childbirth. By offering jobs, providing training power, and giving training and development opportunities to their "fellow sisters" within the enterprises that they run, BWEs can contribute to the nurture and development of women's collective agency in Bangladesh pg 60 many BWEs felt compelled to develop collective agency after they realized they possessed individual agency pg 61 role models "is, as they become successful, a number of BWEs discover that they have become inspirational figures for other women in Bangladesh to venture into business... shared how their presence has encouraged many more women to step forward and initiate similar businesses ventures.
Pinky	Family standing/network	Escape into new world	Finding spirituality as guide	Enabling, guiding,	Pinky pain in putting form husband / family in law in parallel
Study	- Female friendship network - Capitate (female) network - Borrowed Karmaic realms - Borrowed cyberspace - Good base personal agency - Cannot hire male staff - Husband active undermined her - Not used father name/ money	- Creativity to amplify - Strong boundaries - Love of son - Sidestep the negative if relational - Confronts the negative of commercial	- Finding own scope - Repurposing for karma - Find inner source of love - Find inner source of esteem - Changing attitudes and promoting women's rights and agency - Teaching other women	- Enabling, guiding, and providing opportunities to other women - Promoting and inspiring women - Changing attitudes and promoting women's rights and agency - Teaching other women	Boundaries to those (mainly) men who don't align - pushed out of orbit Pinky refuses customers who don't accept value proposition or are demeaning Workers see similar improvement in familial self-worth and esteem Workers similar boost to self confidence Pinky similar in hiring all women and helping social skills, collective agency Pinky also strongly connecting plus lead advisory as solo-help within family confines, bad marriage Workers hiring others so bringing in more Pinky encourage others to follow and inc. a new customer base of new biz
Female employees	- Family standing/network - Male (support)	Shifts inside family respect inc in reputational value	- Finding independence - Finding self-worth/esteem - Finding confidence and strength	- Enabling, guiding, and providing opportunities to other women - Female children have higher esteem	Many workers similar to necessity entrepreneurs in impact

One does not find ventures centred on a shared female conception of the Christian Holy Spirit, for example.

Religion and Hinduism as an Influence on Entrepreneurship

Religious belief and entrepreneurship have largely excluded Hinduism. Religion as a socio-cultural factor in entrepreneurship is ambiguous. It engenders conservatism and maintaining the status quo, both antithetical to

envisioning a new terrestrial future. Values in some faith traditions align with prosperity and wealth creation being a contribution to society (Schumpeter, 1955). Debating “sinful” wealth creation is (Carr, 2003), or fair distribution of wealth does not feature within Hinduism. Prosperity is consistent with morality. Both support Hindu, especially Jain (Dheer et al., 2019) cultivation of virtue and self-improvement within a business context.

Values in a venture exist can express the socio-spatial characteristics of place (Baker & Welter, 2020). If a venture’s values align with society, acceptance follows as an “authentic” enterprise (Anderson & Smith, 2007). Socio-spatial values also generate an orientating sense of meaning behind entrepreneurial actions (Gundolf & Filser, 2013) beyond profit maximization explaining why a venture acts as it does. Two fraternal caste-based networks examples of this are from Gujarat: Khatiwada Patel’s in Surat, India who dominate diamond cutting and polishing (FT, 2015) and Palanpuri Jains who are ascendant in diamond trading in Antwerp (Lum, 2014) and as a transnational trading network. These subgroups trade and marry each other’s daughters. Highly gendered spheres, religious and cultural values, and commercial links are reproduced. Daughters are “simply not interested and the few that do are not taken seriously and consequently drop out when they get married” (Lam, 2014).

The detailed analysis of Audretsch et al. (2013) on the possible linkages between different religions communities in India and entrepreneurship identified that Hindus were less likely to seek self-employment. This was due to a “belief that people should be content with the status quo” and that this might hinder a drive to create a better world today. This redirected drive to the spiritual sphere should be even stronger for Buddhists, generally seen as step beyond Hinduism in spiritual focus. Both seek to act to “reduce the accumulation of Karma by acting without intention towards

personal benefit... as a business entered for the express purpose of generating personal wealth at the expense of other people may create much karma, while a business entered to improve society while incidentally generating modest profits may not” (Valliere, 2008, p. 181). This stance ignores three crucial aspects. Karma can positively accumulate as well as detracts so positive actions may be sought to gain favour in a following life. This is not passivity as implied by Valliere. Women also have reason to be more aggrieved so less accepting of the more patriarchal tenets of Hinduism. The karmic view might suit the male in general but the concept of accepting intolerable social conditions for future karma payoffs might be met with female scepticism. There is a theological opportunity for women to generate positive karma by conducting good acts which both have an impact today and creates positive karma for her future, particularly if her actions support her children’s futures (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010). The third objection is that the analysis by Audretsch et al. (2013) stresses passivity and negative outcomes. This suggests an Indian’s perspective of business as non-value generative with a resource scarce mindset in a highly individualistic marketplace of man versus man. This view is confounded by later research (Dheer et al., 2019) on values within India which show cynicism towards the state, not towards each other and a highly entrepreneurial, value creating mindset (Dheer et al., 2019). By shifting the view from individual to group activity, such as a sub caste with commercial specialisms, shows groups competing with a resource opportunity mindset and using intra-group trade and intermarriage for mutual gain. These values of scepticism towards government or “institutional noncompliance” goal orientation, work values and male dominance (Dherr et al., 2015) are not placid acceptance. They match a theory of people acting in service of the survival and mutual support of the fraternal group over others, including over the state. Hinduism treats

money as neutral and does not condemn wealth generation itself. Fraternal groups commercial activities get reinforced by shared religiosity in a confluence of interests between wealth and religious requirements. “Wealth emerges as a signifier not only of moral piety but also as the signal for economic reputation and consequently, with credit” (Iyer, 1999). One influences the other and so wealth creation as a way to amplify religious credit fits within the frame of “prosperity beliefs” (Doherty, 2019). The “religion of the Indian merchant community” (Iyer, 1991 in Paul 2021 p. 103) is agnostic as to money and blends both wealth creation and religious piety to advance market reputation. There is some suggestion that the human stance of Hinduism influences venture creation (Khurana et al., 2021) in believing it is a force for good (Kim et al., 2020). Absent from the literature is a female perspective of how duality of commercialism and faith is enacted by female Hindu entrepreneurs.

How might a social-spatial imaginary be an ontology of future potentiality. Place is not just an influence but contains certain material and non-material resources that can be reassembled in the mind of the entrepreneur into imaginative potentiality. Whilst others might do this in art or music, the entrepreneurs here shape those wisps of non-materiality and potential meaning into commercial as shared imaginary space of potentiality as an enabler of venture creation. This has been touched upon tangentially in the literature as to the ability to hold a sustained belief in what might be, in potential and the will to make that a reality. Ganzin, Gazi and Suddaby (2020) suggest a “magical thinking” aligned with strong will as a spiritual context in which “the entrepreneur perseveres by remaining true to trust in a wider cosmological belief system” (Ganzin et al., 2020, p. 1). This is “digging deep” into one’s spatial context of place and the abiding framework of belief therein to use “entrepreneurial spirit” (Buchholz &

Rosenthal, 2005) to help assemble a business opportunity and drive oneself forward. This may be a motive force for women “finding one’s path, obtaining the answers and being at peace” (Ganzin et al., 2020 p. 1) but literature lacks female perspectives. Kavas et al. (2020, p. 287) ask if practices of belief enable a stronger persistent envisioning of the future. Actions make an arc towards a believable future, a fledgling idea which requires resilience of effort (Smith et al., 2021) then made manifest. A shared religious belief within that place means social proximity enhances “trust, information and resource exchange” (Di Pietro and Masciarelli, 2021, p. 12) within the collective action forming a venture. As Indian context does not express religious similarity as a binding force by choice to join a congregation (Dougherty et al., 2019). Rather pre-existing Indian social structures dominate the society into which one is born, not join by choice. A Western choice to join a religiously associated community with a shared sense of values (Dougherty et al., 2019) may function as a substitute for the lack of such close social ties and collective sense of community.

When scholars suggest religious beliefs are the basis for values in a future venture, this needs nuance in India. A commercial opportunity may be less aligned with beliefs but more with sectoral competencies within that community. The values in which one is steeped (Rodrigues & Franco, 2022), such as the sanctification of labour (Dodd & Gotsis 2007) or ethical stance (Lautermann, & Tokarski, 2018) may shape future business structures but embedded social connection in India would provide the necessary commonality. Leadership styles (Kaptein, 2019), entrepreneurial effort and business culture are partly shaped by the prevailing values orthodoxy (Dana, 2009; Kumar et al., 2022) but this is the lens of Western individuation from family and social groups.

Some entrepreneurship literature references Hinduism (Kumar et al., 2022), others do not (Giacomin et al., 2022). The links between religion and entrepreneurship presents an uneven body of knowledge. Hinduism values contributions to others in the collective group and how they will affect you and your extended family, across generations. Emotions and energies may surface today that connect with the wider collective consciousness. A number of Hindu religious beliefs fit within this loose amalgamation of practices that buttress existing social structures and actions. However, how such beliefs might contribute to venture support or help shape the actions of a female entrepreneur is not well documented in the literature.

There are two other parts pertinent points of debate within the literature. The first is that religiosity might be a contrary factor to entrepreneurship as it is associated with the preference for conservatism, prioritizing conservation of established structures over embracing change or the creation of the new (Rietveld & Hoogendoorn, 2022). This research was confined to Europe and is contrary to Dougherty et al. (2019) who found the obverse: a positive relationship between business venture creation and religiosity which suggests that religious influence is complex. The second context-related factor that needs refinement in the literature is that India is not homogenous in either religion, language, or culture. Islam is intertwined within Indian thought, history, and business practices as well as being a contemporary source of sectarian politicization that affects modern business and social culture. Further, there will be differences in any given religion between those that are strict adherents and those that are more fluid in their practice and beliefs. Drawing any conclusion is fraught with difficulties with directional causality. Is religion affecting business related beliefs or is it a tendency of someone to hold beliefs in one's ability to

create a better future? It is unclear how this leads to religious adherence or influence over their venture.

In the Liberation Theology of Gutierrez (1968) the concept of the divine within, the irreducible value of all human life has been a theological basis for social change and bringing in the oppressed into the fold of society on a more equal basis. It is a force for the lateralization of society by reducing the hierarchical existing structures and improving the lives of the marginalized at the bottom. Recognizing the inherent equalizing theological truth that all are equal in the eyes of God is a unifying force to drive social change. This stress on "the need for unjust structures to be changed" (Ratzinger, 2010) has since spread to Islamic theology (Palombo, 2014), particularly by Esack (2003) who shifted the focus from considering the afterlife to living this life as a full human. This includes alleviating hardship in wider society. In India (Abeyasingha, 1979), this has been adapted to the struggle by the Dalits, or "untouchables" as a form of both Christian and Hindu adapted theology to empower the bottom tier of society (Skaria, 2022). This is an intersection with the inclusion of Taylors (2004, p. 22) thinking by Laine & Kibler (2022) that entrepreneurship in theory is a tool for the "rejection of hierarchical order". This is also the central change envisaged by Liberation Theologians across faiths.