Big dreams and bold steps: Becoming a startup entrepreneur in Silicon Valley

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the entrepreneurial identity work of Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. Most existing studies on entrepreneurial identity aim to identify the universal characteristics of entrepreneurial identity or to build causal links between identity and outcomes. As many entrepreneurship theories assume fairly stable views on entrepreneurial identity, little attention has been paid to the dynamic and complex nature of the phenomenon or to entrepreneurial identity work in the context of internationalization. In addition, the discursive approach has been largely ignored in research on startup entrepreneurship.

This study aims to fill the gaps in previous research by taking a discursive approach on entrepreneurial identity work in the context of global mobility. Language use is considered essential as it has a fundamental role in both reflecting and constructing reality. Entrepreneurial identity is constructed in interaction with others and different articulations of "who I am" serve different purposes, legitimize entrepreneurial efforts, and are related to certain ideological underpinnings.

The research produced three essays, which provide different perspectives on entrepreneurial identity work and taken together paint an overall picture of the phenomenon. This dissertation examines how entrepreneurial identities and personal growth stories are constructed by Finnish startup entrepreneurs in the context of global mobility. In particular, it shows the key helpers and opponents, who either support or hinder entrepreneurial efforts in the entrepreneurs' narratives. On the other hand, it adopts a critical and micro-linguistic approach to entrepreneurial identity. Both angles have been largely missing from existing research. The entrepreneurs use different discursive identity strategies and micro-level linguistic devices to construct hero identities and to reproduce masculinity and the dominant ideal view of entrepreneurship. In addition, they use fiction and fictive narratives in constructing entrepreneurial opportunities, entrepreneurial identity, and legitimacy.

This dissertation suggests that entrepreneurs continuously construct, maintain, and shape their identities in and through discourse. It increases our understanding of entrepreneurial identity work as a dynamic, nuanced, and social phenomenon and highlights the role of time and place in entrepreneurial identity construction. By taking a discursive approach to entrepreneurial identity work, the dissertation contributes to a detailed understanding of entrepreneurial identity work and suggests that it is a much more complex phenomenon than earlier research has suggested.

Tekijä
Hanna Maula

Väitöskirjan nimi
Suuria unelmia ja rohkeita askelia: kohti startup-yrittäjyyttä Piilaaksossa

Tiivistelmä

Tämä väitöskirja käsittelee Piilaaksossa toimivien suomalaisten startup-yrittäjien identiteetin rakentumista. Suurin osa aikaisemmista yrittäjäidentiteettiä käsittelevistä tutkimuksista on pyrkinyt määrittelemään yleisiä yrittäjäidentiteetin piirteitä tai esittämään kausaalisuhteita identiteetin sekä lopputulemien välille. Koska monet yrittäjyysteoriat näkevät yrittäjäidentiteetin suhteellisen pysyvänä, ilmiön dynaamisuus ja monitahoisuus on usein sivuutettu, eikä yrittäjäidentiteetin rakentumista kansainvälistymisen yhteydessä ole juuri tutkittu. Lisäksi diskursiivinen lähestymistapa on ollut tähänastisessa startup-yrittäjyyden tutkimuksessa harvinainen.

Tämän väitöskirjatyön tavoitteena on paikata puutteita aiemmassa tutkimuksessa tarkastelemalla yrittäjien identiteettityötä diskursiivisesta näkökulmasta globaalin liikkuvuuden kontekstissa. Kielen käyttäminen nähdään tässä tutkimuksessa keskeisenä, koska kieli sekä heijastaa todellisuutta että rakentaa sitä. Yrittäjäidentiteetti rakentuu vuorovaikutuksessa muiden kanssa, ja vastaukset kysymykseen "kuka minä olen?" palvelet vaihtelevia tarkoituksia, legitimoivat yrittäjien pyrkimyksiä sekä pitävät sisällään erilaisia ideologisia taustaoletuksia.

Tämä väitöskirja sisältää kolme esseetä, jotka käsittelevät yrittäjien identiteettityötä eri näkökulmista ja piirtävät yhdessä kokonaiskuvan ilmiöstä. Niissä tarkastellaan, miten globaalissa toimintaympäristössä toimivat suomalaiset startup-yrittäjät rakentavat yrittäjäidentiteettejään ja henkilökohtaisia kasvutarinoitaan. Tämä tutkimus paljastaa yrittäjien kertomuksissa esiintyvät auttajat ja vastustajat, joilla on tärkeä rooli yrittäjien pyrkimysten tukijoina tai hankaloittajina. Toisaalta tässä väitöskirjassa lähestytään yrittäjäidentiteettiä sekä kriittisesti että mikrolingvistisesti – molempien näkökulmien jäätyä pitkälti sivuutetuiksi aikaisemmassa tutkimuksessa. Yrittäjät käyttävät useita eri diskursiivisia identiteettistrategioita sekä mikrotason kielellisiä välineitä rakentaessaan sankari-identiteettiä sekä toisintaessaan maskuliinisuutta ja vallitsevaa yrittäjyyden ideaalikuvaa. Yrittäjät hyödyntävät aktiivisesti myös fiktiota ja fiktiivisiä kertomuksia yrittäjyyden mahdollisuuksien, yrittäjäidentiteetin ja legitimiteetin rakentamisessa.

Tutkimuksen tuloksena voidaan todeta, että käyttäessään kieltä yrittäjät rakentavat, ylläpitävät ja muuttavat identiteettiään jatkuvasti. Työ lisää ymmärrystämme yrittäjien identiteettityöstä dynaamisena, vivahteikkaana ja sosiaalisena ilmiönä sekä korostaa ajan ja paikan merkitystä identiteetin rakentumisessa. Hyödyntämällä diskursiivista lähestymistapaa yrittäjien identiteettityöhön tämä tutkimus tarjoaa yksityiskohtaisen kuvan yrittäjäidentiteetin rakentumisesta ja osoittaa, että kyseessä on paljon monimutkaisempi ilmiö kuin monet aikaisemmat tutkimukset esittävät.

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Helsinki, January 2017

Hanna Maula

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1. Introduction

A fast-changing operating environment, continuous striving for new innovations, and the remarkable success stories of the digital era, such as Facebook and Amazon, have led us to pay further attention to entrepreneurship. Many traditional businesses have been challenged and problems both small and large solved by innovative startups. Startups are often considered to be agile, lean, bold, and open to unconventional ideas, and thus well-positioned in a fast-changing operating environment. In fact, many traditional companies like General Electric have publicly admitted that they want to learn from startups and aim to change their culture accordingly (see Power, 2014). In today's world, large corporations follow startup trends, acquire new ventures, and aim to build joint collaboration models, platforms, and ecosystems. Startups are also a matter of political and media interest because they can have a major economic impact; they attract venture capital and successful entrepreneurs often continue to invest in new ventures. Of course, not all startups will ever become unicorns – private, venture-backed companies valued at a billion dollars or more – but they can still play an important role in innovation. Startups are not necessarily great corporate taxpayers, because during their early years they often operate at a loss, but they are nevertheless important employers. The direct and indirect economic impact of the most famous startup successes is naturally undisputed. Even failed startups are typically considered to provide useful learning experience for both entrepreneurs and employees.

Startups are understood here as newly emerged and fast-growing companies that aim to meet market needs by developing or offering innovative products or services. New ventures or high-growth entrepreneurship are alternative terms. Usually the business is not firmly established, but constantly developing and changing instead. There may be major opportunities, but also significant risks and uncertainties. Apart from startups, entrepreneurship in general has attracted more attention because of changes in working environments and public discussion (Gill, 2013; OECD, 2017). Long careers in the same profession or in the same company are becoming less common and more and more people earn their living as entrepreneurs or contingent workers (Barley et al., 2017).

It is evident that the most important players in the fields of entrepreneurship are the entrepreneurs themselves. Their ambitions and efforts play a key role in entrepreneurship. The world of startup entrepreneurs has recently been addressed in several books and movies. For example, the movie The Social Network

(2010) depicts Facebook-founder Mark Zuckerberg, while Steve Jobs (2015) focuses on the life story of the legendary Apple entrepreneur. Hero narratives are constructed on various levels and they tell us something not only about individual entrepreneurs, but about startup ecosystems, current societies, and their ideals in general.

In recent decades, there has also been growing interest in entrepreneurship as an area of research and the notion that entrepreneurship is a key to innovation and productivity has been widely accepted (e.g. Shepherd 2015; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Kuratko, 2016; Donnellon et al., 2014; OECD, 2017). To better understand entrepreneurship and its premises, we must take a close look at the experiences, views, and motivations of the entrepreneurs themselves. By studying entrepreneurial identity, we can find answers to some of the essential questions regarding entrepreneurship, such as why some people become and succeed as entrepreneurs and what is it like to be an entrepreneur. If we are to reap the benefits of entrepreneurship in increasing innovation and productivity in our societies, these are core questions to consider when developing potential support systems and incentives for becoming, growing, and succeeding as an entrepreneur. On the other hand, there is also a need for critical studies that allow us to understand the ideological underpinnings, power relations, and darker sides of entrepreneurship.

There has been an increasing demand for greater attention to entrepreneurial identity (e.g. Anderson and Warren, 2011; Cohen and Musson, 2000; Downing, 2005; Down and Reveley, 2004; Hytti, 2005; Johansson, 2004; Jones et al., 2008; Nielsen and Lassen, 2012) and especially to the processes through which language and discourse produce entrepreneurial understandings and meanings (e.g. Jones et al., 2008; Down and Giazitzoglu, 2014; Down and Warren, 2008). Previous research has shown that a strong sense of identity can serve entrepreneurs well when outcomes are unpredictable (Sarasvathy and Dew, 2005). The role of entrepreneurial identity can be seen as especially important in startups. In the early stages of a company the business may consist of little more than the concepts or plans crafted by startup entrepreneurs trying to seize novel entrepreneurial opportunities and thus subjective judgments of what is "claimed" take on greater relevance, since objective assessments of organizational structures, systems, products, services, or competitive strategy are not yet known or fully predictable (Navis and Glynn, 2011). Although we know a great deal about the central role of identity, our understanding of identity construction on an individual level in and around organizations remains inadequate (Jain et al., 2009; Svenningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Brown, 2015).

Most studies on entrepreneurial identity have so far focused on identifying the universal characteristics of entrepreneurial identity and building causal links between identity and outcomes (e.g. Hoang and Gimeno, 2010; Mitchell and Shepherd, 2010; Shepherd and Haynie, 2009; Farmer et al., 2011; Cardon et al., 2009). As many entrepreneurship theories assume fairly stable views on entrepreneurial identity (Leitch and Harrison, 2016), little attention has been paid to its changea-

ble aspects (Nielsen and Lassen, 2012). It has been argued that research on entrepreneurial identity is mostly conceptual, rather than empirical, and relies mostly on role identity theory, discounting the social aspects of self (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). Ybema et al. (2009, 302) stress that identity research in general focuses too much on either internal or external definitions and "in consequence, 'identity' does not always live up to its promise as a mediating concept" between macro and micro phenomena.

Although we know a lot about the central role of language in identity-building, recent studies indicate that there is much more to be studied to better understand the complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions in identity narratives (Vaara et al., 2016). Entrepreneurs' own voices have been often missing in entrepreneurial research (Foss, 2004), even though entrepreneurial experiences can best be described by entrepreneurs themselves. While there is some research on macro level entrepreneurial discourse and entrepreneurial identity (e.g. Nicholson and Anderson, 2005), entrepreneurial identity work (e.g. Down and Reveley, 2004; Watson, 2009b; Hytti and Heinonen, 2013), and the linguistic aspects of entrepreneurship (e.g. Larson and Pearson, 2012; Anderson and Warren, 2011), the discursive approach to identity work of startup entrepreneurs has been largely ignored in research on entrepreneurship. This is unfortunate given that entrepreneurial identity may play an important role in explaining the willingness to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities, the success of entrepreneurs, or the ability to recover from failures. For instance, Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) argue that we do not have a clear understanding of the important ways in which self-narrative forms, nor do we have conceptual frameworks specifying their role in identity construction. As a result, several theoretical issues have remained underdeveloped, such as the elements of narratives that allow people to construct their entrepreneurial identities and to reach desired identity goals. It is not surprising that more linguistic (e.g. Steyaert, 2007; Down and Giazitzoglu, 2014; Down and Warren, 2008), narrative (e.g. Garud and Giuliani, 2013; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2005; Jennings et al., 2005), and critical approaches (e.g. Verduijn et al., 2014; Calas et al., 2009; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009; Leitch and Harrison, 2016) have been suggested in the study of entrepreneurship.

Even though today's business environment is largely global and startup hubs such as Silicon Valley attract attention and entrepreneurs from all around the world (see Lippmann and Aldrich, 2016), many aspects of global mobility are still unknown in the study of entrepreneurship (Chrysostome and Lin, 2010). There has been some interest in the spatial dimension of entrepreneurial identity work (Gill and Larson, 2014; Larson and Pearson, 2012), but little is known of entrepreneurial identity work in the context of global mobility (Ozkazanc-Pan and Muntean, 2016). Recent studies from other fields show that narrative analysis provide useful methods to understand identity construction in international settings (Gertsen and Søderberg, 2011).

In general, only limited attention has been paid to entrepreneurship as a context of identity creation and interpretation (Navis and Glynn, 2011), and further research to gain a better understanding of what it takes to become entrepreneurial on a personal level has been called for (Donnellon et al., 2014; Jain et al., 2009; Steyaert, 2007). This dissertation aims to fill the gaps in previous research by focusing on personal growth stories and construction of entrepreneurial identity in the context of global mobility. This approach allows us to hear entrepreneurs' own voices and experiences. It also takes into account the complex, nuanced, and emergent nature of entrepreneurial identity work. Language use is considered essential as it has a fundamental role in both reflecting and constructing reality.

In this dissertation, I take a discursive approach and use three different perspectives, each of which examines a specific aspect of entrepreneurial identity work. I aim to produce an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and a rich description of the context. Language is approached not merely as a conduit for communicating information, but as the very arena, where entrepreneurial identity is constructed and legitimated (see e.g. Phillips and Oswick, 2012; Hardy et al. 2005; Phillips and Hardy, 2012). Narratives are viewed as an essential part of discourse that provides a means for sensemaking and sensegiving (Vaara et al., 2016). Entrepreneurial identity is created and maintained in interaction with others, and this process is inherently linked to social categories, issues of power, and certain ideological underpinnings, since different entrepreneurial identities serve different interests and purposes (see Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004). Although each essay provides its own separate perspective, the three essays together contribute to a greater understanding of the discursive construction of entrepreneurial identity.

The first essay allows us to shed light on crucial structural elements in entrepreneurial narratives. Greimas' (1983; 1987; 1990) classical actantial model and tests are used as a framework through which we can better understand the roles of various actants, tests, and temporality in narratives and in entrepreneurial identity construction – a perspective that has been largely ignored in existing research on entrepreneurial identity. In particular, the essay focuses on the role of helpers and opponents in entrepreneurial growth stories and entrepreneurial identity work. It aims to shed light on how entrepreneurs present the factors that support and hinder startup entrepreneurship and how these constructions differ across different narrative types.

On the other hand, this dissertation adopts a critical and micro-linguistic approach to entrepreneurial identity – both being angles that have been largely missing from existing research. The second essay aims to shed light on the discursive identity strategies and a variety of micro-level linguistic devices used by entrepreneurs to construct hero identities. My purpose is to pay attention to individual agency in producing desired identity formations, but also to better understand the multiple ideological underpinnings and external pressures faced by entrepreneurs. Most critical studies on entrepreneurship have tended to focus on minorities, such as female entrepreneurs. While such research is valuable and

needed, there has recently been a call for a broader perspective (e.g. Hamilton, 2014; Down and Giazitzoglu, 2014; Smith, 2010; Marlow, 2014). Analysis of hero narratives can help us in better understanding how masculinity and the dominant ideal view is reproduced in entrepreneurship. The third essay focuses on fictive narratives and the discursive practices used in constructing entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial identity. Iser's (1993) literary theory and his triad of the real, the fictive, and the imaginary is proposed as one way to better understand entrepreneurial opportunities and how fiction can produce changes in the real, given world.

This dissertation and the collection of essays it comprises propose some frameworks and methodologies for studying entrepreneurship in the current fast-changing environment. In particular, it focuses on entrepreneurial identity construction, which is illuminated from different perspectives, highlighting dialogue with others. By using different methods on the same data, this work aims to add to our understanding of the constitutive role of language in entrepreneurial identity work.

The dissertation aims to address the following research questions:

- How are entrepreneurial identities and personal growth stories constructed by startup entrepreneurs in the context of global mobility? What and who are key helpers and opponents in their entrepreneurial identity narratives?
- What discursive identity strategies and linguistic devices are used in entrepreneurial hero narratives? How is masculinity reproduced by startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley?
- What are the implications of applying a fiction lens to narratives of entrepreneurial opportunity?

In exploring these key questions this dissertation takes a discursive and critical approach and provides new information on the construction of entrepreneurial identity in the context of global mobility.

The research data of this study consists of interviews of Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. This data set is unique because it allows us to pay attention not only on these startup entrepreneurs' efforts and pressures to build high growth business in one of the world's most famous startup hubs, but also their identity work in between two different countries. By shedding light to the cultural and spatial aspects of entrepreneurial identity work and some essential premises of startup entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley, this dissertation aims to answer the call made in previous studies about taking the context seriously in entrepreneurship (see e.g. Vaara et al., 2016). It also has implications for the more general understanding of identity work in the context of global mobility.

On the whole, this dissertation suggests that entrepreneurs continuously construct, maintain, and shape their multiple identities in interaction with others. A discursive perspective brings our attention to the constructive and constitutive nature of language in this process (see e.g. Phillips and Oswick, 2012; Hardy et al.

2005; Phillips and Hardy, 2012) and allows us to see heterogeneity in entrepreneurial identity work and entrepreneurial identities. This work aims to build a more detailed understanding of entrepreneurial identity construction and argues that it is a much more complex phenomenon than earlier research has suggested.

2. Entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial opportunities

In this chapter I aim to define the key concepts of this study and certain other concepts in order to position this study in the current academic discussion and to ensure conceptual clarity. The term entrepreneurship has been defined in numerous ways in the literature and there is no consensus regarding the term "entrepreneur" (Chasserio et al., 2014). Hence there is a need to carefully explicate what in fact is being studied in this dissertation. Following Down and Reveley (2004, 234), I define startup entrepreneurs as owner-managers who are (or have recently been) major shareholders in a startup firm and who see and talk of themselves as entrepreneurs. This definition also includes startup entrepreneurs other than founders, but excludes employees who only have minor share in the company. In addition, it includes persons who have recently sold their startup company, but still consider themselves entrepreneurs.

2.1 Who am I? – A concept of identity

The concept of identity has been studied from several perspectives. The theoretical underpinning of identity scholarship has always been multidisciplinary, influenced by work in psychology, social theory, gender theory, and sociology (Angouri, 2016). Mead (1934) studied the concept of 'self' and stated that it is constructed through interactions with other people. The concept of identity became popular due to the work of Erik H. Erikson (1959) in the late 1940s, and his work was further developed by James Marcia (1966; 1980). Since then, identity has been a popular topic of research and the concept has been studied on many levels, such as the organizational level (e.g. Alvesson and Empson, 2008) and the individual level, focusing on e.g. occupational identity (e.g. Ashcraft, 2013).

Because the term "identity" has been used in many ways both in scholarly work and in popular culture, there are multiple definitions, and different concepts are often overlapping (Vignoles et al., 2011). Brubaker and Cooper (2000) take issue with the use of identity as an analytical concept arguing that identity is ill suited for analytical work as "it is riddled with ambiguity, riven with contradictory meanings, and encumbered by reifying connotations" (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000,

34). To avoid the pitfalls described by Brubaker and Cooper, I aim for conceptual clarity.

2.1.1 Defining entrepreneurial identity

Giddens (1991) sees identity as a process of becoming, where narratives of the self are negotiated and recreated over time, while Weick (1995, 461) defines identity as "…[a] person's sense of who he or she is in a setting." I define entrepreneurial identity as a *(discursively) constructed understanding of oneself as an entrepreneur*. This definition allows both social and role-based identities (see Ashforth, 2000; Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Powell and Baker, 2014). Having an entrepreneurial identity means that owner-managers perceive themselves as entrepreneurs, and that this is evident in their speech and behavior (Down and Reveley, 2004, 234). Instead of understanding entrepreneurial identity as the sum of different characteristics seen as facets or aspects of self, identity is seen here as emergent and continuously negotiated in the context of interaction (Angouri, 2016). Entrepreneurial identity can also be treated as a discursive resource in the linguistic repertoire used in social interaction (Watson, 2009b, 255). Entrepreneurs purposefully construct entrepreneurial identities (Down and Warren, 2008; Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Downing, 2005; Down, 2006) and use multiple linguistic resources and devices to do so.

I join those who believe that there is no identifiable and universal entrepreneurial identity, but rather multiple identities (e.g. Morrison, 2000; Shepherd and Haynie, 2009) that can be overlapping, complementary, and sometimes also contradictory. However, they all have an impact on "who I am," even though in different contexts certain identities may play a bigger role than others. In a turbulent world, the discursive construction and reconstruction of identity emerge as a continuous process and stability is typically only a momentary achievement (Ybema et al., 2009; Svenningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Entrepreneurial identity is seen as contextual and dynamic (Donnellon et al., 2014; Gill and Larson, 2014) and the focus is on how entrepreneurs negotiate, enact, and perform aspects of self in relation to their social-cultural context and how they position themselves and others in their narratives (Angouri, 2016). Identity is also a future-oriented construct; our behavior is affected not only by who we are, but also by who we want to become (Watson, 2013).

2.1.2 Social identity and role identity of entrepreneurs

The concept of identity provides in-depth, often empathetic insights and descriptions that can stimulate and facilitate people's reflections on who they are and what they do (Alvesson et al., 2008). This dissertation takes a social psychological approach to entrepreneurial identity. Entrepreneurial identity is seen as self-understanding, which has both a linguistic and a social nature.

There are two main streams of social psychological research on identity. Social identity theory has its roots in psychology and focuses on social identity, which derives mainly from social attributes, categories, and relationships (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1982). Identity theory, on the other hand, has its roots in sociology and focuses on role identity and expected role performance (Stryker, 1980; Burke and Stets, 1999; Stryker and Burke, 2000). Similarly, empirical research on entrepreneurial identity typically falls in one of these two streams. The role identity approach (e.g. Hoang and Gimeno, 2010; Jain et al., 2009; Cardon et al., 2009; Boje and Smith, 2010) has been used for example to describe role transition to a new (entrepreneurial) work role (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010) and various role identities (Murnieks and Mosakowski, 2007). In identity theory, an individual's understanding of and identification with a role is shaped by others who express norms and expectations related to the role (Stryker, 1980) and "self" is enacted through role performance (Angouri, 2016).

The social identity approach, on the other hand, has been used to describe the extent to which entrepreneurs see themselves as members of certain social groups or categories, the meanings they give to these social groups and categories, and the feelings, beliefs and attitudes related to identifying and associating with them (e.g. Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Larson and Pearson, 2012; Sieger et al., 2016; Chasserio et al., 2014). The focus has then been on social relationships, group memberships, as well as personal and symbolic interaction. In social identity theory, "self" is related to an individual's position within a system of social categories (Angouri, 2016). According to Powell and Baker (2014), in social identity theory, the process of identifying as a member of a social category (self-categorization) does not necessarily require interactions with other people in the category or associated with the category. However, a membership in a particular social category or group (in-group) provides entrepreneurs with a frame of reference for positioning oneself in relation to in-group members and to others who do not belong to the group (out-group) (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011).

Hogg et al. (1995) have argued that social identity theory and identity theory may be useful for different purposes. There is an emerging consensus across disciplines that entrepreneurial identity is constituted through interaction between the individual, society, and culture (Anderson and Warren, 2011). Building on Angouri (2016), Stets and Burke (2000), Ashforth and Johnson (2001), Fauchart and Gruber (2011), Powell and Baker (2014), and Cote and Levine (2014), I see value in bridging different viewpoints; identities are associated with individuals, but created, developed and maintained in social interaction. Entrepreneurs do not operate in isolation from others, and social relations with different stakeholders impact how the entrepreneurial role is enacted and perceived. Thus I understand entrepreneurial identity simultaneously as role identity and social identity and aim to draw on both streams to investigate the negotiation of entrepreneurial identity and the positioning of oneself and others in the social context to provide a holistic approach to entrepreneurial identity.

2.1.3 Collective identity and sense of we-ness

Entrepreneurial identity can be seen also as collective identity (e.g. Andersson and Warren, 2011; Down and Warren, 2008; Hjorth and Johannisson, 2003; Downing, 2005). Personal, social, and collective identities are typically overlapping constructs (Snow and Corrigall-Brown, 2015). Hjorth and Johannisson (2003) see entrepreneurship as enacted collective identity often portrayed as the individualized practice of singular individuals. Snow and Corrigall-Brown (2015) view the collective, shared 'sense of we' as animating and mobilizing cognitively, emotionally, and sometimes even morally. They argue that collective identities can be emergent and evolving rather than firmly rooted in prior social categories, as in the case of social movements.

Emphasizing the collective "we" can alter our spontaneous judgments of similarity and self-descriptions (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). On the other hand, stories told by individual entrepreneurs can also impact and legitimate collective or shared identity (Wry et al., 2011). Downing (2005) argues that notions of both individual and collective entrepreneurial identities are coproduced over time with stakeholders through narrative and dramatic processes. According to Hardy et al. (2005), conversations produce discursive resources that create a collective identity and often translate it into effective collaboration. For example, a collective identity of co-founders is likely to emerge, even though there can be ambiguity in the earliest stages of the startup organization (see Wry et al., 2011).

Collective identity addresses the 'we-ness' of a group, stressing the similarities or shared attributes around which group members coalesce (Cerulo, 1997, 386). A collective identity is meaningful to its members and to its stakeholders and is shared in the sense that members collectively engage in the discursive practices that produce and reproduce it over time (Hardy et al., 2005). Embedded within the shared sense of 'we' is a corresponding sense of 'collective agency', which is the action component of collective identity and which suggests the possibility of collective action in pursuit of common interests, or even invites such action (Snow and Corrigall-Brown, 2015). Common action is often seen to take place in organizations (e.g. Ostrom, 1990; Olson, 1965), in which shared organizational narratives (Czarniawska, 1998; Boje, 2001) also exist. However, collective identity can also take place without an organization, organizing, or a sense of community of practice (Wilhoit and Kisselburgh, 2015; see also Bennett and Segerberg, 2012).

Not only is the 'shared we' generative of a sense of agency that can be a powerful impulse to collective action, but it functions, as well, as the orientational identity for other actors within the field of action (Snow and Corrigall-Brown, 2015). A collective identity can be seen as a linguistically produced object embodied in talk and other forms of text, rather than as a set of beliefs held by any particular member (Hardy et al., 2005). The data used in this study consist of the narratives of individual entrepreneurs, but it also allows us to review broader discourses and collective aspects of entrepreneurial identity.

2.1.4 New venture identity

The organizational level has been the most common level of identity to study in mainstream management scholarship (Ashcraft, 2013; Alvesson et al., 2008). It holds the assumption that an organization's members shape and are shaped by the organizational identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Hatch and Schultz, 2002) and stresses the formation and change of organizational identity (Gioia et al., 2013). There are some studies that focus on the new venture identity (the organizational identity of new ventures) in particular. For example, Moss et al. (2011) explore social venture identities as reflected in organizational mission statements. They show that social ventures exhibit dual identities and have both normative (i.e., social, people-oriented) and utilitarian (i.e., entrepreneurial, product-oriented) elements in their organizational identities. Snihur (2016), on the other hand, studies the types of action new ventures undertake in building their organizational identities. Lounsbury and Glynn (2001) propose a cultural entrepreneurship framework focusing on how entrepreneurial stories facilitate the crafting of a new venture identity upon which legitimacy may be conferred by different stakeholders, such as investors, competitors, and consumers. Positive differentiation is crucial when constructing legitimacy (Navis and Glynn, 2011; Wry et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2013). In addition, Wry et al. (2011) argue that legitimacy is more likely to be achieved when there is a collective identity story that identifies the startup's orienting purpose and core practices. They define two basic types of stories: identity stories, which define the collective identity; and growth stories, which explain and coordinate the increasing number of members. Both types of collective identity stories focus on enabling the cultural alignment of the group ("who we are" as a collective) and its core practices ("what we do" as a collective).

Entrepreneurship can be understood as the experiences of organizational creation (DiMaggio, 1982; Hjorth et al., 2015). Donnellon et al. (2014, 497) emphasize that entrepreneurial identity construction can be facilitated by using a "learning through" approach, where the organization (and the organizational identity) are constructed in parallel with the entrepreneurial identity. Boje and Smith (2010) argue that companies can co-manufacture entrepreneurial identities by their use of for example images and narratives. On the other hand, based on their field study of 13 founder-run firms, Powell and Baker (2014) found that founders use their firms as devices to defend who they are or to become who they want to be.

Although this study takes a social psychological approach to entrepreneurial identity and does not focus on organizational identity, I see a connection between entrepreneurial identity and organizational identity formulation as ventures are established and grow (see Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Downing, 2005). As startup entrepreneurs typically invest a lot of time, effort and often also their own money in their startups, in addition to creating and pitching the business ideas and serving as the key decision-makers, their personal role and impact on company operations is crucial. Many startups have only a handful of employees and lack established practices and processes. In this context, the role of organizational

support or control (Alvesson, 2001) is limited and we are likely to see more individual-driven organizations than organization-driven individuals (see Alvesson and Empson, 2008). In line with some previous studies (Martens et al., 2007, Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001, Wry et al., 2011; O'Connor, 2002), I suggest that discourses and narratives are an important part of the process by which entrepreneurs construct and legitimize new ventures, acquire capital and other recourses, and generate wealth. Often also external stakeholders are highly interested in individual startup entrepreneurs as well as their ideas and experiences. This has implications for both entrepreneurial and new venture identities. Thus, without disputing the importance of organizational identity, I suggest that in the case of fast-changing startup companies it is particularly beneficial to pay attention to entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurs' narratives. On the other hand, organizational aspects are important, because startups often face different challenges than more established organizations. I suggest that entrepreneurial identity and new venture identity should be seen as intertwined. Incorporating insights from different streams of literature is useful in order to form a holistic understanding of startup entrepreneurship.

Although the concepts of career choices (e.g. Carter et al., 2003), career identity (e.g. LaPointe, 2010), occupational identity (e.g. Ashcraft, 2013), or work identity (e.g. Shepherd and Williams, 2016) are not the focus of this study, I acknowledge their relevance when trying to understand entrepreneurial identity. For example, the identity work of serial entrepreneurs can be more about the relationship between self and occupation or self and career than between self and the specific organization (see Ashcraft, 2013).

2.2   Origins of entrepreneurial opportunities

Entrepreneurial identity is closely linked to exploiting and pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities. An entrepreneurial opportunity consists of a set of ideas, beliefs, and actions that enable the creation of future goods and services in the absence of a current market for them (Venkataraman, 1997; Sarasvathy et al., 2010). Shane and Venkataraman (2000, 218) defined the field of entrepreneurship as "the study of sources of opportunities; the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate, and exploit them." Their work created a basis for research that has centered on the origins of entrepreneurial opportunities (e.g. Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Eckhardt and Shane, 2010; McMullen and Shepherd, 2006; Alvarez and Barney, 2007; Baker and Nelson, 2005) and in particular whether they are a result of a process of discovery or one of creation (Garud and Giuliani, 2013). These two streams also suggest different implications for entrepreneurial identity.

2.2.1   The discovery perspective

From a discovery perspective, entrepreneurial opportunities exist objectively and independently of individual perception (Kirzner, 1973) or recognition (Baron, 2006). Thus there are objective forces influencing the existence, identification, and exploitation of opportunities (Shane, 2012). Much of the research in this area assumes that alert individuals (Kirzner, 1973) pay attention and make assessments and evaluations (McMullen and Shepherd, 2006) and have the qualities necessary to both discover and exploit opportunities that most other individuals overlook. This typically requires access to information, social networks, and cognitive abilities, including prior knowledge (Eckhardt and Shane, 2010).

In this view, entrepreneurial opportunities are treated as definable and identifiable objects (Alvarez et al., 2010). Opportunities arise from competitive imperfections in markets due to changes in technology, consumer behavior, and other attributes of the business environment (Kirzner, 1973; 1997). Shane (2012, 15) describes entrepreneurial opportunities as situations in which it is possible to recombine resources in a way that generates profit. He separates opportunities from business ideas that are the entrepreneurs' interpretations of how to recombine resources in a way that allows pursuit of that opportunity. The defining characteristic of the discovery perspective is the assumption that opportunities exist in the environment prior to entrepreneurs' awareness of them and occur as a matter of objective discovery. Thus the focus of entrepreneurial research should be to identify the conditions in the environment that provide such opportunities and the characteristics of entrepreneurs that predispose them to such discovery (Suddaby et al., 2015).

Ardichvili et al. (2003) present opportunity identification/recognition as a multistage process in which entrepreneurs play proactive roles. Some of the discovery scholars include a notion of creativity – even though opportunities are considered to be there to be seen and discovered, entrepreneurs react creatively (Schumpeter, 1934) or use bricolage to respond (Baker et al., 2003). Baker and Nelson (2005) take a more constructionist approach to bricolage and emphasize its use in creating something from nothing.

2.2.2   The creation perspective

According to the creation perspective, it is the entrepreneur who constructs, deconstructs, and reconstructs an existing reality to form a new reality and thus an opportunity (Alvarez et al., 2010). This creation or constructionist perspective sees entrepreneurial opportunities as products of creative imagination (Lachmann, 1986), effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001), and bricolage (Baker and Nelson, 2005). Alvarez and Barney (2007) argue that entrepreneurial opportunities are social constructions that do not exist independently of an entrepreneur's perceptions. Klein (2008, 182) supports this view; for him, opportunities "do not exist objectively, *ex ante*, but are created, *ex nihilo*, as entrepreneurs act based on their

subjective beliefs." Thus opportunity does not exist separately from the entrepreneur, since it is the differences in the perceptual and cognitive beliefs and interpretations of the entrepreneur that construct opportunity (Alvarez et al., 2010).

According to Suddaby et al. (2015), the defining characteristic of the creation perspective is that the entrepreneurial opportunity is not an objective phenomenon occurring within the environment prior to the agency of the entrepreneur. Instead, entrepreneurial opportunities are endogenous and iterative acts of creation in which the entrepreneur socially constructs both the opportunity and the product or service. Entrepreneurial opportunities thus extend beyond identifying and filling gaps in the market. They exist in a broader social or cultural context and are articulated through the interaction of an entrepreneur's unique and creative perceptions and the demands of the marketplace.

2.2.3   Moving beyond the dichotomy

While Alvarez and Barney (2007) see creation and discovery as clearly distinctive perspectives, many scholars suggest bringing the different perspectives together. Sarasvathy (2014) points out that forcing the polarization onto the debate is not necessary and suggests that research should use multiple theoretical perspectives and different empirical methods. Vaghely and Julien (2010) suggest that entrepreneurs use more or less both approaches in order to identify opportunities; thus entrepreneurial opportunities can be both recognized and constructed. Venkataraman et al. (2012, 26) argue that most entrepreneurial opportunities in the world have to be made and their making involves transforming the extant world into new possibilities by the actions and interactions of stakeholders in the enterprise. Opportunities are thus seen as artifacts and entrepreneurship as the science of the artificial. Understanding opportunities as both made and found allows us to move beyond new combinations to transformations and focus on actions and interactions. Sarasvathy (2001), on the other hand, distinguishes between causal and effectual explanations of entrepreneurial opportunity. She suggests that instead of being contradictory, these two explanations are two different contingencies, one or the other of which may dominate under different circumstances.

Suddaby et al. (2015) brings forth the concepts of imprinting and reflexivity, arguing that theorists who advocate a discovery perspective see imprinting as a key process that explains the "discovery" of an opportunity and theorists who advocate a creation perspective see reflexivity as a core construct that explains how some actors are better able to "create" entrepreneurial opportunity. According to these authors, both imprinting and reflexivity operate on the common assumption that entrepreneurial opportunity emerges as the result of the capacity of some actors to perceive socially embedded schemas in unique and creative ways. Thus rather than seeing the constructs as oppositional and merely reflecting the tension that exists between objectivists and social constructionists in entrepreneurial theory, they argue that the constructs of reflexivity and imprinting point to areas of agreement or similarity. Other scholars see common ground between the two per-

spectives as well. For example, Alvarez et al. (2010) present a third perspective to accompany the realist (discovery) approach and constructionist (creation) approach; this is an evolutionary realist approach to opportunity creation, including elements of both the realist approach and the constructionist approach. Similarly, Sarasvathy et al. (2010) discuss the discovery process view, the creative process view, and the allocative process view. The authors suggest integration based on the proposition that all of the three different views are empirically valid but at different stages of market creation, recognizing that each view is useful under different circumstances, problem spaces, and decision parameters.

2.2.4   The formative role of language

Garud and Giuliani (2013) present a narrative perspective on entrepreneurial opportunities. It suggests that discovery and creation are both part of entrepreneurial opportunities. It considers agency an emergent property of relational processes involving ongoing associations between humans and artifacts. The past, present, and future are considered to be intertwined, while meaning-making occurs in interaction between relational space and durational time. Both entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial agency are seen as distributed and emergent and both discovery and creation are involved in dynamic ways as an entrepreneurial journey unfolds.

Gartner (2014, 34) argues that "opportunity" as a primary construct for entrepreneurship has limited our "descriptive and intellectual power to fully portray entrepreneurship," suggesting that words such as hope, imagination, and vision require more attention. Hjorth and Steyaert (2009) suggest that the language of imagination can help us address what is currently missing in entrepreneurship studies and may help us perceive novel sides of entrepreneurship that have been previously unperceived. While the inner thoughts, visions, and imaginations of entrepreneurs matter, they are not necessarily spoken or speakable, and thus special interest should focus on the point where ideas take linguistic form and meet the requirements of spoken language (Cornelissen and Clarke, 2010, 542). The narrative perspective allows us to recognize the formative role of language in conceptualizing entrepreneurial opportunities (Clarke and Cornelissen, 2011). Narratives have both performative power (as constitutive acts) and agency (they may bring about change in organizations) (Vaara et al., 2016).

This dissertation takes a narrative perspective to entrepreneurial opportunities, which allows us to study not only entrepreneurial opportunities, but to pay attention to the implications for entrepreneurial identity. By adding a literary lens, essay 3 aims to add to existing research on entrepreneurial opportunity and to gain a more profound understanding of what it is entrepreneurs are doing when they speak of opportunities. We see entrepreneurs making statements of reality and drawing from the fictive, the real, and the imaginary to construct new meanings and understanding.

2.3 Discursive approach to entrepreneurship

This dissertation adopts the broad definition of discourse as language use in speech and writing and as social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). It assumes a dialectical process between social structures and discursive activity (e.g. Fairclough, 2010; Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Phillips and Hardy, 2002): discourse production and interpretation is enabled and constrained by certain social structures, but at the same time discursive activity contributes to the construction, reproduction, and transformation of social structure. This work considers three different levels of discourse: textual level, discursive level, and societal or structural level (Fairclough, 2010) as shown in Figure 1. Entrepreneurs have agency, since they produce discourses and thus create and shape social reality. At the same time their discourses are socially determined, since they depend upon the nature of the sociocultural practice and a variety of contextual, institutional, and societal elements.
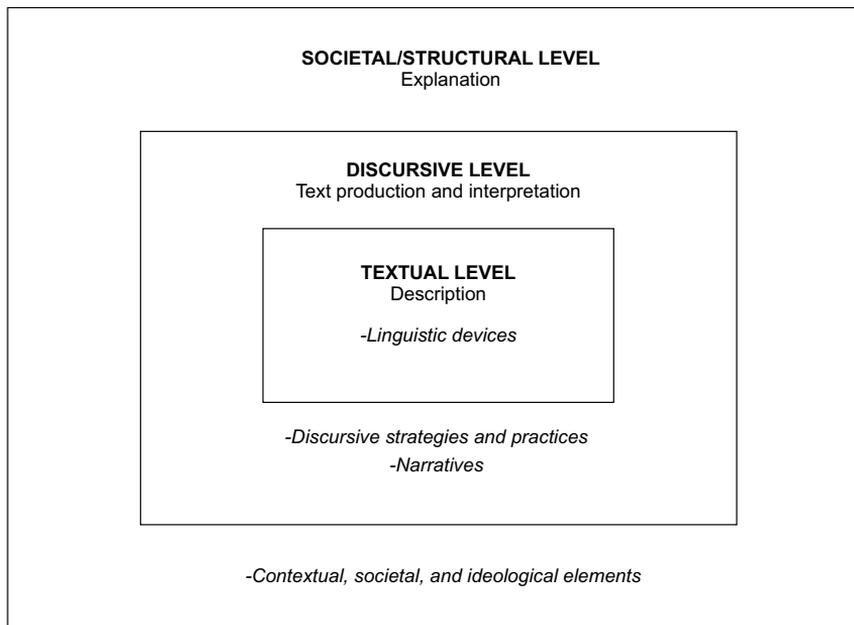
Figure 1. Three-dimensional approach of the study

Phillips and Hardy (2002, 2) summarize discourse in a sentence: "without discourse, there is no social reality, and without understanding discourse, we cannot understand our reality, our experiences, or ourselves." Discourse can refer to anything from a historical monument, a political strategy, text and talk, narratives, speech, and conversations to language per se (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, 2-3). A variety of discursive resources are used in different ways and at different times to make sense of what is going on and to achieve particular purposes (Gill and Larson, 2014). Language is seen as constitutive and constructive rather than merely reflective and representative (Gergen, 1999; Phillips and Oswick, 2012). By drawing on the discourses available, we legitimize and reproduce them, thereby continually strengthening certain discourses and creating reality (Gill and Larson, 2014).

According to Gill (2014) entrepreneurialism draws on the Protestant ethic and American dream ideology. Entrepreneurship discourse is typically described as a modernist, industrial discourse in which entrepreneurs are presented as masculine and heroistic symbols for success, progress, innovation, and change (Du Gay and Salaman, 1992; Chasserio et al., 2014; Berglund and Johansson, 2007; Ogbor, 2000; Boje and Smith, 2007; Fletcher and Watson, 2007). On the other hand, Gherardi (2015) stresses the importance of seeing the discourse of entrepreneurship as a multi-discursive construction rather than a monolithic economic discourse centered on the heroic, lonely male entrepreneur hegemonic, which can be deconstructed. The range of discursive resources has broadened, including for example ethical implications and expectations (Down and Giazitzoglu, 2014) and 'accidental entrepreneurs' (Coulson, 2012). While some argue that entrepreneurs and identities are constituted by the hegemonic discourses (Cohen and Musson, 2000; Ainsworth and Hardy, 2008; Du Gay and Salaman, 1992), I join those who see entrepreneurs more as empowered human agents that use and rework discourses with an impact, thus not being mere products of discourse (Warren, 2004; Down and Reveley, 2004; Down and Warren, 2008; Watson, 2009b). There are creative ways to use ideologies to reframe, recalibrate, and refocus discussion in order to see or present oneself in a positive light (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). Thus entrepreneurs both make choices about available discourses and are constrained by them (Down and Giazitzoglu, 2014).

Narratives are a unique form of discourse and are of particular interest in the current dissertation. According to Vaara et al. (2016), narratives can be defined as temporal, discursive constructions that provide a means for individual, social, and organizational sensemaking and sensegiving, while stories are viewed here as existing narratives that can be told and retold in various forms. Narratives borrow from both history and fiction (Ricoeur, 1991) and order events in a meaningful, temporal sequence that leads to a conclusion (Elliot, 2005). What distinguishes narratives from other forms of discourse is their temporal aspect, even though the temporal plotlines a can remain implicit in narratives due to the complex, ambiguous, and fluid nature of communication; sometimes people need only to be

prompted by some key words to develop narrative understanding (Vaara et al., 2016). Narratives are natural for human beings; we organize our experiences mainly in the form of narratives, telling each other stories and interpreting the stories we hear (Polkinghorne, 1988). Telling and sharing stories helps us to connect to each other but also to understand ourselves (Erikssson and Kovalainen, 2015).

Previous research shows that narratives may provide entrepreneurs tools to build entrepreneurial identity (e.g. Johansson, 2004), to gain legitimacy (e.g. Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001), to acquire resources (e.g. Martens et al., 2007), and to process venture failure and stigma (Mantere et al., 2013; Byrne and Shephard, 2015; Singh et al., 2015). In general, linguistic processes are not only relevant to how we communicate with others, but also to how we think and how we persuade ourselves rather than others to follow certain arguments about what we should do (Watson, 1995) or think. As Hytti and Heinonen (2013, 887) put it "identity is constructed through a positioning in discourse, as a performance created and sustained through textual labour." Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we define our everyday realities (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

We already know that different forms of language are used to shape identity (Down and Giazitzoglu, 2014) and to constrain or enable action (Sillince et al., 2012). Rhetoric approaches often focus on how individuals construct themselves in relation to different audiences (Jarzabkowski and Sillince, 2007) with particular emphasis on strategic goals or actions and persuading others (Sillince et al., 2012). For example, Jarzabkowski et al. (2007) show changes in top managers' language use as they emphasize some goals in some situations and others in different situations in order to persuade others. Jarzabkowski et al. (2010) examined how strategic ambiguity is used as a discursive resource by different organizational constituents and how that is associated with collective action around the strategic goal. They suggest new rhetoric as a useful approach in understanding how people persuade themselves about how they identify with an issue and what values they espouse in order to resolve ambiguity. Although this dissertation does not take a rhetoric lens, it should be noted that different concepts are partly overlapping. For example, metaphors and similes can be seen as both linguistic and rhetoric devices.

In sum, entrepreneurial identity is accomplished in discursive and narrative representations (see Boje and Smith, 2010) and the linguistic choices of agents are an important part of entrepreneurial identity work. This dissertation uses narrative and discursive approaches to better understand what it is like to be an entrepreneur and how entrepreneurial identity is constructed.

2.4   On-going identity work

The extant literature has focused on the content of entrepreneurial identity at the expense of discursive identity work through which entrepreneurial identities are formed and shaped (Donnellon et al., 2014; Leitch and Harrison, 2016). Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010, 135) argue that we do not yet have a clear understanding of the important ways in which self-narrative form or their role in identity construction. Even though there has been growing interest in identity work, emphasizing the dynamic aspects and on-going struggles around creating a sense of self (e.g. Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Down and Warren, 2008; Nielsen and Lassen, 2012; Watson, 2009b), our understanding of entrepreneurial identity work is underdeveloped.

Svenningsson and Alvesson (2003, 1165) see identity work as people's engagement in forming, maintaining, strengthening, and revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness. While they focus on how people "strive to shape their personal identities", Watson (2009b, 257) hopes to put more focus on the external aspects of how we present ourselves in social interaction and emphasizes how people strive to shape their social identities in relation to others in different contexts. He uses the term "identity work" to link the identities of entrepreneurial actors (individual-level identity) to the cultural, discursive, and ideological aspects of entrepreneurship (structural-level identity). Language plays an important role in identity work, because identity is constructed through a positioning in discourse (Hytti and Heinonen, 2013).

Kreiner et al. (2006) have created a conceptual model of identity work that illustrates the complex interactions between individual and situational influences as individuals strive for optimal balance. McAdams (1996, 301) pays attention to narratives and argues that lives can be viewed as narrated texts, known and "read" as stories, framed through discourse, and told in culture. The process of narration is interactive: both the narrator and the audience formulate, edit, applaud, and refuse various elements of the ever-produced narrative to construct identities (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004). Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010, 137) introduce the term "narrative identity work" to refer to social efforts to craft self-narratives – narratives or stories about the self – that serve a person's identity aims. They provide a conceptual model focusing on role identity processes in work role transitions. I aim to take a more holistic approach. Everyone engages in identity work, even though there are variations in how relatively active or passive individuals are in the light of the circumstances that they confront at various stages of their life (Watson, 2009b). Identity work typically aims for a positive identity (e.g. Dutton et al., 2010), which includes also social identity and social relations. Although everybody experiences at least some amount of self-doubts and self-openness (Svenningsson and Alvesson, 2003), there can be specific situations in which the need for deliberate and intentional identity work becomes more apparent (Watson 2009b). In the case of startup entrepreneurs seeking high growth, there is obviously a need to construct self-confidence, but also a need to construct legitimacy

when "pitching" one's ideas for investors, customers, and other stakeholders. Internationalization can be seen as a transition process, during which entrepreneurs explore new opportunities and must explain both their background and future goals (see Ibarra, 2003), (re)build social relations, and (re)define their national identity, but entrepreneurial identity work will continue also after these type of transition phases.

When studying narrative identity work, Ibarra and Barbulescu (2010) distinguish narratives from other elements of self-referential discourse. I find it important to pay attention to discursive meaning making and language use in general, including micro-linguistic approach. When doing identity work entrepreneurs articulate and give meanings to themselves and their actions (Hytti, 2005). How the individual constructs entrepreneurial identity cannot be pre-defined. Answers to the question "who am I?" are temporary, as individuals constantly strive to shape their identities and are being shaped by discursive forces (e.g. Svenningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson et al., 2008). Thus identity work is dialogical (Beech, 2008), rather than an individual dealing with discourses, narratives or ideologies in isolation from others (Watson, 2009b). Identity work can be seen also as fictive, because individuals draw from both fictive and real worlds when constructing themselves, their past, and their future.

Identity work helps us to understand how people negotiate their unique individual identities in the face of social demands, role expectations (see Kreiner et al., 2006), and macro level discourses as defining and legitimizing frames of entrepreneurial meaning. This means that entrepreneurial identity reflects and reproduces some specific values and hegemonies of the society that are present in media and social interaction. For example, Nicholson and Anderson's (2005) analysis of articles published in a newspaper revealed images of male entrepreneurs as dynamic wolfish charmers, supernatural gurus, successful skyrockets, or community saviors and corrupters. The entrepreneurs are influenced by these social norms, values and expectations, but at the same time they also produce, reproduce and shape wider societal discourses in terms of what is culturally and socially legitimate, acceptable, and even admirable.

Based on the above insights, I approach entrepreneurial identity work as *individuals' efforts to (discursively) construct, maintain or shape understanding of oneself as an entrepreneur.* This definition includes legitimation and meaning-making for oneself and for others. The framework for analyzing entrepreneurial identity work is presented in Figure 2. Entrepreneurs continuously strive to understand who they are and who they want to be based on their own aims and needs. Entrepreneurial identity work is seen as a discursive activity including different narrative types, discursive identity strategies, and discursive practices. Social structures enable and constrain entrepreneurial identity work, but on the other hand entrepreneurs maintain and shape social structures by using different narrative types, discursive strategies, and discursive practices. Furthermore, entrepreneurial identity work is context dependent. This means that entrepreneurial

identity work takes place in a specific time and place, which has an impact on language use and how entrepreneurial identity is constructed. Entrepreneurs do not operate in a vacuum and thus entrepreneurial identity work can be either supported or hindered by different helpers and opponents. Identity work allows us to understand not only how individual entrepreneurs relate to the broader discourses and narratives available to them, but also how they continuously reproduce and shape the existing discourse as well as their own identities. This has implications to social practices, which articulate language together with other non-discoursal social elements, such as action, persons with their beliefs and attitudes, and social relations (Fairclough, 2003).
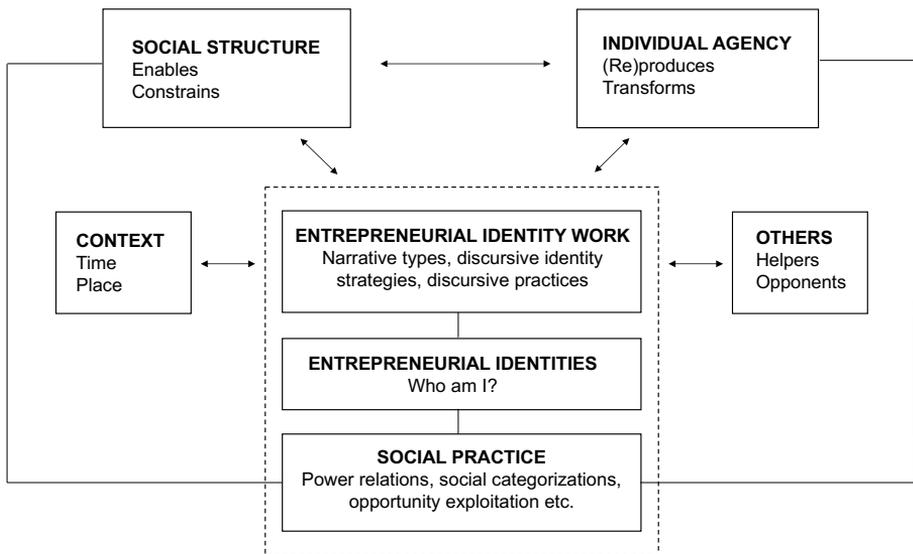
Figure 2. Framework for analyzing entrepreneurial identity work

3. Methodology

I will next present the research setting and the research process of this study. My purpose is to carefully describe the choices made and the steps taken during the process to make it possible for readers to evaluate both the process and the results. Table 1 summarizes the essays of the study.

Table 1. Summary of the essays

Essay	Authors	Method	Research questions	Key findings
Helpers and opponents in entrepreneurial identity work: A narrative analysis on growth stories of Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley	Hanna Maula, Paul Savage, Henrika Franck, Eero Vaara	Narrative analysis	How are entrepreneurial identities and personal growth stories constructed by startup entrepreneurs in the context of global mobility? What and who are the key helpers and opponents in their entrepreneurial identity narratives?	We identified four narrative types, in which different tests, helpers, and opponents as well as non-opponents and non-helpers play a key role.
Constructing hero identity: Discursive identity strategies in entrepreneurial identity work	Hanna Maula	Critical discourse analysis	What discursive identity strategies and linguistic devices are used in entrepreneurial hero narratives? How is masculinity reproduced by startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley?	Five discursive identity strategies and a variety of linguistic devices that are used in constructing entrepreneurial hero identity and (re)producing masculinity were identified.
Entrepreneurial opportunity as fiction: An analysis of discursive practices in entrepreneurs' narratives	Paul Savage, Henrika Franck, Hanna Maula, Eero Vaara	Narrative analysis	What are the implications of applying a fiction lens to narratives of entrepreneurial opportunity?	We identified three types of discursive practices in between the fictive and the real. All of them have different implications for entrepreneurial identity.

3.1   Research setting

This research was conducted in Silicon Valley, California, United States and it focuses on the narratives of Finnish entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. Startups form a highly relevant context for entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial identity research because they typically search for novel business ideas, have a need for private and/or public funding, refine their businesses, and seek fast growth. In addition to their own ambitions, startup entrepreneurs face a variety of external expectations, some of which may be more realistic than others.

Silicon Valley is widely known for the region's entrepreneurial activity and it attracts people hoping to replicate the famous success stories (Lippmann and Aldrich, 2016). As a context, it represents privilege, the global economy, high-tech, and innovation (Ozkazanc-Pan and Muntean, 2016). Many of the successful globally known high-tech companies such as Twitter, Apple, and Google originate from Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is also a base for many famous venture capitalists to whom entrepreneurs pitch their ideas and companies in order to obtain funding. In addition, Silicon Valley is often considered a talent pool, partly related to the highly ranked universities in the area, such as Stanford and the University of California, Berkeley, and a work force from all around the world. In public discussion, it is often also considered a hypercompetitive context. While Silicon Valley is viewed as a place of wealth and success, not everybody succeeds and questions of, for example, social inequality in Silicon Valley have been raised.

Promoting research from the "ghettos of entrepreneurship discourse," Baker and Welter (2017, 170) propose the creation of a new subfield of entrepreneurship, which they call "nexus studies," a subfield that focuses on "developing theory to explain the behavior of externally financed non-family, profit-focused growth ventures in developed economies, often started and run by educationally and economically privileged men with their eyes on the prize of a lucrative 'exit' event." The data used in my dissertation fit this description well. However, my purpose is certainly not to marginalize other subfields or to narrow the discourse, but rather to take a critical approach to what has been seen as a mainstream in entrepreneurship and shed light on the (re)production of dominant discourses.

All the interviewees of this dissertation were born and raised in Finland, which allows me to shed light on spatial and cultural tensions in the discourses of Finnish entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. Morrison (2000) argues that compared with many other countries, the characteristics and behaviors in Finland are of a more implicit and low-key nature than aggressively explicit. Based on her cross-country study, Finns are rather conformist and anti-entrepreneurial and have a low tolerance for failure, which tends to leave a lasting stigma, while in North America entrepreneurial behavior is applauded and failure has few associated negative connotations. It should be noted, however, that such traits are rather stereotypical and never apply to the entire population. Little is known about how experienced cultural differences are enacted by startup entrepreneurs and about the implications for entrepreneurial identity work.

We have known for a long time that environment is one of the key dimensions in new venture creation (e.g. Gartner, 1985; Baker and Welter, 2017); it affects e.g. entrepreneurial opportunities. Furthermore, agentic reconstruction of identity is enabled and constrained by an institutional environment that provides interpretive, legitimating, and material resources that individuals adopt and adapt (Chreim et al., 2007). The role of environment or place is especially interesting in this dissertation, because the setting allows interviewees to narrate experiences from two different countries.

Understanding the social context is a key element in this type of research. Throughout the research project I lived in Silicon Valley, gaining insight into the operating environment and plenty of formal and informal connections to local entrepreneurs. This, I believe, helped me in getting a holistic understanding of the context, asking the right questions in the interviews, reflecting on the representations as well as in interpreting and analyzing the data and seeing the specific texts as parts of or in relation to other texts (intertextuality).

3.2   Methodological foundations of the research

This dissertation is based on a qualitative approach and interpretation is considered important in the analysis of the data. As our reality is constructed in ongoing and contextual meaning-making and social interaction, it cannot be perceived objectively (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). People construct different versions of social reality in their social interaction and their understanding of the world is always historically and culturally specific (Burr, 2003; Foss, 2004). Also entrepreneurial identities are constructed in certain social contexts and built on the basis of consciously or unconsciously held beliefs, values, and traditions. Language is seen here as central in the discursive processes of meaning-making and related identity construction (Burr, 2003). Language is not seen only as content; it is also context and a way to recontextualize content and thus we do not just report and describe with language; we also create with it (Boje et al., 2004). Discourses and narratives create social reality through the production of concepts, objects, and subject positions (Oswick et al., 2000).

The key sources of data in this study were deep semi-structured interviews. They were analyzed with narrative analysis in Essay 1 and Essay 3 and critical discourse analysis in Essay 2. Detailed qualitative analysis is considered well-suited for studying how entrepreneurs negotiate their identities and position themselves and others in interaction. Both critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis can be seen as abductive approaches (Wodak, 2004; Boje, 2001). The researcher constructs interpretations to draw conclusions. Instead of predicting, confirming, or disconfirming (deduction) or generalization (induction), the purpose is to explain and theorize through abduction. Abduction involves an active researcher formulating various generic statements as explanations or interpretations of the data (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013). Another researcher looking at the very same data

might well make different interpretations and formulate different set of statements.

As is typical of the interpretive approach, my research was a continuous dialogue between theory, my own preunderstanding, and the data. This requires remaining open to being surprised by the data and questioning my own preunderstanding (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007). This dialogical process does not lead to a "final explanation." Rather it can be seen as a "reflexive narrative" where I seek – through a dialogue between my own preunderstanding and empirical data – a new understanding of theory through evolution of my own preunderstanding (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013).

3.3   Reflexivity of the researcher

Due to the nature of this research, it is unavoidably subjective. In fact, scientific knowledge is seen in this study as a product of social construction in which the researcher has an active and political role. The findings are considered interpretations of the researcher rather than objective facts available in the data (Alvesson, 2010; Charmaz, 2006; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009; Fairclough, 2001; 2003) and the implications of findings are not recommendations or advice. Reflexivity is crucial in this type of study, meaning that subjective criteria for the choices made in the process of interpreting are revealed (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013). It should help the reader to evaluate the credibility of interpretations. Phillips and Hardy (2002, 83-86) have summarized various dimensions of research that deserve reflection in discourse analytical studies. I have applied these dimensions and present my own reflections related to them in Table 2, which serves as a tool for looking openly and critically at my own role, perspectives, choices, and authority in this research process.

Table 2. Dimensions of research and researcher's reflection

Dimensions of research	Reflection
The study itself is a social construction, not an objective description.	The researcher's role and influence as well as the subjective nature of this study are openly discussed. The results are not presented as objective truth.
The research is always related to other texts and broader discourses.	The context of this study (Silicon Valley) is described and discussed. Life story interviews and additional research material collected help to put discourses and narratives in their historical and societal context.
Multiple and possibly controversial voices construct reality and some of them may be typically silenced.	It is acknowledged that entrepreneurs' own narratives do not give the whole picture of entrepreneurship. In addition to entrepreneurs, consultants, venture capitalists and representatives of Tekes and Finpro are interviewed, but not all possible voices are included. For instance, employees could see entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs from a different angle. The critical lens provides an opportunity to uncover multiple and even contradictory aspects in the construction of entrepreneurial identity.
All voices cannot be included and those that are included are not expressed on equal terms. The researcher always has influence on which voices are heard more than others.	All interviews have been coded during the research process using the same criteria. However, due to differences between the interviews, research approach, and subjective choices in this study I may have privileged some voices over others when analyzing the data.
Multiple meanings and different readings of the research data are possible.	Quotations from the interviews have been added to essays to help the reader to follow the reasoning but also to make their own interpretations.
The aim of this type of study is not to present a totalizing theory, but to inform and complement other theories.	The aim of this study is not to provide causal explanations, to generalize, or to give advice or recommendations. I aim to stimulate and participate in the debate around startup entrepreneurship.
There are no institutionalized techniques in narrative or discourse analysis.	The techniques used here have been customized for the purposes of this study. The choices made have been explained and the work done has been carefully reported to help readers follow the steps taken in the different phases of this research.
The research process and reporting have a political nature.	It is acknowledged that this research is interpretive and also political, and I as a researcher also construct social reality. I aim at reflexivity and transparency throughout the dissertation.

3.4   Data collection

The data collected in this study consists of 43 interviews of Finnish current or former startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley as well as seven interviews of venture capitalists and consultants, who work closely with startup entrepreneurs. This data is exceptional because it allows us to study identity work of a rather homogenous group of startup entrepreneurs in a new operating environment and follow their transition processes. Hofstede et al. (2010) define Finland as an individualistic, normative, indulgent, and feminine society, where power is decentralized and people have high preference for avoiding uncertainty. The same authors define the United States as highly individualistic, pragmatic, indulgent, and masculine society, where power is fairly decentralized and people do not avoid uncertainty. Our data allows us to study entrepreneurial identity work of entrepreneurs

in between these culturally partly similar, yet different countries and to pay special attention on the development of their national identity. Furthermore, Silicon Valley is a well-known startup hub, which attracts entrepreneurs from all over the world (see Lippmann and Aldrich, 2016). I believe this study can shed light to a broader phenomenon of global mobility in high-growth entrepreneurship.

The storytelling interview is very useful for particular research questions, such as when individual life stories are being investigated or personal experience is under scrutiny (Johansson, 2004). It was appropriate for our purposes because we wanted to gather the experiences of the entrepreneurs over the years. The interviews were conducted by four researchers. A great majority of the interviews in this study were carried out in Finnish, although some Finnish entrepreneurs were interviewed in English by one of the authors, who is a native English speaker. The first interview was conducted by three interviewers together to be able to modify the questions and style based on the interview experience and feedback from the interviewee. I conducted 36 interviews on my own and thus I participated in a total of 37 interviews. My active role in data collection allowed me to gain a good understanding of the data in an early phase of the research and to observe the entrepreneurs during the interviews.

The interviews ranged from about 30-180 minutes with most lasting about an hour. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The first round of interviews was conducted from October 2014 to May 2015 and the second round from January 2017 to June 2017. The interviews typically took place at the entrepreneur's office or a café in Silicon Valley. One interview was conducted by telephone and two on Skype. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed to all interviewees, which hopefully encouraged the entrepreneurs to talk freely. The details of the data used in this study are portrayed in Table 3 on the next pages.

Table 3. Background information on the interviewees

#	Role	Previous experience as an entrepreneur in other companies	Age	Education	Years as an entre-preneur	Years in Silicon Valley	Interviewed in
1	current entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	high school/dropout[1]	21-30	1-5	2014-2015
2	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	high school/dropout	11-20	1-5	2014-2015
3	former entrepreneur	Yes	21-30	MSc (tech)	6-10	1-5	2014-2015
4	former entrepreneur	No	21-30	high school/drop out	1-5	1-5	2014-2015
5	former entrepreneur	Yes	21-30	high school/dropout	6-10	1-5	2014-2015
6	consultant	Yes	51-60	MSc (tech)	1-5	11-20	2014-2015
7	current entrepreneur	No	31-40	MSc (econ)	1-5	6-10	2014-2015
8	current entrepreneur	Yes	51-60	BSc (tech)	11-20	11-20	2014-2015
9	current entrepreneur	No	31-40	MSc (tech)	1-5	6-10	2014-2015
10	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	MSc (econ)	1-5	1-5	2014-2015
11	consultant	No	41-50	MSc (tech)	<1	11-20	2014-2015
12	consultant	No	51-60	MSc (tech)	<1	1-5	2014-2015
13	former entrepreneur	Yes	51-60	MSc (tech)	11-20	11-20	2014-2015
14	current entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	MSc (tech)	5-10	21-30	2014-2015
15	former entrepreneur	Yes	40-50	MSc (tech)	5-10	6-10	2014-2015
16	consultant	No	41-50	MBA	5-10	1-5	2014-2015
17	consultant	No	51-60	MSc (econ) LLM, JSD	21-30	21-30	2014-2015
18	consultant	Yes	31-40	MSc (soc)	5-10	6-10	2014-2015
19	current entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	MSc (tech)	11-20	6-10	2014-2015
20	current entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	MSc (tech)	11-20	11-20	2014-2015
21	consultant	No	51-60	MSc (tech)	<1	21-30	2014-2015
22	current entrepreneur	Yes	51-60	MSc (tech)	>30	21-30	2014-2015
23	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	MSc (tech)	5	<1	2014-2015
24	current entrepreneur	No	21-30	Chef	<1	<1	2014-2015
25	current entrepreneur	Yes	51-60	MSc (tech)	21-30	21-30	2014-2015
26	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	MSc (tech)	21-30	6-10	2014-2015
27	consultant	No	31-40	BBA	<1	6-10	2014-2015
28	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	PhD Psychology	11-20	<1	2014-2015
29	former entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	MSc (tech)	5-10	<1	2014-2015
30	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	MSc (tech)	5-10	1-5	2014-2015
31	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	MSc (tech)	11-20	6-10	2014-2015
32	former entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	MSc (eng)	11-20	1-5	2017

[1] University dropouts

33	former entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	MSc (econ)	11-20	1-5	2017
34	current entrepreneur	No	31-40	MSc (econ)	1-5	1-5	2017
35	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	MSc (econ)	11-20	1-5	2017
36	current entrepreneur	No	41-50	MD	1-5	1-5	2017
37	current entrepreneur	No	21-30	MBA	1-5	1-5	2017
38	current entrepreneur	No	31-40	MBA	1-5	1-5	2017
39	current entrepreneur	Yes	31-40	Msc (eng)	6-10	1-5	2017
40	current entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	high school/drop out	11-20	<1	2017
41	current entrepreneur	No	41-50	PhD (social sciences)	6-10	1-5	2017
42	current entrepreneur	No	51-60	MSc (eng)	6-10	1-5	2017
43	current entrepreneur	No	21-30	BSc (econ)	1-5	1-5	2017
44	current entrepreneur	No	41-50	MSc (tech)	11-20	6-10	2017
45	current entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	MSc (tech)	21-30	1-5	2017
46	current entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	high school/drop out	11-20	6-10	2017
47	current entrepreneur	No	41-50	MSc (educ)	11-20	<1	2017
48	current entrepreneur	Yes	41-50	MSc (soc)	6-10	1-5	2017
49	current entrepreneur	No	41-50	MSc (tech)	6-10	6-10	2017
50	current entrepreneur	No	31-40	MBA	1-5	1-5	2017

There was a target group of 35 Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley when we started to do our interviews. We contacted all of them. Ten of the entrepreneurs were unwilling or unable to give an interview. A typical reason given was a busy schedule, but there were also a few entrepreneurs who declined to participate. The second round was organized in 2017 because by that time there were many new Finnish entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. In addition, we contacted those entrepreneurs that were too busy for interviews during the first round. Entrepreneurs to be interviewed were identified with listings of Finnish entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley maintained by Finpro[2] and Tekes[3]. Both Finpro and Tekes have offices and representatives in Silicon Valley. We also asked interviewees to recommend additional interviewees and used a variety of public sources such as websites, media articles, and our own networks to make sure we would contact most if not all of the Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley at the time of the data collection rounds. In addition to current and former startup entrepreneurs, we interviewed venture capitalists, consultants as well as Tekes and Finpro representatives who work closely with Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley (to preserve anonymity they are referred to as consultants in Table 3). Even though the data used consist of a limited number of specific discursive events, I believe the discourses used can be placed into a broader context to serve as examples of more general patterns and tendencies.

The interviewees represented different ages, but were mostly males. This is not exceptional in Silicon Valley, and in fact reflects the realities of entrepreneurial work in the area. As all interviewees were Finnish, they shared the same cultural background. Some of them had lived in Silicon Valley for several years and some of them had moved there recently. The educational background of the interviewees varied from high school to doctoral degrees, typically from engineering or science. All interviewees had aimed to become entrepreneurs and thus the data do not cover "passive" entrance into e.g. family businesses (Bjursell and Melin, 2011).

We used a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 2) to make sure all of the interviews covered the same main themes. We asked open-ended questions and allowed the interviewees to talk freely because we wanted to leave room for them to tell stories about their experiences in their own way. The outline was slightly modified for different types of interviewees. Topics discussed during the interviews covered for instance the current situations and future plans of the entrepreneurs and their companies, how the interviewees became entrepreneurs, when and why they moved to Silicon Valley, as well as failures and successes during their entrepreneurial careers. At the end of the interviews we always asked the interviewees to add any important issues that they had not brought up yet.

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[2] Finpro helps Finnish SMEs go international, encourages foreign direct investment in Finland, and promotes tourism.
[3] Tekes is the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, a part of the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

We were already interested in entrepreneurial opportunities when planning the interview outline. However, we did not intend to study entrepreneurial identity and it was not addressed explicitly during the data collection process (the word "identity" was not used in the interview guidelines or mentioned by the interviewers). When analyzing the data, however, it became evident that there was a considerable amount of data related to identity. In fact, constructions of entrepreneurial identity appeared to be central in the interviews.

The stories gave us access to the world of the entrepreneur (Steyaert, 2007). Human agency and imagination determine how the stories are told, what events are included or excluded and how events are plotted (Riessman, 1993). Stories are never complete; they are told in a particular context, to particular listeners, by a particular storyteller, for particular purposes and in a larger context of other stories and ideas (Gartner, 2001). When entrepreneurs in dialogue with researchers tell their life stories, it satisfies their need for making sense of their experiences (Foss, 2004). Intentionally or not, researchers in interviews participate in creating the reality they study. The researcher typically arranges the interviews and decides the themes or interview questions. Some interviewees are more eager to tell their story in their own way, while others can be rather reluctant or more willing to meet the researcher's expectations. This calls for reflexivity from the researcher (Gartner, 2007). Narrative analysis of entrepreneurial stories also requires looking for the various cultural and master-narratives in which the actors are emplotted (Steyaert, 2007).

The use of interviews in identity research has been criticized by Svenningsson and Alvesson (2003) because interpretations of them can vary. This raises questions regarding the value of interviews as realistic expressions of how people define themselves and experience subjective worlds. Furthermore, critics claim that traditional question and answer interviews merely reproduce the categories of the researcher and even if these categories are not explicitly stated, the interviewees try to meet the expectations of the interviewer and thus the interviewer influences them (Johansson, 2004). When doing the interviews, we tried to avoid these problems by wide and open-ended questions and by leaving a lot of time for interviewees to tell their story in their own way without leading questions even though we tried to make sure that certain main themes would be covered in all interviews.

Although the interviews listed in Table 3 formed the main data of this study, supplementary materials were also used. The interviews were complemented with observations of some formal and various less formal conversations in dozens of startup events. These observations and numerous discussions with leaders and employees of Silicon Valley-based startup companies provided background information on the phenomena and the context. Prior to the interviews, we used publicly available data (e.g. websites) to familiarize ourselves with the company and business in question. In addition, 263 newspaper articles published in *Kauppalehti, Helsingin Sanomat,* and *Talouselämä* published between October 2014 and April 2017 with a main focus on Finnish entrepreneur(s) in Silicon Valley were collected and read to better understand the context as well as to obtain background information on the interviewees

and their companies, to widen our perspective, to help us to ask informed questions, and to validate the results. These materials were not, however, used directly in the analysis.

3.5 Data analysis

This dissertation uses two qualitative methods: narrative analysis and critical discourse analysis. There are no universal instructions on how to do this type of analysis. Thus in all three essays we researchers developed approaches that we believe make sense in these particular studies (see Phillips and Hardy, 2002, 74). Analyses in this type of research are typically iterative and based on the researcher's interpretation (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). My purpose is to carefully describe and explain the steps taken during the analysis in order to be as transparent as possible. This should enable the reader to follow the reasoning and evaluate the analysis.

All three essays included several rounds of analysis. Detailed and extensive excel sheets were made when coding the data. Coding was not done for statistical analysis, but rather to facilitate the process of defining the themes arising from the data and to work systematically. The purpose was to make the soundest interpretations possible. In the co-authored papers, the excel sheets and multiple rounds of coding also served as a tool for developing mutual understanding of the data. There is always a range of possible interpretations and coding helped us to discuss our choices and the reasoning behind them (see Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013).

A critical approach is used in all essays; hence questions were asked to determine what lies behind the initial, self-evident interpretations sometimes automatically produced by researchers and to provide alternative points of departure for thinking about what the empirical work produces (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). The data analyses in all of the essays is presented as linear. The various phases of analysis will hopefully make the whole process more understandable for readers, but it should be noted that they also oversimplify the analysis, which is iterative and includes continuous dialogue between theory and data.

3.5.1 Narrative analysis

Research on entrepreneurship has increasingly turned to narrative approaches (Steyaert, 2007, 742). Engaging with entrepreneurship through narrative analysis helps us to understand that entrepreneurship involves persuading others of what the firm might become and what course of action might best achieve that potential (Holt and Macpherson, 2010). In Essay 1, we use narrative analysis to shed light on the construction of entrepreneurial growth stories, and in Essay 3, narrative analysis is used to study how abstract entrepreneurial opportunities are formed in narratives using different discursive practices. Life stories form the basis of conventional narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993). Although longer narratives with a clear beginning, middle and end are most familiar and easy to recognize as narratives, narrative analysis does not

have to focus on long stories only (Georgakapoulou, 2006). In the narrative approach, the interview situation is regarded as an arena for storytelling. Each of the interviewees tells their stories in different ways and some need more prompting by interviewers than others (Larty and Hamilton, 2011). In telling their stories, the interviewees continuously revise the plot as they pass through experiences. Life stories are then a way of articulating and explaining who we are, not only to others but also to ourselves (Johansson, 2004). Thus life stories can be analyzed as identity constructions.

Steyaert (2007) is concerned that when applying narrative approaches to entrepreneurship research we might reintroduce individual entrepreneurs to the foreground of our analysis, and focus on listening to them tell their personal story instead of analyzing the stories and storytelling. In that case the focus would be rather on the storytelling entrepreneur than on the process of storytelling. We try to avoid this problem by analyzing the narratives of several entrepreneurs and presenting the data anonymously. Then "who's the entrepreneur?" is not the question (in contradiction to e.g. mass media). Instead we aim for understanding the construction of entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial opportunities. Our data allow us to focus on personal narratives, which include emotions, individual experiences and perspectives, and certain contexts. The narratives produced by our interviewees can be seen also as a collective narrative co-produced by the community of Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. This collective narrative serves in constructing collective entrepreneurial identity.

In Essay 1, we use narrative analysis to define different narrative types used in the interviews. We start the analysis by using Greimas' actantial model (1983; 1987; 1990) to identify the actants and actions in narratives in a systematic way. We then categorize various types of helpers, non-opponents, opponents and non-helpers. In addition, we use Greimas' tests to better understand the role of challenges, helpers, and opponents in the narratives and in entrepreneurial identity construction. In Essay 3, we study entrepreneurial opportunity as fiction. Following Garud and Giuliani (2013), we use a narrative lens to view entrepreneurial opportunities. We draw from Iser's (1993) literary theory and propose his triad of the real, the fictive, and the imaginary as one way to better understand entrepreneurial opportunities. We define three discursive practices, which are used to produce and shape entrepreneurial opportunities.

3.5.2   Critical discourse analysis

Discourse analysis provides tools to analyze both meaning-making by individual entrepreneurs as well as the broader discourses within which they are bound when constructing their identities. It has proven to be a useful method for analyzing how social constructs such as identity emerge and develop (Phillips and Oswick, 2012). In Essay 2, I use an explicitly critical approach to discourse analysis in order to focus on the context and ideological underpinnings of the narratives related in the interviews.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) emphasizes the central role of texts and their analysis in allowing examination of the constitutive role that discourses play in contemporary society (Vaara, 2005). It typically addresses the issues of social power by elites or groups (van Dijk, 1995), such as startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. CDA is especially interested in hierarchy-building, exclusion and subordination, and privileging some actors at the expense of others (Wodak and Meyer, 2009; Phillips and Hardy, 2002) and attempts to make visible social phenomena that often pass unnoticed (Vaara, 2015). Critical scholars are not seekers of 'truth' but rather questioners of *whose* 'truth' is being privileged in any particular context/s and why (Tedmanson et al., 2012). Discourse analysis attempts to uncover the way in which social reality is produced and maintained (Phillips and Oswick, 2012, 445). Through such an approach we can better map out and understand the role of discursive practices in the micro-level processes (Vaara, 2015).

Discourse analysis typically involves textual analysis, investigation of the broader discourse of which the focal texts are a part, and an investigation of the social context in which the texts appear to meld together to produce useful insights into the social world (Phillips and Oswick, 2012, 445). Discourses can be seen as a major locus of ideology (Phillips and Hardy, 2002; Vaara, 2015). According to Fairclough (2010), analyzing discourses helps us to understand the possible emergence of new discourses and their constitution as new articulations of elements of existing discourses. He argues that hegemony is formed when particular discourses (and not others) and associated narratives become hegemonic in particular organizations or groups. New discourses always emerge by 'reweaving' relations between existing discourses. Certain discourses may exist somewhere and become recontextualized in a new setting across structural boundaries. Operationalization of discourses refers to enactment of new discourses in new ways, inculcation in identities, styles and new ways of being or materialization as objects and properties of the physical world (Fairclough, 2010, 267). A dominating or hegemonic discourse in one place may have influence beyond that specific context.

In the Essay 2, I use critical discourse analysis to identify the discursive identity strategies used in entrepreneurial hero narratives. My purpose is to shed light on the main objectives of the entrepreneurs, the linguistic devices used, and the identity outcomes. As part of the analysis, the ideological underpinnings of each discursive identity strategy are discussed. Furthermore, the analysis shows how dominant discourses, and masculinity in particular, are produced and reproduced.

4. Results

Entrepreneurial identities, startup organizations, and operating environments are not fixed. Instead, they change continuously and language plays a fundamental role in this process. Discourses and narratives support (with or without intention) either change or stability (Vaara et al., 2016). This dissertation adds to our understanding of the discursive dynamics of startup entrepreneurship by focusing on the role of language in constituting and constructing entrepreneurial identities.

This research project started with a focus on entrepreneurial opportunities and innovating. However, when analyzing the data it became evident that even when talking about innovations, the entrepreneurs were continuously constructing who they are and who they want to be. Thus focus was redirected to entrepreneurial identity work. The three essays of this dissertation investigate the phenomenon from different angles. The analysis of entrepreneurs' narratives permits us to pay attention to the interplay between agency and structure and the situated nature of identity work.

Essay 1 elaborates on the personal growth stories of Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley and focuses on patterns in the stories told. Greimas' actantial model is used as a framework, which allows us to analyze how different actants are constructed in entrepreneurial narratives and affect entrepreneurial identity work. In addition, this essay sheds light on the development of national identity. Essay 2 focuses on different discursive identity strategies and a variety of linguistic devices used by the entrepreneurs in their on-going identity work. It takes a micro-linguistic and critical approach and shows how entrepreneurs construct hero identity and produce and reproduce certain discourses, masculinity in particular. Essay 3 focuses more on entrepreneurial opportunities and shows how they are constructed based upon the real, the fictive, and the imaginary. We identify three discursive practices through which entrepreneurial opportunities are constructed and shaped. We analyze not only the key elements of different discursive practices, but also the related tensions, the legitimization of entrepreneurial activities, and the implications for entrepreneurial identity. This essay shows how entrepreneurial identities and business opportunities are intertwined, which can inform us also about connection between entrepreneurial identity and new venture identity.

In all, to gain a comprehensive view, the three essays target different aspects of the same phenomenon, using different research methods to analyze the same data. Detailed analysis takes into account the textual level, the discursive

level, and the societal level. All three essays shed light on entrepreneurial iden-
tity work and how entrepreneurs legitimize who they are and who they want to
be. Different discursive strategies, discursive practices, and narrative types are
analyzed, which provides empirical evidence of the complex, nuanced, and
heterogeneous nature of entrepreneurial identity work.

4.1 Essay 1 Helpers and opponents in entrepreneurial identity work: A narrative analysis on the growth stories of Finnish startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley

The essay is co-authored with Paul Savage, Henrika Franck, and Eero Vaara. The paper was presented at the Academy of Management Conference 2017 in Atlanta.

As entrepreneurial identities are formed by narratives and storytelling, they
can be studied with a narrative approach (Johansson, 2004; Boje and Smith,
2010). Entrepreneurs craft narratives that meet their identity aims (Ibarra and
Barbulescu, 2010) in addition to using those which the surrounding culture
makes available to them (Watson, 2009). Essay 1 takes a narrative approach to
entrepreneurial identity work and the personal growth stories of Finnish
startup entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. To elucidate through narrative analysis
how entrepreneurs construct their entrepreneurial identity, we used 50 inter-
views that were multifaceted; including plots, different characters, conflicts,
successes and failures, as well as different cultural contexts. The perspective
chosen allows the focus to be placed on both subjective and contextual nature
of identity construction.

The essay suggests Greimas' (1983; 1987; 1990) actantial model and semiotic
square as possible frameworks to map various actants and their role in entre-
preneurial identity construction. Greimas' classical work belongs to linguistic
semiology, which is based on the work and thoughts of Ferdinand de Saussure.
Later researchers include e.g. Roman Jakobson, Roland Barthes, and Umberto
Eco. The roots of the theory are found in structuralism. Greimas' model allows
narrative analysis of plot structure and it has been widely applied to e.g. classi-
cal fairy tales. The model provides a new and interesting angle on entrepre-
neurial narratives. We applied Greimas' actantial model to analyze the actants
in the plots. We looked at how different subjects, objects, senders, receivers,
helpers, and opponents are present and act and what kind of roles are played
by the actants when the stories continue. The subject is always the narrator,
i.e. the entrepreneur. The object can be for example fast growth or an initial
public offering. The sender, for example an investor, assigns a task for the sub-
ject and defines the objectives. Often times the sender is also a receiver, the
one who benefits when the task is successfully completed, but there can be also
other receivers such as the entrepreneur or customers. Helpers and opponents
contribute either positively or negatively to completion of the task.

Our main focus is on the helpers and opponents and another binary of non-
helpers and non-opponents that are included in the narratives and have an
effect on identity construction. A more detailed and critical analysis focuses on

the roles of helpers and opponents with a view to understand nuance, agency, and temporality or fluidity. Various helpers and opponents, as well as non-helpers and non-opponents, are categorized in order to gain a clearer picture of who and what they really are. Greimas' semiotic square allows us to shed light on how these actants are related to one another. The results show that helpers and opponents have a significant impact on the narratives and identity work of entrepreneurs. Our study also sheds light on how explanations of success and failure are constructed in the form of (non-)helpers and (non-)opponents and how these constructions differ across the narrative types. Especially the operating environment appears to play an important role in entrepreneurial identity construction in both a positive and in a negative sense. The essay also shows that Greimas' actantial model and the semiotic square are particularly useful when mapping supporting and hindering factors in entrepreneurship.

In addition, Greimas tests are applied in the analysis to see how discursive constructions of actants are present in the narratives. The qualifying, the decisive, and the glorification tests allow us to focus on the temporality and development of the story. For example, the qualifying test could be founding a company with the help of mentors and advisors and thus becoming qualified as an entrepreneur. The decisive test typically means a big battle and overcoming opponent(s), e.g. the company may have financial problems and passing the test requires solving them. Passing the glorification test means external recognition and could take the form of an increase in sales or a buy-out by a bigger player, meaning recognition from clients, colleagues, and the market.

Finally, we demonstrate how narratives are able to shed light on the construction of entrepreneurial identity by analyzing how entrepreneurs narrate their own journeys using four different narrative types: "*Go West," "Cut the Roots," "Develop or Die,"* and *"Pay It Forward."* These narrative types are compelling as they allow us to follow personal entrepreneurial growth stories in a global business environment. *Go West* describes personal growth from ordinary to superior, constructing ambitious and success-driven hero identity, while *Cut the Roots* describes personal growth from local to global, focusing on adherence to Silicon Valley and the adventures experienced. The *Develop or Die* narrative type emphasizes continuous personal growth, learning, and high tolerance of risks and mistakes, while *Pay it Forward* constructs hero identity and draws from helping others or the world. The latter often describes personal growth from mentee to mentor. Systematic analysis of these stories shows archetypal identity constructions and continuous identity work. We argue that these narrative types are not mutually exclusive and can instead be seen as complementary. One entrepreneur may construct several, even contradictory, entrepreneurial identities and use different narrative types in identity work.

By focusing on narratives, the essay sets itself apart from more traditional quantitative research in entrepreneurship. It contributes to the growing research on entrepreneurial identity by suggesting new ideas on the use of narratives in entrepreneurial identity construction and by providing new data on the supporting and hindering factors that entrepreneurs may face during their

entrepreneurial journeys, and why such factors are important to identity. The authors join those who stress the dynamic and contextual character of identity rather than seeing entrepreneurial identity as something fixed and stable. Narrative identity construction is effected by continuously balancing complexity and coherence (Steyaert, 2007). Entrepreneurs use narrative expressions to define who they are and make their famously uncertain entrepreneurial activity easier to manage (Down and Warren, 2008). This essay is unique because it integrates the Greimas' narrative analysis model into the narrative types used in entrepreneurial identity construction. It allows us to identify the roles of different actants and analyze the plots of the narratives. It also provides new implications for how entrepreneurs use narratives to share their experiences and to continually construct their entrepreneurial identities. The four narrative types and their combinations allow us to see heterogeneity in entrepreneurial identity work and entrepreneurial identities, a point of view that has been largely missing in previous studies. There has been a call for better understanding of cultural and spatial aspects of identity construction (Vaara et al. 2016) and this essay fills this gap by shedding light on entrepreneurial identity work in the context of global mobility.

4.2 Essay 2 Constructing a hero identity – Discursive identity strategies in entrepreneurial identity work

The essay was written alone. The paper was presented at the EGOS Conference 2017 in Copenhagen.

Entrepreneurial identity has been studied from many angles such as the content of entrepreneurial identity, identity-related outcomes, and identity construction. This essay focuses on entrepreneurial identity construction and takes critical and micro-linguistic approaches to entrepreneurial identity work – both being angles that have been largely ignored in existing entrepreneurship research.

  Entrepreneurial identities are discursively produced, reproduced, and transformed. Identity work is a dialogic activity (Watson, 2009b) and entrepreneurial identities are as much established in face-to-face interaction as they are (re)produced by an 'external' discourse that is embraced to varying degrees by individuals and may have hegemonic effects (Down and Reveley, 2004). Individual entrepreneurs both reproduce and shape the discourse. We already know that different forms of language can be used in flexible ways to shape identity (Down and Giazitzoglu, 2014). Languages can be seen as menus of discursive resources on which entrepreneurs draw in different ways at different times to achieve particular purposes (Watson, 1995) or to build their identities (Down and Warren, 2008). However, our understanding of the discursive and linguistic means through which entrepreneurial identities are constructed, legitimated, maintained and changed is underdeveloped. This essay aims to fill this gap.

The data of the essay consist of 43 semi-structured interviews of Finnish entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley. The data analysis was conducted by coding the data into different categories, emphasizing continuous dialogue between theory and data. As the analysis was iterative, the categories developed as the work proceeded. Typical of interviews, some aspects of entrepreneurship were emphasized, often including strong expressions and figures of speech, while others were mentioned without involvement of specific emotion or strong opinion. By looking for especially strong expressions, I tried to find those elements that were most important and meaningful for the entrepreneurs interviewed at the time of the interviews and can be seen as important for their entrepreneurial identity.

The results suggest that entrepreneurs use several, often overlapping, but sometimes contradictory discursive identity strategies to build, maintain, and revise hero identity. They actively "plot" themselves (O'Connor, 2002) as heroes, using a variety of linguistic devices. Entrepreneurial identity is seen here as complex, dynamic, and emergent. The entrepreneurs are likely to construct multiple constantly developing entrepreneurial identities, which can be incompatible with each other or even in conflict (Chasserio et al., 2014). Five different discursive identity strategies are defined, highlighting the constitutive and constructive nature of language. Each of the discursive identity strategies is illuminated in relation to the main elements, linguistic devices used, hero constructions, and implications for social processes. A variety of quotes from the interviews are provided in order to help readers to follow the reasoning and obtain real examples of the language use. In addition, the masculine underpinnings of each strategy are discussed. This approach allows me to make visible and challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions in entrepreneurship and pay attention to the important role of language in identity work.

The rationalization strategy relies mostly on capitalistic-rationalistic ideology and justifies entrepreneurs' actions by for example constructing necessity and authority positions. The broader framing strategy draws mainly from altruism and ethics and links the entrepreneurs or their work to a broader context. Hero identity is constructed by claiming societal impact, using expressions such as "change the world". The affiliation strategy constructs the entrepreneur in relation to a local peer group in Silicon Valley in terms of sameness, belongingness, and unity, while distancing strategy highlights otherness and distance from corporate employees, non-founders, and entrepreneurs outside Silicon Valley. Anti-identities are constructed especially in relation to Finland and large corporations. Both affiliation and distancing strategies construct and maintain the collective identity of a Silicon Valley in-group, while at the same time marginalizing those who are placed in the out-group. The intensification strategy draws first and foremost from Silicon Valley discourse and is typically combined with other strategies to strengthen them. All of the discursive identity strategies above employ a variety of linguistic devices to construct the entrepreneurial hero identity. In addition to literal language, figures of speech are actively used.

A critical approach is taken to better understand the complexities, ambiguities, and contradictions in entrepreneurial identity work and to examine the context, broader societal discourses and taken for granted assumptions around entrepreneurship. In particular, attention is paid to masculinity in entrepreneurial identity work. While most previous studies on gender and entrepreneurial identity work focus on female entrepreneurs dealing with masculine norms of entrepreneurship, this study examines how male entrepreneurs produce and reproduce masculinity and strengthen societal power structures. This often ignored angle adds to our understanding of how the dominant view of entrepreneurship is formed and explicates the constraining factors for women (see Bjarnegård, 2013). Masculinity is (re)produced for example by using hero metaphors and similes such as James Bond and NHL players. The discursive identity strategies legitimize the actions of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship and strengthen the power position of the interviewees in relation to co-founders, employees, stakeholders, and "ordinary" people.

In all, the essay makes a theoretical contribution by extending our understanding of entrepreneurial identity work. In particular, it shows how different discursive identity strategies are used to build and maintain entrepreneurial hero identity and sheds light on the use of various linguistic devices such as metaphors, metonymies, similes, and hyperboles in entrepreneurial identity work. It also contributes to identity research in general by showing the important role of language and illuminating the use of various linguistic devices. In addition, the essay focuses on the ideological underpinnings of entrepreneurial identity work.

4.3 Essay 3 Entrepreneurial opportunity as fiction: An analysis of discursive practices in entrepreneurs' narratives

This essay was co-authored with Paul Savage, Henrika Franck, and Eero Vaara. Earlier versions of the work were presented at the EGOS Conference 2015 in Athens and the EGOS Conference 2017 in Copenhagen.

This essay focuses on how entrepreneurs see and express entrepreneurial opportunity. For years, the origin of entrepreneurial opportunities has been one of the most debated questions in entrepreneurship research. Following Garud and Giuliani (2013), we approach entrepreneurial opportunity through a narrative lens. We participate in the ongoing debate by studying how entrepreneurs speak about themselves and their environment, thereby indicating their own agency in constructing entrepreneurial opportunity. We put attention on the nature of opportunities, not as ontological objects, but rather as a kind of heuristic – a tool for making sense of circumstances, people, or materiality. Vaihinger (1924) views fictions as mental structures that help us interpret our world. We go beyond that and apply the literary theory of Wolfgang Iser (1993) to explore entrepreneurial opportunity as fiction. In particular we focus on discursive practices used to produce the fiction.

Narratives are often seen as either factual or fictional (Schaeffer, 2009), emphasizing variations of the "true – not true" dichotomy (Ryan, 2007). However, we argue that fictional narratives combine the given world with an imagined future. Narratives as such can be seen as fictions (Ricoeur, 1995). They are detached from the real to which they refer in the sense that the words used are not the object itself (Iser, 1993; Ricoeur, 2010; Walton, 1990). Narratives around opportunity serve a purpose beyond what actually happened, typically also touching what could have happened in the past or what could happen in the future. Our perceptions of both desires and capabilities are connected to reality, but only loosely (Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990). Entrepreneurial stories can be based on actual historical facts and nonetheless be fictional (Popp and Holt, 2013). The opportunity is not a past or present reality, but a possible future among many. On the other hand, fictions always say something about reality – about how it could be, should be, or we desire it to be.

Drawing from Iser's (1993) triad of the real, the fictive and the imaginary, we analyzed the data to find representations of these in the narratives. Iser sees the fictive as an attempt to get the imaginary into action to make an impact on the real. The term imaginary can be used to describe a process whereby the reader or listener comes to understand what the fiction is saying about the real world and the fictive has effects on the real. It serves a purpose, illustrates an attitude, or is the outcome of experience. The real world is constructed and reconstructed by productive fictions – stories that produce effects in the real world.

Our aim was to better understand how the fictive and the imaginary function in entrepreneurs' narratives to shape something in the real world. In our data, we identified three discursive practices: tropes, replotting, and counterfactuals. These illustrate the ways in which discursive practices serve in creating the fictive into an understandable form. We studied key questions, key elements, tensions, and key aspects of imaginary related to each discursive practice. We also illuminated implications of discursive practices in terms of legitimization of entrepreneurial activities and implications for entrepreneurial identity. One interview typically included several discursive practices.

Our paper makes four key contributions. First, we add to existing understanding of entrepreneurial opportunity by conceptualizing it as fiction. We show how narratives on entrepreneurial opportunity are built upon the real, the fictive and the imaginary, of which the latter is a program of reflection on the real. The narrative and literary perspectives permit us to see how entrepreneurial opportunity is both real and fictive (Garud and Giuliani, 2013) and the chosen approach adds to a better understanding of how entrepreneurial opportunities form. Second, we define three discursive practices and their subcategories and show how they are used to construct and shape an abstract fiction linguistically and cognitively. Our analysis reveals the important and multi-faceted role of language in forming entrepreneurial opportunities. Producing their abstract and fictional ideas into a linguistic form allows the entrepreneurs to share the entrepreneurial opportunities with others and to process them further. Third, we add to existing understanding of entrepreneurial iden-

tity by identifying implications and tensions of the discursive practices. Fourth, we show how literary theory and Iser's triad of the real, the fictive, and the imaginary can be applied beyond literary to better understand entrepreneurship.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The essays of this dissertation contribute to partly different streams of literature, but as a collection they help us to better understand how entrepreneurial identity is constructed and maintained. The aim of this collection of essays is also to show how discursive and narrative approaches can provide rich insights into entrepreneurial identity work. Entrepreneurial identity work is analyzed from three different angles to provide a contribution with both depth and width.

Although entrepreneurial identity has been studied from both role identity and social identity perspectives, our understanding of entrepreneurial identity and identity work has remained underdeveloped (e.g. Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Donnellon et al., 2014; Leitch and Harrison, 2016). A better understanding of the key elements in entrepreneurial narratives can provide new insights in entrepreneurial identity construction. However, comparatively little research exists on the role of language and narratives in the dynamic processes of entrepreneurship due to the fact that entrepreneurship research has traditionally relied on quantitative methods. Especially micro-linguistic research has been largely ignored in the field of entrepreneurship. We lack understanding of the constructive and constitutive role of language in the context of entrepreneurial identity work. In addition, there has been a call for more critical research on entrepreneurial identity (e.g. Hamilton, 2013; Ogbor, 2000; Warren, 2004; Kašperová and Kitching, 2014; Gill, 2013; Verduijn and Essers, 2013; Chasserio et al., 2014; Tedmanson and Essers, 2016).

On the other hand, the discovery perspective has dominated entrepreneurial opportunity research and even though in recent decades there has been a more versatile debate on the topic, more focus has been put on the role of agent and creation (see e.g. Alvarez et al., 2010) and different approaches have been combined (e.g. Garud and Giuliani, 2013), studies on fiction as a possible driver for entrepreneurial opportunities have been largely missing. As a result, little is known of the dynamics of fictional narratives and their relationship to entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial identity work.

In this dissertation, narrative analysis and critical discursive analysis are used to analyze entrepreneurs' narratives. Narratives reflect entrepreneurs' idealized views of self and also provide means to bridge the "here and now" with the broader sociopolitical context within which entrepreneurs make sense of self (see Angouri, 2016). Entrepreneurial identity work is situated (e.g. Foss, 2004) and complex (e.g. Anderson and Warren, 2011; Steyaert, 2007) in na-

ture. This work focuses on Finnish startup entrepreneurs in the context of Silicon Valley, a multicultural startup hub. It allows us to follow the personal growth stories and entrepreneurial identity work of the entrepreneurs in the context of global mobility as well as to identify factors that impede and support entrepreneurs during the course of their journeys – an aspect that has been largely overlooked in previous studies.

This collection of essays shows how entrepreneurial identity is constructed more or less consciously with a variety of narratives, discourses, and linguistic devices. Studying the same data from different perspectives and using different qualitative methods allows us to form an in-depth understanding of entrepreneurs' on-going identity work. The results show that legitimation of the entrepreneurs' own activities and entrepreneurship in general form an important part of identity work. The Silicon Valley discourse is actively used when constructing entrepreneurial identity and the findings also include the in-groups, out-groups, and anti-identities constructed by the entrepreneurs in their narratives. The results also show the ideological underpinnings and tensions of entrepreneurial narratives.

Overcoming the limitations in the methodology and scope of previous research, the dissertation offers several insights into entrepreneurial identity work and entrepreneurial opportunity creation in Silicon Valley startup context. After discussing the key contributions in more detail, implications for practitioners and educators as well as further research are discussed.

5.1   Theoretical implications

The current dissertation suggests that entrepreneurs continuously construct, maintain, and shape their identities in and through discourse and describes entrepreneurial identity work as a much more complex, dynamic, and heterogeneous phenomenon than many previous studies. It contributes to the entrepreneurial identity research in five ways. First, it addresses the discursive dynamics in entrepreneurship by taking a discursive approach on entrepreneurial identity work. Previous research tells us that discourses, storytelling, and narratives are important part of identity construction (Anderson and Warren, 2011; Boje and Smith, 2010; Donnellon et al., 2014; Fletcher and Watson, 2007; Harmeling, 2011; Hytti, 2005; Johansson, 2004; Rae, 2005; Steyaert, 2007; Watson, 2009; Wry et al., 2011). The current dissertation adds to this understanding by providing new insights on the identity work of entrepreneurs in the context of global mobility through critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis. I approach language not only as communicative tool, but as the very arena, where entrepreneurial identity is constructed and legitimated. Entrepreneurial identity is created and maintained in interaction with others, and this process is inherently linked to social categories, issues of power, and certain ideological underpinnings, since different entrepreneurial identities serve different interests and purposes.

The current dissertation shows how certain structures are repeatedly used in entrepreneurial narratives and provides a frame of reference for structural

narrative analysis, which allows us to identify crucial elements in entrepreneurial narratives. Familiar formats serve as powerful tools for constructing not only compelling stories, but also entrepreneurial identities. This dissertation provides also a micro-linguistic approach to identity work, an approach that has been largely missing in existing research. It helps us to see how entrepreneurs use language flexibly and purposefully to achieve certain aims and identity outcomes. It provides scholars a new lens through which identity work can be viewed not only as an attempt to strike a balance between broader discourses, social expectations, and individual identity tensions, but as active identity construction with various linguistic devices. In all, this dissertation adds to our understanding of the constructing and constitutive role of language (see e.g. Phillips and Oswick, 2012; Vaara et al., 2016) in entrepreneurial identity work.

Second, analysis of entrepreneurial identity narratives sheds light on entrepreneurial growth stories and the various actants that play an important role in entrepreneurial identity work. Applying Greimas' actantial model allows us to take an action-based approach to identity, where the role of different actants is revealed and identity development can be followed. Analysis of tests allows us to see ups and downs in entrepreneurial journeys, highlighting the complex and continuously evolving nature of entrepreneurial identity work. Based on our results, there are multiple actants that can either support or hinder the entrepreneurial journey. Systematic analysis allows us to see the variety in helpers and opponents as well as non-helpers and non-opponents ranging from entrepreneur's own attitudes to others' advice and general atmosphere. Our study shows that temporality is crucial in this type of analysis; the roles of different actants change over time and helpers, such as co-founders or one's own attitude, can become opponents or vice versa. Study of helpers and opponents is useful, because it can help us to better understand how entrepreneurial successes and failures are experienced and explained, and thereby answers some of the most essential questions regarding entrepreneurship.

Third, my analysis provides a critical perspective on entrepreneurial identity work, allowing us to focus on the (re)production of certain discourses and ideologies. The discourses on entrepreneurship are often hegemonic and problematic (e.g. Da Costa and Saraiva, 2012), and this dissertation allows us to explore the complexity of entrepreneurial identity work. In particular, my findings show how the hero identity is constructed. This dissertation raises important questions of inclusion and exclusion (see e.g. Jones and Spicer, 2009) and ideological underpinnings of entrepreneurial identity work. On the basis of my findings, entrepreneurs construct an exclusive in-group identity in their narratives. The right kind of entrepreneur appears to be constructed in terms of founder role in Silicon Valley and heroism, including financial success and rationalism, societal impact, and masculinity. Anti-identities (see Svenningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2009b) and out-groups are constructed to distance entrepreneurs and their in-group from others, in this case typically from Finland and large corporations. This type of categorization and identity work can also serve as a tool for entrepreneurs to justify their choices to them-

selves and to others. The results support Gill's (2014) findings on how entrepreneurial discourse works to restrict legitimate entrepreneurship to privileged groups and other 'lesser' or non-entrepreneurs.

My study strengthens the understanding that the notions of entrepreneurship are masculine in nature (e.g. Ahl, 2004; Hamilton, 2013; Hamilton, 2014; Smith, 2010; Radu and Redian-Collot, 2008; Ogbor, 2000). While notions of femininity were mostly absent in interviews, the masculine ideal was taken for granted, and masculinity was produced and reproduced through repetitive use of certain linguistic devices such as the NHL and James Bond metaphors and similes. The dominant group, male entrepreneurs, has often remained unexamined in research of gender and entrepreneurship (Hamilton, 2014; Down and Giazitzoglu, 2014; Smith, 2010). My study fills this gap by showing how male entrepreneurs construct their identity and (re)produce masculinity. In order to understand male dominance in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial discourse it is crucial to analyze how current dominant discourse is formed.

Fourth, fiction is presented as a useful concept relevant to the debates focusing on the origin of entrepreneurial opportunities and the construction of entrepreneurial identity. Fictional narratives and their implications for entrepreneurial identity work are a relatively unknown area of research. We show how entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial identities are constructed in the liminal space between the fictive and the real.

We illustrate three different discursive practices that build a bridge between the fictive, the real, and the imaginary. Special attention is placed on the tensions related to them, the legitimation efforts, and the implications for entrepreneurial identity. This work shows how language allows entrepreneurs to combine real world experiences with the fiction on what could be or could have been. Such narratives not only tell us something about opportunities, but also about the entrepreneur in question. Language is used, intentionally or not, to construct a convincing entrepreneurial identity, to justify one's own activities, and to construct new meanings and a coherent story line. The narratives can also be influential, thereby changing the trajectory of events that unfold, which in turn may alter the startup organization or reproduce the status quo (Vaara et al., 2016).

Fifth, this study sheds light on the cultural and spatial aspects of entrepreneurship, which is an underdeveloped area of research and can be studied with discursive and narrative approaches (see Vaara et al., 2016). There has been some interest in the role of 'place' and spatial dimension in entrepreneurial identity work (Larson and Pearson, 2012; Gill and Larson, 2014), but for example many aspects of global mobility are still unknown (Chrysostome and Lin, 2010), including how entrepreneurs construct their identities when adjusting to a new country. These aspects are increasingly relevant in today's global business environment, which includes many innovative regions, such as Silicon Valley that attract startup entrepreneurs from all over the world (see Lippmann and Aldrich, 2016). The experiences and successes of entrepreneurs in these regions are of significant economic, political, and societal interest.

This study takes into account the situated nature of entrepreneurial identity work and provides new insights into existing discussion by examining how e.g. discourses of Silicon Valley and the American dream are enacted and reproduced in narratives and discourses of individual entrepreneurs. At the same time the entrepreneurial discourse in Silicon Valley continues to recreate the identity and purpose of the place (see McKeever et al., 2015). According to this study, Finnish entrepreneurs strive to build and maintain a strong Silicon Valley identity constructed around heroism. The entrepreneurs take distance from Finland by e.g. strongly criticizing the Finnish system, culture, and atmosphere and constructing anti-identities. Regardless of their immigrant status most entrepreneurs interviewed for this study narrate themselves as being part of local in-groups and free from othering in their new home country, unlike immigrant entrepreneurs in some other studies (see e.g. Essers and Tedmanson, 2014; Ozkazanc-Pan and Muntean, 2016). In general, cultural and place-related experiences were used as an essential resource in the entrepreneurial identity narratives of this study.

5.2   Practical implications

The societal implications of startup entrepreneurship make entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial opportunities subjects of general and political interest. In the light of recent interest in startups, it is crucial to understand how the construction of positive entrepreneurial identities can be supported and how new entrepreneurial opportunities are formed. Entrepreneurial identity can be also considered a topical field of study because of changes in working environments and public discussion (Gill, 2013). Careers spanning decades within the same organization are becoming less common and many people work on a project basis as entrepreneurs or self-employed freelancers or in different networks (Barley et al., 2017). This development is supported by several global trends including digitalization and increased opportunities for telecommuting. The current dissertation highlights the proactive role of agents in constructing entrepreneurial identities and creating entrepreneurial opportunities instead of merely passively responding to changes in the context. The results may help current or future entrepreneurs or those training or working with entrepreneurs to better understand different expectations, opportunities, challenges, aspirations, and identity conflicts possibly experienced by startup entrepreneurs in their journeys.

This dissertation makes four practical contributions. First, the current dissertation challenges us to pay further attention to language use and dialogue with others. This is especially relevant in Finland, where communications and marketing skills have often remained overlooked, although they have great relevance in today's business context, in which tasks and challenges are often rather abstract and intangible. Entrepreneurial work is unpredictable, relationship-oriented, and fluctuating (Alvesson, 2001) and entrepreneurial narratives are subject to continuous construction (Leitch and Harrison, 2016). In startups strong track records are often missing and thus what is "claimed"

plays an important role in constructing legitimacy (see Navis and Glynn, 2011). Entrepreneurial narratives are important tools in the current global and networked business environment as the agents negotiate themselves but also their businesses. Entrepreneurs need good communications skills in pitching to customers and investors, in building legitimacy, and in positioning themselves or their companies in relation to others in a highly competitive market. Based on my findings, many Finnish entrepreneurs consider communications and marketing skills as their weaknesses in Silicon Valley, partly because of cultural differences. The current dissertation draws attention to a variety of narrative types as well as discursive strategies and practices, which may provide some ideas and useful tools for startup entrepreneurs. In all, this study highlights the essential role of language use and communications as well as emphasizes their importance in the contexts of startup entrepreneurship and global mobility.

Second, the results show that startup entrepreneurs face multiple challenges during their journeys. These challenges range from cultural differences, to difficulties in getting funding, and interpersonal relations. Learning from the experiences of others can hep new entrepreneurs or those planning to internationalize their startup companies. For example, startup companies are not necessarily very well established and especially young startup entrepreneurs often lack experience of both entrepreneurship and of Silicon Valley as an operating environment, which may lead them to seek and to be more dependent on external help and advisors. However, as this dissertation shows, sometimes important helpers, such as consultants, co-founders, and employees, can turn out to be opponents and cause major conflicts. Thus special attention needs to be paid in selecting partners, co-founders and employees, which is particularly challenging in a new environment. Many startups have faced problematic legal issues, which could have been avoided by better founder agreements and contracts. In all, the results shed light on the challenges and obstacles experienced by startup entrepreneurs, the role of helpers or supporting factors, but also the role of opponents or hindering factors. The findings can be useful for any entrepreneur or startup organization, and especially for those planning to expand their operations to Silicon Valley.

Questions on how to support entrepreneurship and to break down the barriers to it are topical in many societies, which strive to support international high-growth entrepreneurship. Systematic analysis of the supporting and hindering factors in entrepreneurial narratives can provide some important and interesting research-based insights for this broader societal discussion by identifying the helpers and opponents experienced by entrepreneurs themselves. This study also sheds some light on what makes Silicon Valley such an attractive place for startup entrepreneurs. The findings indicate that reasons go beyond market size and opportunities for growth. The findings of this study suggest that in Silicon Valley, entrepreneurial identity and belonging to a group of entrepreneurs form an important source of pride and self-esteem for individual entrepreneurs. Even though Silicon Valley cannot be copied, results can be relevant for communities that actively promote startup entrepreneur-

ship. This is particularly relevant in Finland, where high growth entrepreneurial activity has traditionally lagged significantly behind most European and all other Scandinavian countries, despite the country's significant investments in R&D (Autio, 2009).

Third, the findings on discourses and narratives in the liminal space between fictive and real illuminate new aspects for using language in order to enhance both personal and company development efforts. Fictional narratives allow us to start from what someone wants to do or fix in this world, which may be crucial in terms of motivation and commitment. New possibilities become imaginable through a process of boundary crossing. Elements of real, fictive, and imaginary are used, consciously or not, to construct new opportunities, entrepreneurial identities, and legitimacy in our everyday narratives. Fictional narratives could be used more actively also as a development tool for different purposes. For example, fictional narratives on customer journeys could be helpful in gaining customer empathy and better understanding current and future customer needs. Purposeful use of fictional narratives may free entrepreneurs and others from rational focus on limitations and allow them to think anew and more creatively, which may be crucial in terms of constructing fresh ideas. Narratives are useful also in terms of communication and collaboration. When inner thoughts and new ideas take linguistic form (see Cornelissen and Clarke, 2010), they can be shared, discussed, and further developed with others.

Finally, this dissertation also draws attention to the reproduction of masculinity in organizations and entrepreneurship. Although often unconscious and unintentional, discursive production of masculinity hinders gender equality and women empowerment. It can also result in unwanted consequences, whether related to organizational culture or external reputation. Excluding talk and behavior, such as all-male panels, can easily draw negative attention in both social and traditional media. This study shows the power of language and hopefully helps entrepreneurs to be more aware of their communicative choices including their possible impacts.

Empirical evidence of masculinity in and around entrepreneurship raises some important questions also related to political decision-making and everyday practices in families, schools, and higher education. While this study does not provide answers on how female and more heterogeneous entrepreneurship could be better supported, it illustrates how both masculinity and femininity can play a role in discourses, painting a more nuanced picture of entrepreneurship. For those attempting to support gender equality, it is crucial to see the whole picture, including nuances. This study focuses on representation of in-groups and out-groups and sheds light on the power of language to unite and divide people. Although it concentrates on a small group of entrepreneurs in a certain setting, entrepreneurial discourse has an important influence on societal values and norms beyond business context.

All of the above have implications for how entrepreneurs are trained. Dialogue with others is increasingly important in today's global business environment. The construction of a strong entrepreneurial identity is a critical part

of developing entrepreneurial competency (Donnellon et al., 2014, 496). En-trepreneurial identity is not only about "who I am", but also about "who I want to be" (see Powell and Baker, 2014) and thus it can have important implica-tions in setting targets and taking action. Through finding tools and frame-works to better understand entrepreneurial identity construction, educational institutions may be better able to encourage and help students aiming at en-trepreneurial careers or nascent entrepreneurs in developing their entrepre-neurial competency. This is especially important in Finland, where the relative absence of high-growth entrepreneurship has been explained by cultural issues and insufficient experience (Autio, 2009). High growth entrepreneurship often requires internationalization. In addition to facing differences between operat-ing environments, entrepreneurs may experience identity tensions and con-flicts. Entrepreneurial training should address cultural and societal tensions to support entrepreneurial efforts in the global context. Finally, human beings tend to understand events and experiences in the form of narratives. Thus learning from the narratives of others can give students an understanding of what it takes to become and be entrepreneurial and to internationalize one's business. Constructing personal narratives and a critical self-reflection can allow nascent entrepreneurs to gain greater benefits from their experiences (Aldrich and Yang, 2012). In conclusion, one of the most valuable contribu-tions of entrepreneurship education and training could be offering students tools for their entrepreneurial identity work.

5.3 Limitations

In discursive and narrative studies, the influence of researchers on the process cannot be avoided. All interviews of this study were carried out at the initiative of the research group and were based on topics and questions chosen by the researchers. A semi-structured interview outline was used to make sure that the same main themes were discussed in all the interviews. Broad, open-ended questions were used to let interviewees tell their stories in their own words and researchers tried to avoid expressing their own thoughts or opinions during the interview. In the co-authored essays of this dissertation, categorization and findings were discussed and agreed upon between members of the research group. However, the researchers' own experiences and stories are unavoidably present in the data collection and analysis (Fletcher, 2007; Gartner, 2007), hence leaving room for personal interpretation.

Because of the nature of language, discourses and narratives can never place real events (O'Connor, 2002). As time goes by, it becomes difficult to remem-ber events and the experiences, emotions, and opinions of the interviewees change over time. I realize that in the interviews, stories were told from the interviewees' subjective perspective and other people, such as co-founders or employees, could have narrated the same events differently. As a researcher, I cannot know for sure that the stories told in the interviews are true or whether they have been modified. Moreover, one interview can never capture all entre-preneurial experiences. Although researchers asked certain questions, it was

up to the interviewees to decide what events and aspects were included in the interviews. Social and cultural norms and the assumptions of the interviewees regarding the researchers' expectations and interests all affect the stories told. Although full anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed to all interviewees and many entrepreneurs also clearly shared confidential information, it is possible that some interviewees decided not to do so. In general, I am conscious that while focusing on life/career stories, there is a danger of over-privileging the role of narratives in human lives, so-called 'narrative imperialism' (Phelan, 2005; Watson, 2009, 428). I understand that narratives do not cover everything. On the other hand, as Watson (2009, 429) points out, narratives and stories play their part in our lives, regardless of whether we are particularly aware of it. They also provide an interesting lens for researching social phenomena, although through some other lens the view could be different.

As is typical for exploratory research, this study does not provide causal explanations or normative recommendations. Although I believe it provides some interesting insights in entrepreneurial identity work, there are some significant limitations in generalizability of the findings of this study. Firstly, the number of interviews in this study is limited because the size of our target group was small. In addition, our main purpose was to collect rich qualitative data to allow deep qualitative analysis rather than generalizability. Secondly, the interviewees of this study represented a rather homogenous group (white, Finnish, mostly male high-tech entrepreneurs). The experiences of these Finnish startup entrepreneurs can be very different from e.g. those of entrepreneurs from other countries due to cultural and societal differences. Thirdly, Silicon Valley as a place has its specific history and culture. Despite certain similarities, other startup hubs, such as Tel Aviv or London, are likely to have their own unique features. The differences can be expected to be much bigger in other type of contexts, such as rural areas.

Most of the interviews in this study were carried out in Finnish, although some Finnish entrepreneurs were interviewed in English by one of the authors, who is a native English speaker. Finnish was translated into English when representing the results. Although we did our best to keep all of the nuances and meanings, some of them were unavoidably lost in translation. In addition, we were unable to use quotes with e.g. Finnish phrases that cannot be translated in English. That being said, translating challenges did not impact the initial analysis, which was conducted in the original languages.

5.4   Implications for further research

To really understand entrepreneurship and experiences of individual entrepreneurs, it is important to study entrepreneurial narratives and discourses. This approach allows us to get rich insights in entrepreneurs' everyday world of doing and talking and to uncover the various ways in which entrepreneurial identities are constructed. The current study aims to shed light on use of discourses and narratives in entrepreneurial identity work. However, there is plenty of room for further research to elaborate on the polyphonic and multi-

faceted nature of entrepreneurial narratives and their use in entrepreneurial identity construction. As the current work and also previous studies (e.g. Vaara et al., 2016) show, discursive and narrative approaches can reveal ideological underpinnings. It is important to uncover entrepreneurs' interactional constitution of certain ideas and social categories, everyday legitimation efforts, and related power effects. Further research is needed to get better and more nuanced understanding on entrepreneurs' use of language and to pay attention to the ideological underpinnings and what they result in entrepreneurial activities.

This dissertation suggests that entrepreneurial identity and new venture identity are intertwined. Further research would be needed to study similarities and differences between individual startup entrepreneurs' narratives and organizational narratives and what are the implications for the respective identities. There is also a need for further studies on how legitimacy is constructed on both organizational and individual levels.

We already know that multiple discourses are used in entrepreneurial identity work (e.g. Watson, 2009b) and this dissertation supports this notion. The dissertation sheds some light on the linguistic devices used in entrepreneurial identity work, but is limited to a certain context and a fairly small number of entrepreneurs. Further research would be needed on the use of different linguistic devices in different settings and different narratives. In addition, we do not know much about when, why, and how entrepreneurs change from one discursive identity strategy or linguistic device to another in making sense of their identity for themselves and for others. For example, formal literal language may change to informal figurative language or hero metaphors may be replaced by emotional talk. Focusing specifically on shifts in language use could give us new insights into development of entrepreneurial identity.

The narratives and identity talk can be strengthened or enhanced by a wide variety of additional semiotics, such as visuality (Boje and Smith, 2010), the role of the body and embodied non-linguistic practices (Kašperová and Kitching, 2014), and the use of artefacts or dress codes (Ybema et al., 2009). However, there may be major cultural differences in what is appropriate and effective. For example, in Silicon Valley a very casual dress code is common among entrepreneurs, while in England a more formal dress code is preferred (see Giatzitzoglu and Down, 2017). There is a lack of research on additional semiotics in entrepreneurial identity work in general not to mention their context-situated nature, which limits our understanding of entrepreneurial identity work as a whole. Future research will hopefully fill these gaps.

This study sheds light on the identity work in the context of global mobility by focusing on Finnish startup entrepreneurs in the Silicon Valley startup hub. Taking into account the major economic and political interests related to new innovations, startup entrepreneurship, and international startup hubs, further research would be needed on identity work in the context of global mobility to validate results of this study and to bring into discussion also new insights. A better understanding of startup entrepreneurship and global mobility is important as many startup hubs attract entrepreneurs globally and form signifi-

cant ecosystems. In today's business context, the national and international moves of startup entrepreneurs cannot be called a marginal phenomenon.

Entrepreneurial identity can have an important impact not only on what we aim to achieve in future (Leitch and Harrison, 2016), but also on actual entrepreneurial opportunities. However, current studies do not provide many answers to questions on how entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial opportunities may interact. This dissertation provides some preliminary ideas on discursive practices around entrepreneurial opportunities and related implications for identity. However, there is much room for further studies. One of the interesting questions for future research could be how entrepreneurial identity construction is linked to exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities.

Because discussion around startup entrepreneurship often includes elements of hype and heroism, I find it important for the study of entrepreneurial identity to continue working from a critical perspective. This provides us with a more balanced view of entrepreneurship. The present study provides only a snapshot of entrepreneurial opportunities and entrepreneurial identity work as each individual was interviewed only once. A longitudinal approach would deepen our understanding on the construction of entrepreneurial identity.

6. References

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Types of entrepreneurial opportunities in literature

Types	Description	Subtypes	Key Authors	Representative Quote
Discovered/ Recognized	The opportunity exists regardless of whether or not a person sees it	Prior knowledge	Shepherd	"Consequently, in this article we explore the relationship between level of prior knowledge and potential financial reward in the identification of opportunities in terms of both the number of opportunities identified and the innovativeness of those opportunities." (Shepherd and DeTienne, 2005, 92)
		Situational	Shane	"However, before technological change results in this process of entrepreneurial exploitation, entrepreneurs must discover opportunities in which to use the new technologies." (Shane, 2000, 448)
			Eckhardt and Shane	"Following Casson (1982) and Shane and Venkataraman (2000), we define entrepreneurial opportunities as situations in which new goods, services, raw materials, markets and organiz-ing methods can be introduced through the formation of new means, ends, or means-ends relationships." (Eckhardt and Shane, 2003, 336)
		Nexus	Dew, Velamuri, and Venkataraman	"These heterogeneous expectations, in turn, lead to the nexus of an individual and an oppor-tunity. Exploiting this opportunity…" (Dew et al., 2004, 662)
			Venkataraman	"Thus, the nexus of opportunity and enterprising individual is critical to understanding entre-preneurship." (Venkataraman, 1997, 123)
		Alertness	Kirzner, Gaglio and Katz	"… does alertness have a direct, mediating or a lack of effect on an individual's ability to identify entrepreneurial opportunities." (Gaglio and Katz, 2001, 109)
			Krueger, Reilly, and Carsrud	"The opportunity identification process is clearly an intentional process, and, therefore, entre-preneurial intentions clearly merit our attention." (Krueger et al., 2000, 411)
			Busenitz and Bar-ney	"The purpose of this study is to further explore differences between entrepreneurs and man-agers in large organizations." (Busenitz and Barney, 1997, 11)
		Cognition / Behaviour	Baron	In sum, basic research on various aspects of human cognition // may add much to efforts to understand how individual entrepreneurs identify viable opportunities for new products and services. (Baron, 2004, 232)
			Chen, Greene, and Crick	"(entrepreneurial self-efficacy) is an individual characteristic that shows signs of being unique to the potential and actual entrepreneur." (Chen et al., 1998, 314)
			Ireland, Hitt, and Sirmon	"Therefore, both opportunity-seeking (i.e., entrepreneurship) and advantage-seeking (i.e., strategic management) behaviors are necessary for wealth creation, yet neither alone is sufficient (Amit & Zott, 2001; Hitt & Ireland, 2000; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000)." (Ireland et

			al., 2003, 965)
Created*		Arenius and Minnitti	"In other words, we argue that, in addition to the variables described above, when making decisions with respect to their employment, individuals also consider a set of subjective perceptions about entrepreneurship that they form based on the presence of role models, confidence in one's skills and ability, risk propensity, and alertness to unexploited opportunities." (Arenius and Minniti, 2005, 233)
	Evolutionary	Buenstorf	"The notion of 'higher-order opportunities' was introduced to highlight that even deliberate entrepreneurial opportunity creation departs from exogenously given conditions." (Buenstorf, 2007, 334)
		Suddaby, Bruton, and Si	"That is, both imprinting and reflexivity share a common assumption that entrepreneurial opportunity emerges as the result of a capacity of some actors (individuals or organizations) to perceive socially embedded schemas in unique and creativeways (although theymay differ in their assumptions about how those socially embedded schemas arose)." (Suddaby et al., 2015, 9)
	Development	Ardichvili, Cardozo, and Ray	"While elements of opportunities may be "recognized," opportunities are made, not found." (Ardichvili et al., 2003, 106)
		Dimov	"Rather than being the deed of a single person, entrepreneurial opportunities encompass a social, learning process whereby new knowledge continuously emerges to resolve the uncertainty inherent to each stage of opportunity development." (Dimov, 2007, 714)
	Construction	Fletcher	"it is possible to argue that the accounts people construct about opportunity emergence are expressions of relationship to the culture, society and the institutions (of capitalism, family, market economy, enterprise discourse) in which they have been reproduced." (Fletcher, 2006, 434)
		Jack and Anderson	"this study shows that in addition to entrepreneurial facilitation, being embedded creates opportunities." (Jack and Anderson, 2002, 484)
		Baker and Nelson	"At the broadest level, our answer to the question "How do you create something from nothing?' is by refusing to treat (and therefore see) the resources at hand as nothing." (Baker and Nelson, 2005, 356)
Opportunities are created	Neo-Austrian	Chiles	"Specifically, this approach suggests scholars pay more attention to two central, but largely neglected, issues in entrepreneurship research: (1) the creation of opportunities through human imagination directed toward an envisioned future, and (2) the exploitation of opportunities through continuous resource combination and recombination." (Chiles et al., 2007, 486)
		Foss and Klein	"Subjectivism gives rise to individual differences in entrepreneurial alertness and judgment, and entrepreneurial judgment allows a firm to create new competitive advantages repeatedly (Mosakowski, 2002)." (Foss et al., 2008, 87)

| Blended | Both discovery and created | Opportunity-focused | Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri, and Venkataraman | *"Our ontological stance in defining an entrepreneurial opportunity in this manner transcends purely subjective and purely objective notions. An opportunity presupposes actors for whom it is perceived as an opportunity; at the same time, the opportunity has no meaning unless the actor/s actually act upon the real word within which the opportunity eventually has to take shape. As is made clear in the rest of the paper, this ontological stance enables us to take a pluralistic approach toward the phenomenon without falling into the mire of naïve relativism."* (Sarasvathy et al., 2003, 143) |
| | | Individual-focused | Alvarez and Barney | *"While it will always be possible to describe the formation of a particular opportunity as an example of a discovery or creation process, these two theories do have important implications for the effectiveness of a wide variety of entrepreneurial actions in different contexts."* (Alvarez and Barney, 2007, 11) |

Appendix 2: Interview guideline

Internationalization
- Tell me briefly, what are you doing in Silicon Valley?
- When and why did you end up here?
- How would you describe your company's internationalization?
- What kind of challenges do organizations face when they go abroad?
- What have you learned when going abroad?
- How would you describe Silicon Valley as an operating environment?
- Is it different from Finland? If so, how?
- What do you think are the most important keys to success in Silicon Valley?

Your own role as an entrepreneur
- When did you become an entrepreneur?
- How and why did you become an entrepreneur?
- What is important for you as an entrepreneur?
- What motivates you?
- How is it like to be an entrepreneur?
- What is needed to be a successful entrepreneur?
- What kind of critical events have happened to you as an entrepreneur?
- Successes? What led to it? What happened then? How did it feel? What did you learn?
- Failures? What led to it? What happened then? How did it feel? What did you learn?

Opportunities / Innovations
- How would you describe the circumstances under which new ideas are born?
- What do you think is crucial / critical when creating an innovation?
- Have you got experience of a successful innovation?
- How about a failed innovation?

Future
- So... what is next for you?
- What are you going to do in five years?

Questions? Comments?
Thank you!

A fast-changing operating environment, continuous striving for new innovations, and the remarkable success stories of the digital era have led us to pay further attention to entrepreneurship. Many traditional businesses have been challenged by innovative startups. To better understand startup entrepreneurship and its premises, we must take a close look at the experiences, views, and motivations of the entrepreneurs themselves. Based on 50 interviews conducted in Silicon Valley, this dissertation investigates the entrepreneurial identity work and personal growth stories of Finnish startup entrepreneurs in the context of global mobility. Taking a discursive approach and using three specific perspectives on the same data, it contributes to a greater understanding of the discursive construction of entrepreneurial identity and sheds light on the complex, nuanced, and dynamic nature of the phenomenon.

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