Capitalism with a conscience? A feminist-informed exploration of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in the UK

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of Bernadette Frances Connors

Beloved Granny, much missed.

Abstract

The academic literature has long noted the position of social entrepreneurship as an under-researched phenomenon. To contribute to the field of gender and social entrepreneurship effectively, this study approached social entrepreneurship as a process enacted within a wider social context which, like gender, was considered to be socially constructed. Whilst gender roles and the gendered division of labour have the potential to significantly, and negatively impact upon social entrepreneurial individuals, the practice of social entrepreneurship, and the development of social enterprise policy, these issues have not been sufficiently addressed in the emergent social enterprise and social entrepreneurship literature, and a substantial gap in knowledge and theory therefore persists.

This thesis will make a contribution to knowledge by exploring the experiences of women social entrepreneurs operating in a variety of sectors, and in different locations across the UK, and applying a critical gender lens situated within a feminist theoretical framework within an under-researched context, that of UK-based social enterprise and social entrepreneurship.

This thesis will offer theoretical contributions by advancing our understanding of the impact of gender of women's social entrepreneurial activities in the UK, through an investigation of the dominant discourses of SE and SEship and their enabling and constraining effects, through the exploration of the women social entrepreneurs' narrative construction of their social entrepreneurial identities, and their understandings of SE and SEship, and through an investigation of the effects of life experience on social entrepreneurial identity formation, and subsequent social enterprise establishment.

As such, this thesis will contribute to the nascent gender and social entrepreneurship literature by highlighting the cumulative, and largely negative, effects of gender on women social entrepreneurs, and the ways in which gendered discourses, expectations, and stereotypes conspire with the 'grand narrative of social entrepreneurship' (Dey and Steyaert, 2010) to threaten women social entrepreneurs' professional and organisational legitimacy. Furthermore, it contributes to the critical feminist entrepreneurship literature by

demonstrating the applicability and transferability of critical feminist theory to the social entrepreneurial context, and the insight that such transfer offers into this emergent area of research. Finally, it contributes to the mainstream entrepreneurship literature through its exploration of the nexus of life experience, values/morality, and social entrepreneurial action, which demonstrates the fundamental way in which values and morality are situated within the women's enactment of SEship through their SEs, and how these emerge as political responses to perceived injustices, in the form of (social) opportunity recognition, and are enacted as 'ethical profit maximisation'.

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List of Abbreviations

CIC	-	Community Interest Company
DTI	-	Department for Trade and Industry
GEM	-	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
KI	-	Key Informant
OTS	-	Office of the Third Sector
SE	-	Social Enterprise
SEA	-	Social Enterprise Activity
SEC	-	Social Enterprise Coalition
SEnU	-	Social Enterprise Unit
SEship	-	Social Entrepreneurship
SEUK	-	Social Enterprise UK
SEur	-	Social Entrepreneur
TEA	-	Total Enterprise Activity
WSE	-	Woman Social Entrepreneur

Acknowledgments

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Purpose of the research

This thesis presents the findings from research undertaken with thirty women social entrepreneurs (SEurs) operating social enterprises (SEs) in the UK, in response to the observed paucity of women-focussed research in this area (Humbert, 2012; Teasdale *et al*, 2011; Treanor and McAdam, 2011). The research seeks to provide evidence of women's lived experiences of SEship as a means of revealing the effects of gender on such experiences, and to provide empirical evidence for the development of new theory that incorporates and validates the views and experiences of women SEurs (Hart and Metcalfe, 2010).

The research also seeks to provide evidence of the gendering of SEship by "key paradigm-building actors" (Nicholls, 2010: 611), alongside an analysis of the effects that this has had on the sector as a whole (its feminisation), as well as on the experiences of individual women SEurs (their attraction to SE, and the prevalent gendered outcomes for practitioners) as a means of exploring the "'brand' image [of] social entrepreneurship both at the societal and individual levels" (Dacin *et al*, 2011: 1209).

1.1 Urgency and relevance of the research

Within research focused on SE and SEship, it has been noted that "[t]here is a dearth of research into women's positions as leaders, initiators, or employees within social enterprises…in the UK" (Teasdale *et al*, 2011: 63), which situation continues to remain problematic a decade after it was first suggested that SE and SEship research would benefit from the inclusion of gender sensitive data (Haugh, 2005). This ongoing omission suggests that research into the emergent SE sector (Di Domenico *et al*, 2010; Shaw and Carter, 2007) is at risk of replicating the androcentricity, and gender-blindness evident within mainstream entrepreneurship research and theorising (Humbert, 2012).

A pertinent example of this type of androcentrism is seen in Levie and Hart's (2011) work, which represents one of the very few studies undertaken within the sphere of SE/non-profit research that openly and deliberately incorporates a

gender/women-focussed component (for other examples see: Bhatt Datta and Gailey, 2012; English and Peters, 2011; Humbert, 2012; Pines *et al*, 2012; Teasdale *et al*, 2011).

Purporting to explore, compare, and contrast issues of "gender, context, and commitment" (Levie and Hart, 2011: 200) within mainstream and social entrepreneurship, the paper drew data gathered from the 2009 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) UK survey, and employed "logistic multivariate regression techniques to identify differences between business and social entrepreneurs in demographic characteristics, effort, aspiration, use of resources, industry choice, deprivation, and organisational structure" (*ibid*.: 200).

As such, the research methodology used fell into the category of positivist approaches to entrepreneurship research that feminists have critiqued for many reasons including its tendency: to perpetuate the constant reproduction (and associated legitimisation) of 'malestream' theories of entrepreneurship (Limerick and O'Leary, 2006: 101), to present and apply the terms 'sex' and 'gender' interchangeably and synonymously (Ahl, 2006; Bourne, 2010; Oakley, 1997; Powell and Greenhaus, 2010) thus rendering invisible the distinction between biological 'sex' and socially constructed 'gender', and to apply a false binary - based on gendered stereotypes and the assumption of an unacknowledged masculine norm of entrepreneurship (Hytti, 2005; Ogbor, 2000; Lewis 2006) - within which "[m]ale and female entrepreneurs are treated analytically as being essentially different between-group and essentially the same within-group...[which] duality reinforces gender stereotypes of entrepreneurs" (Foss, 2010: 88).

The problematic nature of such gender blind (Bruni *et al*, 2004; Carter and Shaw, 2006; Lewis, 2006), positivist research on women (social) entrepreneurs is that the unstated (and unacknowledged) biological essentialist, binary oppositional positions adopted preclude examination of either the socially-constructed, constraining effects of the normative gender-based expectations and stereotypes applied to women within a wider cultural context (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Foss, 2010; Marlow *et al*, 2011), or the gendered access to

socially sanctioned sources of power and prestige (England, 2003) e.g. positions of political power and influence, and gatekeeper roles.

Additionally, the failure to apply a 'lens of gender' approach to the analysis of women-centred data renders the issue of the stereotypical presentation (and attendant theorising) of women invisible and therefore unproblematic (Limerick and O'Leary, 2006), which in turn fails to recognise and acknowledge "sex differences [are often] consistent with gender roles and stereotypes" (Manyak and Wasswa Katono, 2010: 512).

Thus, feminist scholars have suggested that underpinning all gender blind research are unacknowledged beliefs that 'real' entrepreneurship is essentially a male pursuit (Eddlestone and Powell, 2008; Lewis, 2006; Mirchandani, 1999; Phillips and Knowles, 2010; Shaw *et al* 2009; Stevenson, 1990), that male behaviours in entrepreneurial activity constitute the 'norm' (Brush *et al*, 2009; Calàs and Smircich, 1996; Kirkwood, 2009; Marlow *et al*, 2008; Tillmar, 2006) from which women deviate due to their 'unwillingness' to replicate this unstated and unacknowledged masculine norm (Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al*, 2004a; Gatewood *et al*, 2009; Marlow, 2002).

The many interesting and pertinent findings that emerged from Levie and Hart's (2011) study were tempered - from a feminist perspective - by both the gendered stereotypes upon which they were founded (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Baughn *et al*, 2006), and the attendant "fragmented, reductionist explanations" (Sinisalo and Komulainen, 2008: 37) of the complex, dynamic, and socially-embedded phenomenon of entrepreneurship (Bjursell and Melin, 2011; de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Chiles *et al*, 2010: 157; Díaz García and Carter, 2009).

What emerged then, were findings presented as faits accomplis (Gartner and Birley, 2002), such that they were assumed to require no further questioning, analysis, or attention (McAdam and Treanor, 2011). Thus, stereotypical understandings of women as natural caregivers and child carers gave rise to the suggestion that "[m]ore women than men may reject business opportunities that require long hours of work" (Levie and Hart, 2011: 214), and that rather than constraining women, such duties in fact provided opportunities for them "[f]ar from being an obstacle to spotting opportunities for social

entrepreneurship, child-rearing duties are likely to increase the awareness of women to pressing social issues in the community" (*ibid*.: 203).

Furthermore, the assumption of a masculine norm of entrepreneurship, coupled with a stereotypical understanding of women's social entrepreneurial activity as being an extension of their (unpaid) work in the domestic sphere led to the contention that "[w]omen then can be seen as important supporters and indeed drivers (entrepreneurs even) of an expanding non-profit sector as their participation in the economy increases and they prefer to allocate their time and private resources towards these activities" (*ibid.*: 204). In this way, women were cast either in a secondary role as 'supporters' of the non-profit sector, or – and this was deemed worthy of specific (bracketed) note – as '(entrepreneurs even)', a point admirably identified by Humbert and Drew (2012: 6) who notes that:

> "[gender-based] differences are based on expectations about essential qualities.
> Men are inherently seen as being better as business and leadership, while women,
> through their assumed caring nature make good support staff".

Thus, whilst the second example provided evidence of the application of an unacknowledged masculine norm of SEship, "[t]he end result of [which] is that women are cast as "the other" of men…as secondary, as a complement or, at best, as an unused resource" (Ahl, 2006: 604), the first examples showed the pervasive effects of a binary oppositional view of women and men coupled with gender blindness, which "reflects a general presupposition of gender polarity in research" (Harrison and Mason, 2007: 464) and brings to bear significant influence on the research process including the "assumptions, variables, theoretical and measurement models, and methodologies" (Gupta *et al*, 2009: 413) employed.

This in turn encourages the search for, and location of, differences between the genders in research (Ahl, 2006), and precludes the problematising of identified differences found, such that:

> "gender-blindness, while appearing to be progressive, conceals women's continued
> disadvantage, neutralizing gendered experiences which privilege the masculine"
> (Lewis, 2006: 453).

As a result, the effects of gender on the reasons for, and causes of, observed differences in entrepreneurial behaviours and outcomes between women and men are not deemed worthy of exploration, but are instead assumed to be the 'natural' consequence of women's assumed 'lack' of capacity in the entrepreneurial field, as demonstrated by the emergence of the so-called 'female underperformance hypothesis' (Du Rietz and Henrekson, 2000).

The "weak analytical framing and poorly founded assumptions" (Marlow *et al*, 2008: 336) represented by a biologically essentialist, gender-blind approach to entrepreneurship research that has drawn such vigorous critique from feminist scholars in mainstream entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006; Ahl and Nelson, 2010; de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Foss, 2010), cannot be deemed to be any less problematic when transposed to SE research on women. As such, Levie and Hart's (2011) paper typifies all the problematic areas associated with traditional 'malestream' (Ashe and Treanor, 2011; Bendl, 2008; Harrison and Mason, 2007; Parker, 2002) approaches to the study of women's (social) entrepreneurial activity, and can be seen to have fallen resoundingly into the trap of:

> "management research [that] perpetually recycles limited malestream theories which do not speak to or about women, because the gendered nature and patriarchal bases of organisations are either ignored or merely acknowledged and not understood to be of major theoretical and practical consequence" (Limerick and O'Leary, 2006: 101).

In summary, the urgency of this research centres on the two-fold problems of the lack of women-focussed empirical studies of SEship (Humbert, 2012; Teasdale *et al*, 2011; Treanor and McAdam, 2011), and the associated lack of feminist-informed research and attendant theorising of SEship in general.

The exclusion of women's experiences from theory development in SEship research as a nascent and pre-paradigmatic field of study runs to risk of: replicating the "monolithic knowledge" (Ogbor, 2000: 629) evidenced in the mainstream entrepreneurship literature (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Mumby and Putnam, 1992), serves to protect masculine privilege and hegemonic power (Brush *et al*, 2009; Carter and Shaw, 2006; Mavin, 2008), prevents alternative ways of 'seeing' and understanding entrepreneurial behaviours (Hyrsky 1999;

Shaw *et al*, 2009; Shaw, 2010), and leaves the inequalities of the status quo unchallenged (Ashe and Treanor, 2011; Hart and Metcalfe, 2010).

Meanwhile, the lack of feminist-informed research and theorising - including the use of qualitative methods in research (Bruni, 2004) - serves to "legitimate the gender blindness which renders masculinity invisible, and to turn masculinity into the universal parameter of entrepreneurial action" (Bruni *et al*, 2004: 410), whilst the perpetual use of quantitative methods means that important questions that could provide rich and meaningful insights into entrepreneurial activities and outcomes (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Anderson, 2005; Chell, 2007) are simply not asked (Gartner and Birley, 2002).

Thus, following Stevenson (1990: 443) this study sought to address the urgency of these issues by adopting a feminist-informed qualitative approach to the exploration of women's experiences of SEship in the UK:

> "[t]he best way to discover relationships in the world of women entrepreneurs is to interview them and let them explain the relationships".

1.2 Research methodological overview

The research was undertaken through the use of semi-structured interviews (for interview questions see Appendix 2) with thirty women SEurs, owner-managing SEs within the UK. The interviews were largely conducted using Skype – a free to use Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) package – that allowed research participants (and the researcher) to work around work and other commitments as necessary.

The thirty interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and subjected to a manual coding process (for coding and themes see Appendix 1) from which the key themes of the thesis emerged.

1.3 Thesis structure

The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter Two – '*Gender and the subordination of women – feminist theorising, women's work, and entrepreneurship'* provides a discussion of the system of gender, and the ways in which it conspires with discourse to

create women's disadvantage and subordination. The implications for women entrepreneurs of the development of masculine discourses of entrepreneurship is then considered, alongside the issues raised by the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship and its attendant research norms. Finally, feminist scholarship as a tool for the critical evaluation of androcentric theory creation is discussed, and the applicability of specific feminist research methodologies and methods is explored.

Chapter Three – '*SEship literature review: general, critical, and gendered*' provides a discussion of the nascent SE and SEship literature and the emergent areas of concern and contention. It then explores the discursive and rhetorical construction of SE and SEship with a particular focus on governmental and other key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) publications, and finally offers a review of the emergent themes from critical SE/SEship scholarship, and the contentions of gender-focussed scholars with regard to contemporary SE/SEship research and theory-building.

Chapter Four – '*The conceptual framework of the study*' provides an overview of the literatures drawn upon during the conceptual framework developmental stage: the feminist critique of entrepreneurship litertature, and the social entrepreneurship literature. As such, it explains the key emergent themes derived from these two strands of literature, and demonstrates how these were brought together to inform the development of the conceptual framework adopted for this study.

Chapter Five – '*Methodology*' begins with a justification of the feminist methodology adopted for the study, goes on the explore the issues of reflexivity and 'voice' as core components of feminist research, introduces the framework adopted (Low and McMillan, 1988) and its constituent parts, discusses the sample design, adherence to University ethical procedures, and the selection criteria for research participants. It then explains the data collection process – including lessons learned from the Pilot study, and reflections on the strengths and weakenesses of the chosen research

methods – and discusses the data analysis techniques used to reveal the emergent themes presented in the Empirical chapters.

Chapter Six – '*Findings - Political construction of SE: discursive and rhetorical conceptualisations of the 'idea(l)' of SE*' is the first of the three empirical chapters, and opens with an exploration of the development of SE policy under the Labour government (1997-2010), and a review of the emergent academic critique. This is followed by a discussion of the politics of defining SE, alongside an investigation of what has been termed the 'grand narrative of SEship' (Dey and Steyaert, 2010), and an overview of the effects on SE national policy caused by a change of government in 2010. The final section provides evidence of the gendering of SE and SEship by 'key paradigm-building actors', and considers the potentially negative impacts on women of engagement with SE and SEship.

Chapter Seven – '*Findings - SE in practice: articulations of SE and SEship amongst SEurs*' provides a discussion of the ways in which the women SEurs conceived of SE and SEship. It considers the 'core' components of their personal conceptualisations of SE and SEship, and considers the perceived 'stereotype threats' experienced by the women and their SEs. Finally, it explores the ways in which the women reported enacting SEship through their SEs as 'ethical profit maximisation'.

Chapter Eight – '*Findings - SEurial identity, gender, and enacted SE (SEship)*' investigates the links between the women SEurs' life experiences, their values, their SEurial identities, and their visions of success, before exploring the impact of gendered experiences upon SEurial actions both prior to, and post, SE establishment.

Chapter Nine – '*Discussion*' is divided into four discrete parts, the first part of which provides a discussion of: the implications of the policy-driven SE landscape, the problematic nature of the DTI (2002) definition of SE, the ways in which SEship was presented in differently gendered ways to different audiences, and the implications that these issues potentially had for women SEurs specifically, and would-be SEurs more generally.

The second part of the chapter discusses the ways in which the women SEurs' conceptualisations of SE and SEship reflected the DTI (2002) definition, and the ways in which they conceived of it differently, before presenting a discussion of the ways in which the definition failed to assist the SEurs in their work, and the legitimacy threats that were created as a result of the assumptions of an ill-informed public.

The third part of the chapter discusses the ways in which SEurial identity formation was fundamentally influenced by personal, lived experiences, and how these factors affected the ways in which the women SEurs both developed and managed their SEs, and how they negotiated their professional legitimacy within the gendered terrain of their (largely) 'feminine' work.

The fourth and final section of the chapter presents a discussion of the emergent themes, and their inter-connections in relation to the three key texts outlined above. This section also discusses the findings in relation to the wider literature review, paying specific attention to the relevance of the findings to the feminist entrepreneurship, mainstream, and SE/SEship streams of literature, and considers the knowledge gaps identified within those streams as a result of this study.

Chapter Ten – '*Conclusions'* provides a discussion of the contribution made by the key findings from the study, followed by a consideration of their implications for both theory and policy development. The limitations of the study are then explored, and suggestions for future research are made.

1.4 Summary of research aim and objectives

Through the use of semi-structured interviews with women SEurs operating SEs in the UK in the context of an ongoing global economic recession (Conservatives, 2010; Liberal Democrats, 2010), where national public spending cuts persist (Lyon and Fernandez, 2012; SEUK, 2012), this study aimed to explore the contextualised experiences, identities, motivations, values, and visions of success of women SEurs, and evaluated both the extent to which the women's experiences reflected the "optimistic logic" (Steyaert and Dey, 2010: 246) of the claims made within the "grand narrative of SEship" (Dey and

Steyaert, 2010: 85), and the ways in which the women's conceptions and understandings of SE and SEship mirrored (or repudiated) the grand narrative and the definition of SE provided in the DTI (2002) document 'Social enterprise: a strategy for success'.

This aim was addressed through four specific objectives, which were driven by scholarship from the mainstream entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and women's entrepreneurship streams of literature. Each of the four objectives is outlined below, and its development in relation to the literature is explained.

1. A contextualisation of the contemporary social entrepreneurship landscape in the UK

The importance of contextualisation in entrepreneurship research has gained increasing prominence in recent years (Brush *et al*, 2009; Trettin and Welter, 2011), as critiques have emerged of the "dubious mono-factorial explanations" (Zafirovski, 1999: 351) proffered by research premised upon "the concept of *entrepreneur* and *entrepreneurship* [as] limited to the study of personality/psychological characteristics" (Ogbor, 2000: 616).

Building upon Hindle's (2010: 601) assertion that "context has a profound influence upon [entrepreneurial] process", Higgins and Elliott's (2010: 347) theory that "entrepreneurial practices [are] inevitably and inextricably related to socially embedded experiences and relations", Bacq and Janssen's (2011: 391) contention that "the contextual factors in which social entrepreneurship emerged should not be ignored", and Welter's (2011: 165-166) claim that "[c]ontext simultaneously provides individuals with entrepreneurial opportunities and sets boundaries for their actions", the various impacts - both positive and negative - of the macro (national), and meso (local/regional) level socio-political, economic, and geographic environments on the day-to-day (micro) level management of the individual social enterprises by their women owner/managers was explored.

The ability of the elicited data to facilitate comparisons between the issues raised in the mainstream women's entrepreneurship literature, and those experienced by the women research participants, in addition to its capacity for

providing insight into the effects of context on the women's social enterprises studied, served to answer the call for entrepreneurship research that:

> "enhance[s] the comprehensiveness of our explanations for entrepreneurial phenomena and deepen[s] our understanding of the complexities and compromises involved in entrepreneurial processes" (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003: 593).

2. An investigation of the personal construction of social entrepreneurial identity as a process that facilitates SE action, and an investigation of its relationship to lived experience, and personal values

The personal construction of an entrepreneurial identity for women can be seen to be potentially problematic when it is considered that:

> "[p]atriarchy infuses enterprise discourse and practice, with men traditionally taking on the identity of entrepreneur, an identity that is historically located in the symbolic universe of the male and is representative of hegemonic masculinity" (Lewis, 2011: 2).

As discussed previously, within dominant discourses of entrepreneurship, women are cast as 'other' to the masculine norm (Carter and Shaw, 2006; Marlow *et al*, 2008; Ogbor, 2000), and face further challenges to the legitimacy of their entrepreneurial identities by the demands placed upon them by female-ascribed gendered roles whereby:

> "the interweaving of availability for the market and for the family…places adult women with family responsibilities in two systems (that are in fact interdependent though symbolically separate) [which] is a normative model that produces drudgery, coercion, restrictions of time and cleavages of identity" (Bruni *et al*, 2004a: 263).

The conceptual association of normative stereotypes of femininity – for example, that women are naturally caring (Marlow and McAdam, 2012), and relationship-oriented (Bourne, 2010) – with women's unpaid domestic labour, and its extension into the labour market (Bellamy and Rake, 2005; Hughes and Jennings, 2012), underpins both the sex segregation of the labour market (Gupta *et al*, 2009) and the associated gendering of types of work (Marlow, 2002).

With SEship noted to attract women at a far greater rate than mainstream entrepreneurship (Harding, 2006; Levie and Hart, 2011), and the (gendered) association of the 'social' with women (McAdam and Treanor, 2011), the construction of a SEurial identity by women SEurs represents both a challenge and a potential opportunity (Essers and Benschop, 2009), as the masculinity of entrepreneurial discourses is negotiated alongside the (assumed and stereotypically gendered) femininity of the social.

Thus for women SEurs, the construction of a (social) entrepreneurial identity within the boundaries of existing dominant discourses of both womanhood/femininity, and masculinity and entrepreneurship provides the possibility of the creation of alternative, personally meaningful and authentic identities (Lewis, 2011; Parker, 2002) constructed by drawing on the value-adding aspects (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Fenwick, 2002) of the various, but often conflicting, discourses (Hytti, 2005; Jones *et al*, 2008) at their disposal.

3. **An examination of the meaning(s) ascribed to the term 'social enterprise' and 'social entrepreneurship' by the women participants, and an exploration of the effects of the political construction of the same on conceptualisation(s) by practitioners**

Discourses, which are widely accepted, socially constructed ways of understanding, defining, and delineating things, which rather than reflecting reality, "form the object of which they speak" (Foucault 1972: 49) are noted to be "a structuring principle of society, in social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivity" (Weedon, 1997: 41). As such, it is recognised that discourse "is the means by which power is able to circulate throughout the social body, acting to create the objects at which it is targeted in its attempts to regulate them" (Dick and Hyde, 2006: 550).

Thus, far from being politically neutral, discourses are imbued with power (Lazar, 2007) and as such, the control of the development and dissemination of dominant discourses (Lazar, 2007) holds "significant implications…for other field actors who lack power or dominance" (Nicholls, 2010: 612), and implies the delineation of conceptual boundaries, including the delineation of what is legitimate and what is not (Mann and Huffmann, 2005; Shaw, 2010):

> "any consideration of an entrepreneurship paradigm should include an explicit recognition of practitioner and political agenda that potentially influence cognitions about the nature of socio-economic enterprise behaviour and that such influence may operate in subtly influential ways" (Chell, 2007: 14).

This objective therefore sought to consider the ways, and extent to which participants' subjective understandings of SE and SEship might have been influenced by dominant discourses of SE and SEship, including which aspects of such discourses might have been internalised or resisted by the women SEurs, and the reasons for these outcomes.

Furthermore, it sought to examine the fluid nature of the social construction of SE and SEship for participants based on the contention in the IFF (2010:10) report which suggested that "there appears to be movement in the definition of a social enterprise". By so doing, evidence is proffered in response to the call made by Cornelius *et al* (2008: 366) to "enhance understanding of the intersection of personal and organisational social enterprise narratives", which should serve to combat the dissonance and polarisation of "the discourses of protectionists of SEship, who believe without empirical proof that social enterprises are effective, and the opponents or doubters in SEship, who need empirical proof of the effectiveness of social enterprises" (Pärenson, 2011: 39).

Finally, this objective sought to reveal which aspects of SE and SEship discourses were considered meaningful and value-adding to the practitioners, based on the assertion that "finding how practitioners are seeing, talking about and understanding the concept of social enterprise is a key to envisaging and devising contextually appropriate solutions that are sustainable" Seanor *et al* (2011: 14), which should in turn facilitate a more holistic vision of SE and SEship within which:

> "[e]veryone from academics, to policy-makers, to practitioners could move towards theory and practice that better understands and enables approaches that are not 'siloed' but bring *together* and *negotiate* the economic, the social, the personal, and the environment, *not* seeing them as distinct realms" (Westall, 2007: 2).

4. **An exploration of the meanings ascribed to 'success' by the women social entrepreneurs specifically as they relate to life experience, values, and identity**

As noted above, the issue of the unexamined androcentrism of traditional success measures within mainstream entrepreneurship research (Foss, 2010; de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Maxfield *et al*, 2010) has been highlighted within the feminist critique as being problematic on several levels including: the gendered nature of the "measuring instruments [which] may lead to results that confirm hypotheses of differences, even if there are none" (Ahl, 2006: 604), the "essentialist characterisation of women as a group" (Foss, 2010: 92), and the sexist assumptions embodied in the view that "growth firms are considered to be 'serious business', while small and stable firms are branded 'non-serious business'" (Lewis, 2006: 456).

In this way, traditional mainstream entrepreneurship scholarship has perpetually reproduced the androcentric status quo in which "researchers typically look for shortcomings in women entrepreneurs" (Ahl, 2007: 678) premised upon the "embedded and hegemonic assumptions [which] presume that deficit and lack rests within women who fail to assimilate and reproduce masculine norms" (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 544).

The focus then, was on how the women SEur participants in this study conceived of and defined 'success' (and 'being successful'), and what synergies such understandings had with their lives as both SEurs, and as women. The adopted approach offered a way of accessing "refreshing alternative[s] to the 'greater than life' models of entrepreneurship" (Lewis 2006: 456) associated with the dominant, economically rational "heroic white male" (Tedmanson *et al*, 2012: 536) discourses of entrepreneurship, and provided the means by which to gain insight into the nature and influence of gendered life experiences (Bruni *et al*, 2004a; Cliff, 1998; Essers and Benschop, 2009) on the women and their subsequent engagement with social entrepreneurship.

Chapter Two: Gender and the subordination of women – feminist theorising, women's work, and entrepreneurship

2.0 Introduction

This chapter offers a feminist-informed overview of the system of gender as a socially constructed and culturally-condoned system through which male supremacy (and women's attendant subordination) is created and maintained based upon the feminist assertion that there exist:

> "two distinct ways in which societies [continue to] disadvantage women: through discouraging women's participation in stereotypically male activities that are highly rewarded, and through the failure to recognise the contribution of, and thus to value and reward, the activities typically done by women" (England, 1993: xii).

Therefore, aim of the chapter is to explore the ways in which contemporary forms of gender-based subordination manifest, and to demonstrate some of the multiplicity of ways in which attendant gender norms, expectations, and discourses continue to pervade women's lives and limit their opportunities, with particular reference to their earning capacity through labour force participation.

The gendered outcomes of these limitations on women are discussed, and their impacts upon women's entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship are considered. Attention is also drawn to the effects of gendered discourses and stereotypes on the careers of feminist academics specialising in the study of women entrepreneurs. Finally, an exploration is made of the applicability of feminist theory and attendant methodologies to the investigation of women's entrepreneurship, which provides a justification for the research methodologies adopted for this study.

2.1 Contemporary forms of subordination: the relevance of gender in the 21st century

> "[W]hile the legitimacy of patriarchy has been eroded, it is far from being rendered obsolete and the material and institutional structure of patriarchy are still largely intact" (Mavin *et al*, 2004: 294)

In the UK, many of the inequalities historically suffered by women have now been (nominally) addressed through legislation enacted to protect their rights

and autonomy, such as the Married Women's Property Act 1882, Equal Pay Act 1970, Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Sexual Offences Act 2003. However, women and girls continue to experience social, political, and economic subordination relative to men and boys as a result of the ongoing tenacity of the socially constructed and enacted system of gender (Ahl, 2006, 2007; Marlow and McAdam, 2012; Shaw *et al*, 2009).

Understood as a multifaceted system of "widely shared beliefs about characteristics attributed to men and women" (Gupta *et al*, 2009: 398), gender serves to underpin the "androcentric and gender-polarizing social structures [which] have been rationalized and legitimized for centuries by (first) religious and (then) scientific discourses that naturalized both difference and inequality" (Bem, 1994: 99).

As such, gender can be understood as a socially constructed system through which sex-based biological differences between women and men are extended into the social domain (Bradley, 2007) through the deterministic enactment or performance of 'compulsory' femininity and masculinity (Butler, 1990), as a means by which to reinforce the traditional validity of men's dominant status in society (Sjoberg, 2008):

> "gender is that package of expectations which a society associates with each sex [...] So whilst we may be born into a particular sex, we acquire and are socialised into a set of behaviours and characteristics which constitute gender" (Buckingham-Hatfield, 2000: 4).

Gender then, is a hugely complex system (Mooney and Kiguwa, 2009) that facilitates the domination of women by men in a multitude of largely socially invisible and culturally normalised ways (Al-Saji, 2009). In order to begin to explore the complexity of the system, it is important to explicate the ways in which gender reflects and reinforces basic assertions of biological essentialism such that "[t]ogether, sex differentiation and gender differentiation ensure that females differ from males in readily noticeable ways" (Padavic and Reskin, 2002: 4).

The paradigm of difference is replicated in many of social domains, for example, in language (Coates and Pichler, 2011), clothing (Paoletti, 2012), cultural

symbolism (Monk-Turner *et al*, 2008), institutional symbolism (Gherardi, 1995), and work roles (Catterall *et al*, 2006), in support of men's naturalised dominance over women through the employment of three distinct 'gender lenses': "gender polarisation, androcentrism, and biological essentialism" (Bem, 1993: viii).

The three gender lenses identified by Bem (1993) work individually and/or in combination to create social, cultural, and institutional barriers to women's equality (UN Women, 2012). The first, gender polarisation, is a lens that highlights women's difference from men through the construction of gender categories that are relational (Gherardi, 1995), such that one represents what the other is not (Ahl, 2007, Youdell, 2011). Furthermore, it associates the masculine half of the gender binary with normative power and legitimacy so that it appears that "whatever is male, is [also] natural, normal, central, and right" (Nelson, 2004: 12).

The second lens, biological essentialism, serves to justify gender polarisation (Gaunt, 2006), contending that biological differences between women and men – specifically women's reproductive capacity, and men's greater muscle mass – provide embodied evidence of men's 'naturally' dominant position within society (Browne, 2006). In this way biological essentialism conspires with gender polarisation to create an environment of inequality between the sexes, within which both "men's and women's acceptance of inequality [increases]" (Morton *et al*, 2009: 653).

The third, androcentrism, is a modus operandi that positions men's experience as representative of and synonymous with, human experience in general (Basow, 2002). The 'male-as-norm'/'male-as-human' approach results in women's lives and experiences being constructed as 'deviant' (read: non-male) from the unacknowledged male norm, the result of which has been the historical discounting of their social, political, and economic contributions (O'Neill *et al*, 2008), and the attendant invisibity of women's lives (Harding, 1986).

Contemporary forms of women's subordination remain closely linked to the hierarchical organisation of society, which reflect the "distortion of sex difference" (Tyler, 2005: 562), and which focus undue attention on behavioural

(and other) differences between women and men at the expense of similarities/no difference (Ahl, 2006; Ashe and Treanor, 2011; Dalborg *et al*, 2012).

The result is that masculine privilege and hegemonic power are both naturalised and rendered invisible (Ferber and Nelson, 2003; Foss, 2010; Özbilgin, 2009), to the extent that:

> "[h]egemony [becomes] consensual because ideological domination works through a symbolic climate that engineers consent and docility. In essence, women can be said to be enslaved by ideas that cast their subordination as normal, ensuring quiescence" (Hunnicutt, 2009: 561).

The concept of sex difference (Eliot, 2009; Gray, 1992; McKeon, 1995; Pateman and Shanley, 1991) is premised upon a worldview that relies heavily upon the hierarchical, largely binary ontology developed by ancient Greek philosophers (Frankenberry, 2004), and has resulted in the widespread inability of people raised in societies culturally informed by Greek philosophical thought "of thinking not-the-same without assigning one of the terms a positive value and the other, a negative" (Eisenstein and Jardine 1988: xxv).

When 'positive value' is consistently associated with men, masculinity, and maleness (Youdell, 2011), the "chain of phallologocentric intertextuality" (Bendl 2008: S52) that results serves to normalise both male supremacy and female subordination (Alcoff 1988; Mumby and Putnam 1992), and to produce an androcentric ontological framework and attendant bias (Ingaray, 1989) such that knowledge creation (and scientific study) are consistently and unquestionably underpinned by masculinised norms of rationalism, positivism, and individualism (Harding, 1986; 1991).

Feminist scholars critiquing the politics of sex difference research (Ahl, 2006; Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Nelson *et al*, 2009) have therefore contended that "the search for sex differences serves firstly to magnify them, usually to the detriment of women, and secondly to attribute them to biological differences rather than socialization processes" (Carter and Shaw, 2006: 53).

Such 'gender blind' science, which either employs the use of biological sex as a demographic variable (Neergard *et al*, 2011), or posits a universalised, yet

apparently gender neutral, version of masculinity as the norm against women are judged (Bruni *et al*, 2004: 410), therefore positions women as the 'lacking other' (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Heilman, 2012; Wilson and Tagg, 2010) to the unacknowledged male norm.

By so doing, women's 'deviant' behaviours are presented as the cause of observed differences (Marlow, 2002; Nelson *et al*, 2009), thereby suggesting that the remedy for the situation lies in women's emulation of masculine behavioural norms (Bruni *et al*, 2004b; Calás *et al*, 2009; Marlow and McAdam, 2013), through which behavioural change they can be "assisted to become honorary men" (Shaw, 2002: 83).

The impact of "misogynist sexual science" (Leck, 2012: 33), coupled with the androcentricity inherent in wider science and scientific method (Campbell, 2011; Fox Keller, 1995; Longino, 1989) continues to be felt through contemporary discourses of women, which still echo the misogyny of the 'founding fathers' of modern science (Nolan and O'Mahony, 1987), whose co-option of both religious doctrine (Tuyizere, 2007; Wessinger, 1993) and ancient Greek philosophy (Frankenberry, 2004, Le-May Sheffield, 2004) was brought to bear in support of the belief that:

> "privilege, power, and dominance should be granted to men by virtue of the random assignment of biological attributes, [which belief] has been perpetuated by tradition, and reinforced by the intersections of politics, law, and religion" (Ammons, 1999: 1218).

2.2 Gender as an extension of sex difference

The maintenance of hegemonic masculine power and the continued subordination of women are constantly (re)produced through the system of gender (Foss, 2010; Mavin, 2008), which in its simplest form can be understood as being:

> "the socially constructed differences between being feminine and being masculine…which gender differences are to be understood as a central feature of patriarchy, a social system in which men have come to be dominant in relation to women" (Holmes, 2007: 2).

Each manifestation of the complex gender system serves to individually, and collectively, reinforce and normalise inequalities between women and men (Ely and Padavic, 2007; Hill Collins, 2000; Heilman, 2012), supported by "wider contextual factors for example, legislation, social norms, labour market structures, economic policies, financial market structures" (Harrison and Mason, 2007: 448). Thus, the construction of gender-based inequality as an individual problem, hides its relationship to structural, cultural, and institutional gender norms that routinely disadvantage women in relation to men (Ahl, 2006; Loscocco and Waltzer, 2013; Neysmith and Chen, 2002),

It is not assumed that (most) men actively enact dominant behaviours in order to maintain inequalities between the sexes but theorised instead, that they engage - individually and collectively - in what has been termed 'complicit masculinity' (Smith, 2010), which "refers to [a version of] masculinity that in and of itself is not dominant, but supports [the] dominant masculinity…[through which] all men can benefit from the privileges of hegemony either directly or indirectly" (Kahn, 2009: 34). As such, it is contended that men passively support the status quo in order to continue to derive personal and group benefit from the continued subordination of women.

Arguably the most central site of the enactment of gendered subordination is the traditional heterosexual family unit, and the associated gendered division of domestic labour (Crompton *et al*, 2005; Emslie and Hunt, 2009; UN Women, 2012). Socially constructed discourses, which posit women's 'natural' propensity for domestic and caring roles, reflect "deeply held normative assumptions conflating femininity and care" (Hughes and Jennings, 2012: 9), and are founded upon an extension of the sex difference dichotomy, premised upon women's reproductive capacity (Ahl, 2007; Ashe and Treanor, 2011; Dick and Hyde, 2006). Attendant gender stereotypes, which represent a "reflection of the public perception of differences [between the sexes]" (Weyer, 2007: 486), serve to delineate the boundaries of socially acceptable and permissible gender performances (Butler, 1990), and typically "identify men as 'breadwinners' and women as 'nurturers'" (Carter and Shaw, 2006: 49).

Gendered discourses of this nature are underpinned by 'benevolent sexism' (Glick and Fiske, 2001), which describes the process of:

> "ascribing favorable and flattering, but clearly stereotypical, traits to women [which] reduces resistance to gender-based role divisions by subtly implying that women are well suited to the roles they have traditionally occupied, and that stereotypically feminine traits are valued by society" (Lau *et al*, 2008: 20).

In spite of the increase in agency associated with women's contemporaneous labour force participation (Euwals *et al*, 2011; Golla *et al*, 2011; Koggel, 2003), traditional discourses relating to women's 'proper and natural' role within society endure, which has resulted in a "greater acceptance of non-traditional roles alongside continued acceptance of traditional role" (Diekman *et al*, 2013: 550).

Thus, women continue to be expected to undertake the majority of unpaid domestic labour and childcare (Davis, 2010; Moen and Yu, 2000), regardless of their paid employment status (Steiber, 2009; Thomas and Hildingsson, 2009), whilst "social institutions and cultural institutions around mothering do not alter to meet this dual imperative" (Maher *et al*, 2010: 238). As such, the assumption that women should fulfil roles as both labour force participants and unpaid domestic labourers (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011; Jennings and McDougald, 2007; Tower and Alkadry, 2008), means that "it is women [not men] who are expected to balance work and family life" (Moen and Yu, 2000: 291).

Gendered discourses, supported by internalised gender stereotyping (Bird and Brush, 2002; Brush *et al*, 2009; Lun *et al*, 2009), and the widespread association of particular roles, in both the private and public sphere, with a specific gender (Cejka and Eagly, 1999; Gupta *et al*, 2009; Pelaccia *et al*, 2010) have become culturally embedded as reflective of the 'true' nature of women and men such that women and men are perceived as homogeneous groups (Crompton and Lyonette, 2005; Haynes and Fearfull, 2008).

Through a process termed 'habitus', which describes "the collective enterprise of inculcation […that] acts within [individuals and groups] as the organizing principle of their actions […] informing all thought and action (including thought of action)" (Bourdieu, 1977: 17-18), people subsequently and uncritically "internalize the normative system and act out of conformity with the value

standard" (Baughn *et al*, 2006: 688), thus constantly perpetuating and reinforcing the 'normative system'.

Gendered habitus, through which "cultural beliefs and norms…are transmitted and reinforced in interpersonal interactions" (Vandello and Cohen, 2003: 1003), can therefore be seen to both support and reinforce the status quo in which women are subordinated to men through the construction of seemingly natural binary oppositional ways of understanding the world (Ashcroft *et al*, 2007; Klages, 2006), which:

> "are products of, and productive of, relations of power [within which] one side of the binary is privileged and/or normative while the other side of the binary is subjugated and/or aberrant…[because] the terms of the binaries are interdependent – the normative Same is defined against the aberrant Other as *what it is not*" (Youdell, 2011: 38).

The concept of (subjugated) woman as 'Other', first explicated in Simone de Beauvoir's landmark work 'The Second Sex' (de Beauvoir, 1949), continues to be of theoretical relevance to contemporary feminist scholars exploring and explaining women's subordinated position in society (Leonard, 2002; Morley, 2011; Pringle, 2008).

This is particularly so with regard to research on women's access to, and career development within, positions traditionally associated with power and social prestige (England, 1993, 2003; Ridgeway, 2001) in, for example, the judiciary (Freenan, 2008; Malleson, 2003; O'Connor and Azzarelli, 2011), the upper echelons of business management (Budworth and Mann, 2010; King, 2008; Linehan and Scullion, 2008), the armed forces (Ball, 2012; Basham, 2008; Dandeker and Segal, 1996), the Academy (Mayer and Tikka, 2008; Paludi *et al*, 2010; Thanakoody *et al*, 2006; van den Brink and Benschop, 2012), and politics (Childs, 2010; Flinders *et al*, 2011; McKay, 2011; Ryan *et al*, 2010).

2.3 Subordination, discourses, and power: social constructivist theory

The issue of power – and its attainment, manipulation, and retention – as a component part of the structural subordination of women, is key to much feminist informed work, with feminist theory – specifically postructural feminist

theory – contending that reality and truth are created at the the nexus of discourse(s) and the discursive practices that they create (Ahl, 2006).

As such, discourses are understood to represent the point at which language, experience/knowledge/understanding, and human (inter)action coalesce to create cognitive, power-imbued 'lenses' (Foucault, 1978), through which individual subjectivity, and collective reality are understood and experienced (Weedon, 1997), and subsequently normalised through 'habitus'.

As such, all human interaction is understood to represent the continuous individual and collective (re)creation of "a social reality which is constructed and shaped by [people's] actions and that of others in response to their actions" (Higgins and Elliott, 2011: 347).

Thus, feminist theory asserts that discourses have an undeniable and profound effect on the way in which people both perceive reality, and create meaning through their experiences (Baxter, 2003; Chilton, 2005; Mills, 2003), such that the are said to possess an inherent capacity to embody power (Coupland, 2002; Foucault, 1978; van Dijk, 2008): "discourse[s] embody ideological assumptions, [which] sustain and legitimize existing relations of power" (Fairclough, 2001: 33).

An exploration of the manifestations of gendered power in society (Ahl, 2006, 2007; Bendl, 2005; Neergaard *et al*, 2011), and its relation to "language, subjectivity, and discourse" (Bruni *et al*, 2004: 256), has been proposed by a growing number of contemporary feminist scholars as a means by which to "advance a rich and nuanced understanding of the complex workings of power and ideology in discourse in sustaining a (hierarchically) gendered social order" (Lazar, 2005: 1).

By so doing, the gendered nature of the "mostly taken for granted assumptions about the order of things" (Ahl, 2007: 690) can be made visible, alongside the ways in which gendered assumptions and power differentials are enforced through discursive practices (Kelan, 2010; Mumby and Putnam, 1992; Neysmith and Chen, 2002), which both construct and reflect "social realities through actions that invoke identity, ideology, belief, and power" (Young, 2008: 1).

2.4 Gender stereotypes as a manifestation of a negative discursive practice

Returning now to the workplace, gender stereotypes, which represent one specific manifestation of a negatively (for women) gendered discursive practice, result in a 'double bind' (Rudman and Glick, 2001; Ryan and Haslam, 2007) for women whereby they face negative consequences for both conforming to normative stereotypes of femininity and for rejecting them (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Heilman, 2001; Nelson *et al*, 2009).

Failure to conform to gender-appropriate stereotypes has been found to illicit 'backlash' responses (Prentice and Carranza, 2002; Rudman and Glick, 2001), which are "defined as social and economic sanctions for counter-stereotypical behaviour" (Budworth and Mann, 2010: 181), and which include such sanctions as "personal derogation and dislike, each of which can give rise to judgements and decisions that halt the upward advancement of competent women" (Heilman, 2001: 671).

This means that even though women are routinely found to 'lack' the (masculine) qualities needed to achieve male standards of success (Mueller and Dato-On, 2008; Shaw and Cassell, 2007) – often referred to as the 'female underperformance hypothesis' (Chaganti and Parasuraman, 1996; Carter *et al*, 2007; Du Rietz and Henrekson, 2000) – they will nevertheless "be penalized economically and professionally for behaving in ways consistent with successful men" (Budworth and Mann, 2010: 181).

Thus, for women in the workplace, adherence to traditional female gender stereotypes means that "if they act femininely, they are disqualified from promotion for lacking the requisite masculine qualities" (Ely and Padavic, 2007: 1135), yet if they enact traditionally male-gendered behaviours they are subjected to suspicion and scorn: "act like a man, and have one's character, motives and predispositions called into question" (Maxfield *et al*, 2010: 594).

The limitations placed on women by prescriptive gender stereotypes, and the backlash experienced for non-conformity, collectively contribute to the three phenomena metaphorically referred to as the 'sticky floor' - "which traps

[women] in low paid, low status work" (Bellamy and Rake, 2005: 19), the 'glass ceiling' (Purkayashtha, 2005; Broadbridge and Hearn, 2008) - which "prevents women from rising above a certain organizational level" (Tan, 2008: 559), and the 'glass cliff' - which refers to promotion of women to "leadership positions that are of dubious value and have an uncertain future" (Ryan and Haslam, 2007: 559).

2.5 Occupational sex segregation

Aside from preventing women's attainment of power and prestige within the workforce, gender stereotypes have also been found to "act as powerful social forces that justify and maintain the sex segregation of occupations" (Gupta *et al*, 2009: 413). Occupational sex segregation is found to occur simultaneously along two orientations – horizontally, which refers to the "unequal representation of women and men across occupational groups" (Bourne and Özbilgin, 2008: 321), and vertically which "refers to the tendency for men to be disproportionately found in occupations at the higher ends of the vertical pay scale" (Sappleton, 2009: 194).

Both aspects of occupational sex segregation assist in preventing women from attaining positions of power and influence within organisational hierarchies (Heilman, 2001; Kargwell, 2008), either by constructing certain occupations, particularly "those associated with the largest rewards of honour, power and money" (England, 1993: 35), as masculine pursuits in direct opposition to feminine gendered norms (Haynes and Fearfull, 2008; Hoyt *et al*, 2009; Kent and Moss, 1994; Prentice and Carranza, 2002), or through the previously discussed 'sticky floor' and 'glass ceiling', which blocks women's upward progression to the senior career positions associated with both power and social prestige (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006; Thanacoody *et al*, 2006).

The exclusionary and power-retaining effects of sex segregation led Mirchandani (1999: 231) to conclude that "the central dynamic behind sex segregation is that of differential power that runs along gender lines". The same 'power differential' that creates and normalises sex segregation also ensures that the norms created and enacted by men as the dominant group in society in support of the retention of their own hegemonic power (Alcoff, 1988) are

"unlikely to be subject to critical assessment and change" (Calás *et al*, 2009: 556). Indeed, the power of discursive practices that serve to disadvantage one gender to the benefit of the other, "goes deeper than the power based on class or race, and it is so universal, so ubiquitous and so complete that it appears 'natural' and, until named by feminists, invisible" (Bryson, 1999: 27).

The invisibility of women's subordination, its direct link to patriarchy and capitalism (Bourne, 2010; Freedman, 2001), and the concealment of masculine hegemonic power behind the plausible mask of gender-neutrality (Lewis, 2006), has been shown by feminist scholars to lead to a failure by mainstream scholars to either acknowledge, or take account of, the mechanisms, causes and effects of gender (dis)advantage – so-called 'gender blindness' (Bruni et al, 2004; Hamilton, 2013; Mavin *et al*, 2004) – which conspires with hegemonic masculine power to "yield fragmented, reductionist explanations" (Sinisalo and Komulainen, 2008: 37) of women's apparent 'failure' to meet the "male standards [which] masquerade as universal meritocratic criteria" (West and Austrin, 2002: 500).

Feminist informed research into the manifestations of gender disadvantage in the labour market has consistently shown that traditionally female occupations, which tend to extend domestic roles outside of the home "namely caring, cleaning, catering, and cash registers" (Bellamy and Rake, 2005: 20), are poorly remunerated and low status (Mirchandani, 1999; ONS, 2008; Winn, 2005).

In conclusion, when considering women's engagement with labour force participation as a whole, the most obvious manifestations of gender disadvantage habitually faced by women are: prescriptive gender stereotypes (Pelaccia *et al*, 2010; Prentice and Carrenza, 2002), the gendered division of domestic labour (Craig and Sawrikar, 2009; van Hooff, 2011), gendered childcare/eldercare responsibilities (Fielden and Dawe, 2004; Mattis, 2004; Shaw *et al*, 2009), the sticky floor/glass ceiling/glass cliff (Pringle, 2008; Ryan and Haslam, 2007; Walker and Webster, 2007).

Added to this is the persistence of the gender pay gap (Fawcett, 2012; Jeffreys, 2010; Leaker, 2008) premised upon the unacknowledged "assumption that a woman is unlikely to be the main earner and, even at the height of her

profession, is unable to perform to the same high standards as a man" (Shaw, 2010: 34), which results in situations whereby "as women climb the corporate ladder the pay gap becomes larger - reaching up to 30 percent in top managerial positions" (Kulich *et al*, 2011: 302).

2.6 Entrepreneurship theory development and masculine norms

Identified as one of the "founding fathers" (Ahl, 2006: 599) of economic entrepreneurship theorising (Deakins and Freel, 2006; Hébert and Link, 1989), Cantillon's (1755) publication of his ground-breaking theories of entrepreneurship as a function of the wider economy (Peredo and McLean, 2006) formed the widely acknowledged starting point (Matlay, 2005; Rocha, 2012; Van Praag, 1999) of a stream of theory development that has been built-upon over time to emerge in its current, multidisciplinary (Moroz and Hindle, 2011; Steyaert and Katz, 2004) state, as a subject embedded within "core disciplines such as economics, psychology and sociology" (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009: 128).

Economics-based theories of entrepreneurship continue to retain their position as 'foundational texts' (Ahl, 2004; Kirkwood and Walton, 2010), which are those texts to which "every author must relate to whether agreeing or objecting, […] which help shape the research field" (Ahl, 2006: 598), in spite of the multi-disciplinarian approach to contemporary entrepreneurship theorising. Indeed, some of the key theories of entrepreneurship to have emerged from the economics-based entrepreneurial theorising which include: opportunity recognition (Casson, 1982; Kirzner, 1980; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000), risk-taking (Highhouse and Yüce, 1996; Knight, 1921), and innovation (Drucker, 1985; Schumpeter, 1911; Sweezy, 1943), all of which continue to exert a profound influence over contemporary research.

However, economic rational choice theories have been critiqued for their level of abstraction (Steyaert, 2007), and the assumptions that underpin them (Minard, 2009; Rocha, 2012), as well as for their positivist methods which seek to present findings in terms of facts, not opinions (Gartner and Birley, 2002: 387), and their inability to explain the "messy 'real-life' variety of entrepreneurship" (de Bruin *et al*, 2007: 331).

The masculine norm of entrepreneurship (Brush *et al* 2009; Hytti, 2005; Lewis 2006) developed within a wider context of the masculinisation of the public sphere more generally (Välimäki *et al*, 2009), wherein men's role as paid workers in the public sphere was set against women's unpaid role in the private sphere (Stevenson, 1990). It is perhaps unsurprisingly then, that "[u]ntil recently, the predominant population involved in entrepreneurial activities was men" (Bird and Brush, 2002: 42), and that entrepreneurship theory development has derived from the activities and outcomes of male-only populations (de Bruin *et al*, 2007), which has resulted in the application of male-derived theories to women's entrepreneurship (Mirchandani, 1999) - premised upon the assumption that male experience is synonymous with universal human experience (Ashe and Treanor, 2011; Lewis, 2006) - and the emergence of a gender-based mismatch between dominant (masculine) discourses of entrepreneurship and women's engagement in such activities (Ahl, 2007; Foss, 2010; Lewis, 2006).

The male-as-norm approach to exploring women's experiences of entrepreneurship has been critiqued for its "organizing motif [of] the linguistic opposition between 'masculine phallic presence' and 'feminine lack'" (Bendl, 2008: S52), which either renders women's entrepreneurship invisible (Baker *et al*, 1997; Ogbor, 2000; Parker, 2010), or highlights the 'otherness' of entrepreneurial women and their businesses (Marlow *et al*, 2008), both of which outcomes reinforce and perpetuate the veracity of the (unstated) masculine discursive norm of entrepreneurship (Lewis, 2006; Mirchandani, 1999; Wilson *et al*, 2006).

2.7 Feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship theory and research

Feminist academics argue that Western entrepreneurship theory, "usually driven by some variant of rational choice economic theory" (Gill and Ganesh, 2007: 270), and underpinned by a "dominant ideology of the heroic rational man" (Ogbor, 2000: 616), has created a situation whereby "the invisibility of the masculinity embedded in entrepreneurial activities [means] that 'entrepreneur' and 'male' have tended to become interchangeable terms" (Lewis 2006: 455). Simultaneously, the invisibility of the system of gender has led to a conflation of the terms 'sex' and 'gender' such that they too have come to be understood and

used synonymously (Ahl, 2006; Neergaard *et al*, 2011; Walker and Webster, 2007).

Research has shown that gender-based barriers to women's participation in entrepreneurship extends beyond the gender mismatch caused by the masculine norm of entrepreneurship (Ezzedeen and Zikic, 2012; Gupta and Turban, 2012), to include the perceived lack of credibility and legitimacy relative to male entrepreneurs that women entrepreneurs suffer (Baughn *et al*, 2006; Langowitz and Minniti, 2007; Nelson *et al*, 2003), the subsequent lower levels of normative support that they receive (Brush *et al* 2009; Welter *et al* 2006), and the demands of a masculine work norm (Bendle, 2008: S57; Mirchandani, 1999) which identifies "men's labour as the general standard for understanding women's work" (Kobayashi *et al*, 1994: xv), and which, for women, creates the "huge disadvantage of not having a wife to take care of them and their children" (Marlow, 2002: 86) whilst they work.

Additional barriers include issues pertaining to the gendered effects on lifetime asset accumulation for women (Shaw *et al*, 2009; Still and Timms, 2000), the assumed homogeneity of women entrepreneurs (Gill and Ganesh, 2007; Gunnerud, 1997; Price and McMullan, 2012), the effects on women of gender-based expectations regarding family, and home (Bjursell and Melin, 2011; Brush *et al*, 2009; Rouse *et al*, 2013), and the central role that career plays in both the construction and enactment of masculinity (Winn, 2005), whilst femininity continues to be conflated, first and foremost, with both motherhood and domesticity (Hughes and Jennings, 2012; Humbert and Drew, 2012).

The masculine gendered norm of entrepreneurship conspires with societal gender norms and stereotypes, which create "consensual beliefs within society about the attributes of women and men" (Weyer, 2007: 484), to produce a situation in which entrepreneurial women cannot compete on a level playing field with men (Ahl, 2006; Gupta *et al*, 2014; Jack and Anderson, 2002).

This disadvantage often means that women start businesses in "sectors with low barriers to entry, high competition and low profit margins" (Verheul and Thurik, 2001; Nadin 2007; Tillmar 2006), which has obvious implications for both profit and growth potential. Since within standard paradigms of economy-

based constructions of entrepreneurship (Carter et al, 2003; Dhaliwal *et al*, 2006; Marlow and McAdam, 2012) profit level and growth potential represent two of the standard measures of entrepreneurial success (Bird and Brush, 2002; Brindley, 2005; Sappleton, 2009), the gendered constraints imposed upon women both prior to starting their businesses and once they are engaged in entrepreneurship invariably cause them to appear to be 'less successful' than men (Gatewood *et al*, 2009; Green *et al*, 2003; Lewis, 2006).

However, such gender blind conclusions fail to question whether all women aspire to success on male-derived terms (Gill and Ganesh, 2007; Lewis, 2006; Shaw *et al*, 2009), or whether in fact, due to women's gendered situation within society, their success measures might be different (Brindley, 2005; Cliff, 1998; Lewis 2006; Parker 2010), yet nevertheless equally valid and valuable (de Bruin *et al* 2007; Gill and Ganesh 2007; Shaw *et al*, 2009). Thus, as a gendered supposition, the assumption that "men's entrepreneurial success can be used as a standard by which women's barriers to success can be indentified" (Mirchandani, 1999: 227) results in women being judged to 'fail' by comparison to an unacknowledged male norm, which in turn forms the framework for the resolution of the failure in terms of the replication of masculine-normed behaviours. The self-perpetuating, hegemonic power of such unspoken and unacknowledged masculine gendered norms and assumptions is therefore evident.

2.8 Gender, the push/pull of entrepreneurship, and context

> "While women were pulled into entrepreneurship in a remarkably similar way to men, the push factors they experienced were largely related to their families (flexibility with children)" (Kirkwood, 2009: 357).

Push/pull factors have been widely used in entrepreneurship theorising to explain entrepreneurial motivations (Brown *et al*, 2007; Kirkwood, 2009; Weiler and Bernasek, 2001), and whilst they provide a useful basic tool for exploring the issue of motivation, they have nevertheless been critiqued by feminist academics for leading to "reductionist and stereotypical [...] understandings that do not account for the relationship between pull and push, or more generally the complexity of factors at work" (Hytti, 2005: 595).

It is generally agreed that "[p]ush factors predominate among women entrepreneurs [and] pull factors predominate among men entrepreneurs" (Humbert and Drew, 2010), however the significance of context (Calás et al, 2009; Mirchandani, 1999; Welter, 2011), and the importance of an understanding of the diverse manifestations of gendered (dis)advantage (Gupta *et al* 2009) in researching women entrepreneurs, is key to the production of knowledge that recognises the influence of society and discourse in moulding women's experiences (Verheul and Thurik, 2001) such that their entrepreneurial "choices need to be understood as both situated in time and space, and constituted through discourse" (Dick and Hyde, 2006: 543).

Thus, a contextualised gender-aware framework also serves to move beyond the traditional attempt to predict who will become entrepreneurs (Hurley, 1999) which results in both the "myopic tendency to focus on constructing ideal types and making lists of traits and competencies" (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2009: 246), and the creation of "essentialist and monolithic categories that in no way can represent the diversity of the subjects researched" (Engelstad and Gerrard, 2005: 4). In this way, feminist-informed scholarship aims to "focus on illuminating the messy, heterogeneous and problematic nature of entrepreneurship" (Tedmanson *et al*, 2012: 533), rather than on trying to discover and delineate the 'universal truths', and unassailable 'facts' of entrepreneurship (Gartner and Birley, 2002; Ogbor, 2000).

The importance of a contextualised, gender-aware approach to women's entrepreneurship has been demonstrated by the differences (and similarities) found in the gendered barriers and associated problems experienced by women entrepreneurs in the developed West, as compared to in developing countries. For example, research carried out in developing countries has shown that women entrepreneurs tend to be "constrained by cultural, educational and economic barriers" (Boohene *et al*, 2008: 239), which barriers manifest as, for example, limited education (Wood and Davidson, 2011), associated poor literacy skills (Williams and Gurtoo, 2011) and mathematical knowledge (Dzisi, 2008), gendered cultural constraints (Afza and Rashid, 2009) such as not being allowed to interact with men (Roomi and Harrison, 2010), endemic poverty (Ndemo and Maina, 2007) and associated lack of access to resources

(Tambunan, 2011), difficulty in obtaining finance (Mahmood, 2011), and early marriage (Mair and Marti, 2007).

Thus, an awareness of context, alongside the application of a gender lens, ensures that the pitfall of "assumptions of shared subordination arising from a homogeneous biological identity and socio-economic positioning" (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 548) of women entrepreneurs is avoided and so, in recognition of the social construction of both gender and entrepreneurship (Higgins and Elliott, 2011), feminist scholars seek to produce research that takes account of "the differentiated, complex, and varied influence gender characterization has upon men and women in entrepreneurship" (Gupta *et al* 2009: 413).

To this end contextualised, socially embedded approaches (Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Brush *et al* 2009; de Bruin *et al* 2007), located within paradigms that recognise the heterogeneity of the entrepreneurial population, with particular reference to women (Ahl, 2006; Foss, 2010; Gill and Ganesh, 2007), are utilised as a means of "escaping the default individualist assumptions" (Rindova *et al*, 2009: 481) of traditional entrepreneurship research.

In this way, the effects of "the larger, external social context" (Shelton, 2010: 379) have become an increasingly central feature of contemporary critical entrepreneurship research (Jack and Anderson, 2002; Steyaert, 2007), which has facilitated the critical analysis of the economically rational "archetype of the white, male, individualistic, Calvinist entrepreneur" (Essers and Benschop, 2009: 420).

Traditional theories of entrepreneurship premised upon "the Schumpeterian legacy [which] characterises the entrepreneur as an independent economic actor detached from the social and political context within which he/she experiences complex relationships" (Jayasinghe *et al*, 2008: 242), are challenged, the complexity of entrepreneurial action as "a complex web of intertwined socio-economic and politically framed activities constructed by contextualized institutional frameworks" (Tedmanson *et al*, 2012: 535; Calás *et al*, 2009; de Bruin *et al*, 2006) explored, the diversity of the entrepreneurial population (Engelstad and Gerrard 2005; Levent *et al*, 2003; Maxfield *et al*, 2010) embraced, and discursive heterogeneity (Lewis, 2011; Nadesan and

Trethway, 2000) that is "tolerant to ambiguity, diversity and pluralism" (Ogbor, 2000: 605; Calàs *et al*, 2009) is encouraged.

2.9 Feminist scholarship as a site of revelation and resistance

Feminist academic scholarship, like other critical scholarship (Boje and Smith, 2010; Down, 2010; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009; Tedmanson *et al*, 2010), represents an important locus of resistance against the essentialist assumptions and reductionist conclusions relating to women's lives evident in 'traditional' scholarship (Ahl, 2006; Foss, 2010; Grunig, 2006).

Research that incorporates androcentric assumptions and norms can be challenged by studies that highlight the diversity and heterogeneity of women as a 'group' (Gill and Ganesh, 2007), and through the application of non-traditional research methods (Bruni, 2004), located within feminist-informed research paradigms (Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Campbell, 2004), feminist scholarship can create a space in which women's diverse voices can be heard (Wallace, 2005), and their "subjugated knowledge" (Brooks and Hesse-Biber 2007: 4) can be validated and legitimised (Hart and Metcalfe, 2010).

Such an approach acts as to empower women (Bryson 1999; Charles 1996; Hill Collins 1991), provide a counterpoint to the homogeneity with which women are often portrayed in normative discourses (Brindley 2005; Neysmith and Chen 2002; Shaw and Cassell 2007), and to challenge essentialist assumptions relating to traits associated with both sex and gender (Butler, 1993). Thus, feminist-informed scholarship serves as a challenge to the sex-based essentialism of the 'homogeneity within/difference between groups' paradigm (Emslie and Hunt, 2009) that provides a rationale for sex-difference studies (Ely and Padavic, 2007), which inevitably find women 'lacking' compared to the unacknowledged masculine norm (Lewis, 2006), thereby reinforcing their subordinate status (Ahl, 2006; Calás et al, 2009; Tyler, 2005).

It can thus be seen that the gendered disadvantages experienced by women can affect them not only cumulatively over a lifetime (Vandecasteele, 2011), but also concurrently to produce nexus of multiple oppressions (Hill Collins, 2000), along dimensions associated with other systems of oppression, for example, in

the form of what has been termed "the holy trinity of social science" (Cherlin, 2009: 1589) consisting of gender, race, and class.

Feminists scholars contend that because "gender and power are inextricably tied" (Ely and Padavic, 2007: 1125), it therefore follows that the power and privilege attendant upon membership of the dominant group within patriarchal societies (Lloyd 2005; Metcalfe 2008; Oakley 2000) are two of the most salient features marginalised, or indeed excluded, by gender blind research (Hunnicutt, 2009).

It has therefore been posited that research that denies the existence of gender-based power disparities and associated disadvantages for women, "exonerates the advantaged from any blame for current inequalities while also blaming the disadvantaged, either implicitly or explicitly, for their own condition" (Lewis, 2006: 458). Furthermore, it denies the ways in which gender, as an internalised and institutionalised system, "so profoundly influences assumptions, variables, theoretical and measurement models, and methodologies" (Gupta *et al*, 2009: 413), thereby giving rise to "weak analytical framing and poorly founded assumptions" (Marlow *et al*, 2008: 336).

Feminist academics have also worked to reveal and critique the manifestations of male privilege and power within the Academy itself (Haynes and Fearful, 2008; Mayer and Tikka, 2008; Thanacoody *et al*, 2006), including the barriers erected around the dissemination of feminist-informed work (Ahl, 2006; de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Ferber and Nelson 1993, 2003), the difficulties faced by women in attaining senior positions within Universities (Morley, 2011; Thanacoody *et al*, 2006), the barriers to access of the editorial boards of the most prestigious journals (de Bruin *et al*, 2006; Özbilgin, 2004), and the challenges faced by scholars specialising in research focussed on women, in getting their work published in top-tier journals (Baker *et al*, 1997; Jennings and Brush, 2013; Hart, 2006).

For women academics specialising in feminist scholarship, the failure to publish their research in prestigious journals has two significant knock-on effects; first, their career progression, heavily premised upon the legitimacy gained through publication of research in top-tier journals, is threatened (Ahl, 2006; Hart and

Metcalfe, 2010), and second, the status quo remains largely unchallenged as masculine hegemony conspires to exclude feminist scholarship from the mainstream (Ahl, 2004; Calvert and Ramsey 1992; de Bruin *et al* 2007).

The result is that "many women academics who want to study women are forced to develop two research interests, one in a 'mainstream' academically 'legitimate' area and a second stream in issues relating to women" (Stevenson 1990: 444). This in turn compels women to compromise their research interests, and feminist politics if they wish to achieve legitimacy and career success (on the terms dictated by hegemonic masculinity):

> "[t]he price has been high – for individual researchers as well as for the field. The major cost for the discipline has, in our view, been conformity. To not 'rock the boat', to have our work accepted by mainstream academic journals and professional associations, to avoid being seen as radical, to try to move from the margins to centre, to be taken even half seriously, we have been forced to mainstream our work and our writing" (Calvert and Ramsey 1992: 80).

Chapter Three: SE and SEship literature review - general, critical, and gendered

3.0 Introduction

Social enterprise (SE) and social entrepreneurship (SEship) have been the focus of considerable governmental policy attention and investment for almost a decade in the UK (Spear *et al*, 2009; Teasdale, 2010), as evidenced by "the support, by way of increased legitimacy, visibility and funding, given by the UK Government to social enterprise" (Grant, 2008: 18).

The Labour government (1997-2010) sought to build capacity within the wider third sector (DTI, 2002; Home Office, 1998b; HM Treasury, 2002) premised upon the vision of "a strong enterprising and business culture [demonstrating] efficiency, financial sustainability, [and] accountability" (Sepulveda, 2009: 5), as it sought to position SE as a "policy vehicle" (Spear *et al*, 2009: 2) through which to facilitate the provision of locally-based, efficient, cost-effective solutions (Leadbeater, 1997; Smith and Stevens, 2010) and thus help "compensate for stagnant and declining public services" (Haugh and Kitson, 2007: 981).

However, as an emergent field of academic research (Nicholls, 2010; Short *et al*., 2009), the development of SE literature has been much facilitated in recent years by the launch of specialist journals (Granados *et al*, 2011) such as the Social Enterprise Journal (SEJ) in 2005, the Journal of Social Entrepreneurship (JSE) in 2010, and the International Journal of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation (IJSEI) in 2011.

Whilst the number of scholars engaging in SE and SEship research continues to grow (Swanson and Zhang, 2012; Zahra *et al*, 2009), the extant SE and SEship literature has nevertheless been subject to ongoing critique on the basis of its fragmentation and lack of general coherence and comparability (Galera and Borzaga, 2009; Kerlin, 2010; Peattie and Morley, 2008), which, it is claimed, has made it "difficult for scholars to build upon and contribute to an emerging stream of knowledge" (Desa, 2007: 20).

3.1 A general overview of the emergent SE and SEship academic literature: problems, practicalities, and potential

Within the extant Se and SEship literature, the most regularly identified barrier to the development of a coherent body of knowledge on SE and SEship, centres on the lack of definitional consensus within the international academic community (Galera and Borzaga, 2009; Mason, 2012; Nielsen and Samia, 2008) regarding what "constitutes a social enterprise" (Shaw and Carter, 2007: 419). The nascent SE literature suggests that the combination of social and/or environmental outputs (Chell *et al*, 2010; Cabinet Office, 2006; Patel and Mehta, 2011) coupled with "revenue generation strategies [delivered] through trading" (DiDomenico *et al*, 2010: 682), occurs along a spectrum (Austin *et al*, 2006; Sepulveda, 2009; Westall, 2007) that ranges from grant/donation-maintained organisations whose income is supplemented through limited revenue generation activities, through organisations who depend upon mixed revenue streams, to organisations created for the sole purpose of providing for a given community through trading, who receive no unearned income at all (Galera and Borzaga, 2009; Harding, 2004; Ridley-Duff, 2008; Sepulveda *et al*, 2010).

It has thus been contended that the diversity of organisations engaged in revenue-generating activities in order to create "social value" (Diochon and Anderson, 2009: 15) by funding social output (HM Government, 2011; Peattie and Morley, 2008), means that SE activity can be said to exist, to varying degrees, in all sectors of the economy (Cabinet Office, 2006; Dacin *et al*, 2010; DTI, 2002; Marks *et al*, 2007):

> "the distinction between social and commercial entrepreneurship is not dichotomous, but rather more accurately conceptualised as a continuum ranging from purely social to purely economic" (Austin *et al* 2006: 3).

3.2 Definitional debate: the difficulties and politics of defining SE and SEship

The debate within the academic community concerning what constitutes SE and SEship is an issue of ongoing concern (Doeringer, 2010; Kistruck and Beamish, 2010; Peattie and Morley, 2008), and has resulted in the development of a

"bewildering array of definitions" (Teasdale, 2011: 1), upon which there remains no general consensus (Chell, 2007; Diochon and Anderson, 2009, 2011). As such, the situation has "frustrate[d] efforts to produce a comprehensive understanding" (Shaw and Carter, 2007: 419) of the concepts, which confusion has been added to by the often interchangeable use of the terms SE and SEship within both the academic and wider literatures (Galera and Borzaga, 2009; Peredo and McLean, 2006).

Within the UK, definitions of SE have tended to emerge from amongst the most influential "paradigm building actors" (Nicholls, 2010: 611), such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) who, in 2002, defined SE as:

> "a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders or owners" (DTI, 2002: 7),

and the Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC), who asserted that:

> "[a] social enterprise is not defined by its legal status but by its nature: its social aims and outcomes; the basis on which its social mission is embedded in its structure and governance; and the way it uses the profits it generates through trading activities" (NEF/SAS, 2004: 8).

The SEC - now Social Enterprise UK (SEUK) – has recently updated its website-based definition of SE, having clearly moved to a conceptualisation of SEs as businesses, in line with the DTI (2002) definition (above):

> "[s]ocial enterprises are businesses that trade to tackle social problems, improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community. *And so when they profit, society profits*" (SEUK, 2014, emphasis in original).

The provision of a "clear but pragmatic" (SEUK, 2014) definition of SE was made alongside a more "technical" (*ibid.*) breakdown of the features that SEUK asserted marked them out as different to mainstream businesses. As such, it was suggested that:

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES SHOULD:

- Have a clear social and/or environmental mission set out in their governing documents
- Generate the majority of their income through trade
- Reinvest the majority of their profits
- Be autonomous of state
- Be majority controlled in the interests of the social mission
- Be accountable and transparent (SEUK, 2014)

However, whilst the DTI (2002) remains the definition most frequently cited in discussions of SE in the UK (Bull, 2006), and was adopted by the ConDem coalition (2009-2015) government (Dey and Teasdale, 2013; Lyon and Fernandez, 2012; McAdam and Treanor, 2011), a critique has emerged with regard to its discursive association the Labour government's SE agenda (Hall *et al*, 2012; Teasdale, 2012; Teasdale *et al*, 2013), as well as to the fact that:

> "according to some authors, the entrepreneurial nature, especially as concerns the carrying out of economic activity in a continuous and stable manner, is not a necessary condition for the social entrepreneurship qualification" (Galera and Borzaga, 2009: 211).

Ultimately as noted by Lyon *et al* (2010: 15), "[w]hat is and is not a social enterprise is a political decision" and as such, an increasing number of SE scholars have called for studies that are alert to the "power relations that characterize a field (i.e. how it is organized and the factors that create and perpetuate that organization)" (Nicholls, 2010: 614).

Within the academic community, definitions of SE range in content and focus, but tend towards the broad and deliberately general, with recent examples including Cho (2006: 36), who defined SE as:

> "a set of institutional practices combining the pursuit of financial objectives with the pursuit and promotion of substantive and terminal values";

Nicholls (2006: 23) who conceptualised it as:
> "innovative and effective activities that focus strategically on resolving social market failures and creating opportunities to add social value systematically by

using a range of organisational formats to maximise social impact and bring about change";

Shaw and Carter (2007: 419) who refer to it as:

"a new label for describing the work of community, voluntary and public organizations, as well as private firms working for social rather than for-profit objectives";

and DiDomenico *et al* (2010: 682) who posit that its spirit is encapsulated in a commitment:

"to attain a particular social objective or set of objectives through the sale of products and/or services, and in doing so aim to achieve financial sustainability independent of government and other donors".

Indeed the search for a universally acceptable definition for the "loose and baggy monster" (McBrearty 2007: 67) of SE and wider third sector activities, continues to provoke debate within the academic community to the point of parody:

"[w]hat we should anticipate is something inclusive like 'for social purpose, non-proprietary, non-commercial, not for personal profit, non-profit maximising, non-governmental, independent organisation' or 'FSPNPNCNFPPNPMNGI'" (Jones and Keogh 2006: 16).

However, in spite of the lack of a conclusive definition of SE a general consensus has emerged that it can be understood as describing organisations which employ "market-based approaches to address social issues" (Kerlin, 2006: 247; DTI 2002), yet even that level of agreement has failed to resolve the many ongoing debates around SE which, as discussed previously, centre on the diversity evident in the SE sector (GEO, 2008; HM Government, 2011; Peattie and Morley, 2008).

3.3 Emergent SE and SEship theory: more questions than answers?

Some of the other key issues to emerge from the nascent SEship literature are those relating to the similarities and/or differences between the various types of organisations pursuing a double/triple bottom line (Chell, 2007; Nielsen and Samia, 2008; Wells *et al*, 2010); the ways in which such organisations are funded (Austin *et al*, 2006; Short *et al*, 2009; Social Enterprise Coalition, 2010);

their use (or not) of democratic, participative governance practices (Defourny, 2009; DiDomenico et al, 2009; Ridley-Duff, 2008); the level and type of trading undertaken (ECOTEC, 2003; IFF, 2005; SEUK, 2012); and the way(s) in which profits are used and/or distributed (DTI, 2002; Kerlin, 2006; NEF/SAS, 2004).

Developing the idea that the social economy - also referred to in academic and policy literature as the 'third sector' (Spear and Bidet, 2005) - within which SE is largely conceptually located (Choi and Majumdar, 2013; Shaw and Carter, 2007) might be sufficiently different to the private sector for the direct application of mainstream theories to be problematic, Teasdale (2010: 90) posits that "it has been suggested that the dominant paradigm in which social entrepreneurship research has been undertaken has led to social outcomes being neglected".

Thus SE scholars, drawing upon the work of mainstream critical entrepreneurship scholars, have argued for the adoption of theoretical perspectives that acknowledge the heterogeneity of social entrepreneurial (SEurial) activity (Austin *et al*, 2006; Cornelius *et al*, 2008; Ridley-Duff, 2008; Shaw and Carter, 2007), which seeks to move beyond the positivist research paradigms associated with mainstream entrepreneurship research (Chell, 2007; Harrison and Mason, 2007; Sinisalo and Komulainen, 2008).

As a result, yet more developmentally fundamental questions have emerged within the SE and SEship literature, centred on such questions as whether mainstream entrepreneurship theories derived from rational economic models (Dart, 2004) can be adapted in order to qualify and quantify SEship (Chell, 2007; Parkinson and Howarth, 2008), what constitutes 'entrepreneurial' activity within the SEship paradigm (Shaw and Carter, 2007), what relationship may exist between "social value" creation (Diochon and Anderson, 2009: 15) and economic output as markers of the double bottom line (Doherty *et al*, 2009), in what ways these outputs should be interpreted as evidence of an SE's 'success' (Dart *et al*, 2010; Dees, 2003: 2), how, and to what end, different conceptions/definitions of SE highlight different salient features (Dey and Steyaert, 2010), and what implications this has for the development and

delivery of SE policy and practice (Nicholls, 2010), alongside the development of SE theory (Short *et al*, 2009).

The fact nevertheless remains that, as noted by Teasdale (2011: 16) "[s]ocial enterprise means different things to different people across time and context...[and] has been constructed by a variety of competing interests embracing different discourses and representing different organisational constituents". Thus, if the creation of a 'hard and fast' definition of SE is neither possible nor perhaps, desirable, then it might be prudent to be mindful of the admonishment made by Gartner (1990: 28) that:

> "[a] definition of entrepreneurship that is so simple that it fails to reflect the thing we are concerned about does not have to be created. But if no existing definition can be agreed upon by most researchers and practitioners, then it is important to say what we mean. If many different meanings for entrepreneurship exist, then it behoves us to make sure that others know what we are talking about. The various themes of entrepreneurship...seem to reflect different parts of the same phenomenon [...] Only by making explicit what we believe can we begin to understand how all of these different parts make up a whole."

With Gartner's (1990) suggestion in mind, the definition of SE employed for the purpose of this study follows DiDomenico *et al* (2010: 682), and is stated as *'the pursuit of a particular social objective or set of objectives through the sale of products and/or services, with the aim of achieving, where appropriate, long-term financial sustainability independent of government and other donors'*.

3.4 The heroic social entrepreneur

Related to both the definitional debate and the contentious proposal to transpose the use of mainstream entrepreneurship theory into the social space, concerns have arisen within some areas of the academic community regarding the conceptualisation of the SEur in 'heroic' terms (Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Jones and Keogh, 2006; McAdam and Treanor, 2011; Parkinson, 2005), which situation mirrors the "dominant ideology of the heroic rational man" (Ogbor, 2000: 616) evident within mainstream entrepreneurship (Goss, 2005; Smith, 2010; Spear, 2006; Tedmanson *et al*, 2012).

The rhetoric around SEurs has tended to coalesce around representations of heroic masculinity, with British SEurship being regularly celebrated through the efforts of individuals such as:

- **John Bird** (Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the Big Issue) – (Cabinet Office, 2006: 14)

- **Jamie Oliver** (Founder of the restaurant Fifteen) – (SBS, 2005: 10)

- **Tim Smit** (Founder of the Eden Project) – (Timms, 2002: 1),

whilst internationally occurring SEship has been lauded through the efforts of men such as:

- **Muhammad Yunus** (Founder of The Grameen Bank) – (Hewitt, 2002: 3)

- **Bill Drayton** (Founder of the Ashoka Foundation) – (Westall, 2007: 20)

What is interesting, is that similar to mainstream entrepreneurship the masculinisation of the SEur (McAdam and Treanor, 2011) has led to women SEurs being rendered almost entirely invisible, and their contribution to both society and the economy through their SEurial activities equally so (Humbert, 2012; Teasdale *et al*, 2011), whilst the heroic male SEurs are regularly lauded in the academic literature, within political rhetoric (McAdam and Treanor, 2011; Nicholls, 2010; Seanor and Meaton, 2008), and within the SE sector itself "[t]here is no dearth of events, awards, and celebrations highlighting the heroic efforts of a handful of social entrepreneurs" (Dacin *et al*, 2010: 52).

As a result, SE scholars have begun to question the political power associated with control of the "utopian and neophilic enunciation of social entrepreneurship" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 86), and its associated legitimating discourses by "resource-rich actors" (Nicholls, 2010: 625) who through control of the dominant discourses, have the ability to create isomorphic "patterns and structures [which] become institutionalised as norms, standards and ideals, not necessarily because they are efficient or effective but because they are seen as legitimising" (Bull, 2006: 10).

3.5 The discursive and rhetorical construction of the idea(l) of SE

The same discursive delineating function can be seen in relation to the rhetoric of SE and SEship in the UK, the legitimating function of which has been brought to bear around issues firmly associated with mainstream entrepreneurship, such as the centrality of the business model to SE:

- "A social enterprise is, first and foremost, a business" (DTI, 2002: 13);

the conceptualisation of SE and SEship as primarily economic activities:

- "The reason the DTI is so committed to social enterprise is that social enterprise can play an important role in achieving our economic goals" (Timms, 2002: 1)

the innovation of entrepreneurship:

- Social enterprises display "entrepreneurial flair" (DTI, 2003: 6)

and its location as a driver of governmental policy initiatives:

- "Nationally, [SEs] are an important part of our business future" (Cabinet Office, 2006: 2).

In this way, through the control of its constituent parts (i.e. what is included/highlighted/fore-fronted versus what is excluded/masked/hidden), the "key paradigm-building actors" (Nicholls, 2010: 611) can be seen to have created a politically-charged (Bacq and Janssen, 2011; Griffith, 2012; Teasdale *et al*, 2013) "grand narrative" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 85) that serves a gate-keeping function for those legitimating features of SEs that are deemed to be value-adding, whilst simultaneously denying legitimacy to those aspects that do not conform:

> "governments and [other] agencies set out what is true and false, the means by which each is authorised, how truth is acquired and the status of those determining what counts as true; they are skilled at engineering truth through language. Such a regime of truth masks or even represses other truths" (Shaw, 2010: 39).

The potential effects that such discursive conceptualisations of SE, SEship, and SEurs could have on the practice of SEship was evidenced by the types of SEs that were showcased as examples of 'best practice' in governmental and other key paradigm-building actors' publications (DTI, 2002; Cabinet Office, 2006;

SEC, 2013). These 'best practice' SEs tended to be represented by "ventures that c[ould] be scaled up and transferred across localities" (Sunley and Pinch, 2013: 116), which could therefore be seen to achieve according to traditional entrepreneurial success markers such as turnover, number of employees, and growth/replicability. Indeed, in a statement relating to the distribution of monies from the SE-supporting Future Builders fund, HM Treasury unashamedly declared that "[h]igh quality schemes that exemplify good practice, encourage partnership working, and replicate success will be candidates for funding" (HM Treasury, 2002: 32).

However, SE scholars noted that in such instances, mainstream economic outputs were presented as being effectively synonymous with the social outputs of SE (Chell, 2007; Lautermann, 2013), thus blurring the distinction between the necessity of economic outputs (to pay for social benefit), and the essentiality of social ideals that are central to the core values, mission, and creation of SEs (Austin *et al*, 2006; Bull *et al*, 2010; Mason *et al*, 2007; SEC 2009):

> "the dominant economic philosophy at the heart of entrepreneurship is capitalism and free market economics [and t]hese assumptions, added to the ambiguity of entrepreneurship and the complexity of community, render social entrepreneurship particularly problematic conceptually" (Parkinson, 2005: 1).

Added to this was the identification of potential problematic areas associated with the fore-fronting of the individual efforts of the 'heroic' SEur at the expense of the collective (Hjorth and Bjerke, 2006; Hjorth, 2010), alongside the reduction of SEs' social value creation to mere cost savings (Lautermann, 2013; Phills *et al*, 2008) rhetorically presented as the 'modernisation' and 'reform' of public services (Bland, 2010; DTI, 2002, 2004; Leadbeater, 1997; WISE, 2006).

Additionally, it was suggested that the inextricable melding of economic and social output within some SE discourses – for example, "jobs created for certain groups, or services provided in deprived communities" (BoE, 2003: 30) – presented a unidimensional image of SE, which masked the diversity and plurality of SEship (Defourny and Nissens, 2010; Spear *et al*, 2009; WISE, 2006), thereby sidelining the less easily measurable and quantifiable social value created (Dacin *et al*, 2011; DiDomenico *et al*, 2010; Lane and Casile, 2011; Peattie and Morley, 2008a).

Through the fore-fronting of business and economic discourses within dominant discourses of SE and SEship (OTS, 2006a; DTI, 2002, 2003, 2003c; SEL, 2004), the marriage of the terms 'social' and 'enterprise/entrepreneurship' was presented as wholly unproblematic (Bull, 2008; Roper and Cheney, 2005; Teasdale, 2011), thereby rendering invisible the many tensions inherent in the management of a double/triple bottom line in practice (Bacq and Janssen, 2011; Dart, 2004a; Scott and Teasdale, 2012; Teasdale, 2012a).

Thus, as a result of a policy and discsursive approach "focussed on successes to the exclusion of failures" (Kistruck and Beamish, 2010: 736), the stories (and associated learning) of those SEs which prove untenable as ongoing economic concerns (Cahalane, 2013; Dacin *et al*, 2010) according to the discursive parameters laid down by the dominant business/economics logics of SE and SEship were made invisible and therefore unproblematic (Seanor and Meaton, 2008; Scott and Teasdale, 2012), and the 'heroic' image of SEship (Corner and Ho, 2010; Parkinson and Howorth, 2008; Seanor and Meaton, 2007) allowed to retain its discursive potency regardless of the 'on the ground' reality for practitioners (Amin, 2009; Dacin *et al*, 2010; Dey and Steyaert, 2010).

3.6 Social impact measurement and the 'success' of SEs

The political discourses of SE and SEship were designed to underpin the validity of the neo-liberal policy drive for the "replacement of government with the market" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 90), which sought to impose "the values and ethos of the corporate sector – competitiveness and profit maximisation" (Wallace, 2005: 85) onto SE.

Premised upon an assumption that "[t]he more profitable the activities are, the more money that is available to address social concerns" (Diochon and Anderson, 2009: 16), such an economically rationalist (Dart, 2004) approaches have been claimed to create situations wherein "a managerialist ideology [can take] precedence over the social" (Bull *et al* 2010: 253).

In this way, dominant discourses of success in SEship, based on "efficiency, business discipline, and financial independence" (Dey and Steyaert 2010: 98), were assumed to represent the most appropriate (read: easily quantifiable)

measure success in SE, a situation evidenced in the (tellingly ordered) list of 'values' embodied by successful SEs in the (2002) DTI document 'Social enterprise: a strategy for success':

> "[t]he values that successful social enterprises exemplify [are] enterprise, innovation, competitiveness and social inclusion" (*ibid.*: 8).

Indeed, measurement of SE output that focused on the more accessible and easily quantifiable economic, rather than social, outputs (Austin *et al* 2006) resulted in some surprising claims, for example that "social enterprises with mixed revenue streams create five times as many jobs and just over six times the amount of turnover as mainstream entrepreneurial businesses" (Harding, 2004: 43).

Such 'facts' relating to the size, scope and impact of the SE sector certainly appeared to support the utopian rhetoric of SE (Dey and Steyaert, 2010), yet the validity of both the data presented and the methodologies used for the various scoping exercises of the UK SE sector have now been called into question (Puttick and Ludlow, 2012; Teasdale *et al,* 2013). However, in spite of these identified problems, the issue of social impact measurement nevertheless remained high on the political agenda, with the Cabinet Office – under the auspices of the former ConDem coalition government (2010-2015) – claiming its continued commitment to:

> "make high quality impact measurement the norm for charities and social enterprises by 2022" (HM Government, 2013: 13).

Indeed, one of the outcomes of the government-sponsored 'Inspiring Impact' programme during its first year of operation was the publication of a 'code of good impact practice' within which document the assertion appeared to be made, that the *measurement* and *scaling-up* of social value creation was apparently more important than the actual *delivery* of services to clients:

> "it is all too easy to focus on your day-to-day work, when it is the impact you're having, and how you can have more, that is arguably more important" (Inspiring Impact, 2013: 4).

Such obviously politicised and hard-line approaches drew critique from some parts of the academic community for their aggressively economically rationalist underpinning philosophy, which failed to take account of subjective measures of social value and:

> "often display[ed] a perhaps surprisingly positivistic and linear attitude to social impact as a 'truth' to be discovered, rather than a set of contextual and interpretive (according to stakeholder perspective) data" (Nicholls, 2013: 1).

3.7 Organisational sustainability within SE: competing discourses and demands

Sustainability – both social and financial – within SE represented another issue to have come under the scrutiny of the academic community (Wallace, 2005), with Moizer and Tracey (2010: 253) stating that:

> "[m]anaging this double bottom line demands a careful balance between resource utilization (in order to build and maintain competitive advantage), and engagement with local stakeholders (in order to build and maintain organizational legitimacy). Failure to strike an appropriate balance between these two partly competing objectives profoundly threatens organizational sustainability".

The combination then of a policy approach that actively promoted financial self-sufficiency, with the often conflicting expectations of non-governmental stakeholders (Hynes 2009; Thompson, 2008), "and the social enterprise's [own] focus on social or local outcomes" (Parkinson and Howarth, 2008: 286), had the ability to create significant managerial complexity (Pärenson, 2011) including, but not limited to, "constraints of time and space on their ability to grow and maintain their venture" (Smith and Stevens, 2010: 591).

One component part of the aforementioned managerial complexity was the previously discussed notion of the potential conflict between the two elements of the double bottom line - the social and the economic - (Teasdale, 2011), and its connection, in turn, to the definitional debate:

> "[t]o amalgamate social and enterprise is then problematic. Legitimising the union of the terms suggests the narrative in the literature has moved toward one that if the business activities are a success in the market it will follow that the social aims will, in essence, take care of themselves" (Bull, 2008: 271).

Where, as is the case in the UK, policy initiatives are tied-up in a "strategy to encourage social enterprises to move away from grant dependency and toward self-financing" (DTI, 2002: 9), the economic component of the double bottom line naturally becomes prioritised, causing "tension between social and commercial activity" (Short *et al*, 2009: 172).

Such an emphasis on "independence and self-sufficiency" (Wallace, 2005: 82) whilst coherent with a neo-liberal economic approach, failed to acknowledge the centrality of the "ideological orientations" (Spear, 2006: 408) of SEurs that very often underpin their desire "to solve local problems and maintain a local focus" (Smith and Stevens, 2010: 578).

Thus, at the same time as the government spoke of *social* enterprise, it provides a conceptual definition that gave primacy to the business function: "social enterprises are *businesses* with primarily social or environmental objectives" (OTS, 2006: 4 *emphasis added*).

This fundamental contradiction in the conceptualisation and articulation of SE by government, had potentially significant practical implications for practitioners trying to manage the policy demands of an economically rationalist (Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Ridley-Duff, 2007; Teasdale, 2011) approach to SE embodied in a 'one size fits all' approach, whilst nevertheless attempting to additionally create social value.

By attempting to achieve the successful management of a double/triple bottom line, whilst simultaneously giving primacy to the economic sustainability of the organisation, SEs were sometimes forced into situations wherein they were obliged to "abandon less efficient practices that strengthen social capital, such as running a volunteer program" (Kerlin, 2006: 258).

The potential impact of such constrained decision-making was underlined by Wallace (2005: title) who, discussing the "meaning(s) of sustainability for community based social entrepreneurs", asserted that "social sustainability draws on the concept of social capital" (*ibid*.: 80) for its development and ongoing maintenance, thus highlighting the vital link between community-based

social capital accumulation and long-term sustainability for SEs – a link that was markedly absent from the 'grand narrative' of SEship.

Related to the issue of (financial) sustainability and the political implications of the adoption of a rationalist, business management conception of SE within policy-making circles, was the widely-held contention that SEs were very often launched in response to "market failure and the inability of the state to fulfil its social responsibilities" (Chell, 2007: 4), thereby "reflect[ing their] tendency to enter less viable markets" (Diochon and Anderson, 2009: 15).

Where SEs establish themselves for the benefit of socially and economically disadvantaged communities (Defourny and Nissens, 2008; Galera and Borzaga, 2009; Spear and Bidet, 2005), thereby undertaking "complex, low-profit activities" (Haugh, 2005: 6) within "markets [that] do not do a good job of valuing social improvements" (Dees, 2003: 3) the practical implications of the (negative) impact on an SE's ability to create ongoing financial organisational sustainability are potentially significant (Seanor and Meaton, 2008).

However, governmental approaches to the assessment of the causes of "the difficulties faced by social entrepreneurs" (OTS, 2006: 42) tended not to be framed in terms of the tensions caused by attempting to attain financial sustainability and autonomy, whilst simultaneously meeting a double/triple bottom line through trading activities undertaken within the context of an environment suffering from significant economic and social deprivation, but rather in the simplistic market-based terms of either market failure, or of an overly-'efficient' market:

> "[t]he challenge is to try to understand whether the difficulties faced by social
> enterprises are a result of market failures or the product of an efficient market that
> tends to value financial over social return" (*ibid.*).

Thus, when SEs located in deprived communities were pushed to prioritise financial outputs through consistently "working to increase traded income" DTI, 2002: 13), whilst simultaneously attempting to effect social change (Martin and Osberg, 2007; Perrini *et al*, 2010; Ridley-Duff, 2007), the competing demands were likely to provoke the conclusion that "aiming for 100% trading element was unrealistic and likely to be achievable only at the expense of not meeting the

needs of disadvantaged groups" (Wallace, 2005: 83). Indeed, where ongoing financial independence was consistently prioritised as a management outcome, SEs were found to have to make some stark choices based upon the reality that "the most financially sustainable option might be to deliver only modest social outcomes" (Thompson, 2008: 157).

In this way, where governmental rhetoric posits that SEs exist both to "create real opportunities for the people working in them and the communities that they serve" (DTI 2002: 5), in addition to providing "a key component in the process of modernising and reforming our public services" (DTI 2002: 6), whilst the reality of the enactment of those policies compels even some SEs to reduce their social service provision, it stands to reason that the mismatch between rhetoric and policy implementation should be investigated and if necessary addressed.

3.8 Critical scholarship in SE and SEship: emergent themes

> "[M]uch of what is said and known about social entrepreneurship is mythological in the sense that it is perceived as true rather than effectively being true" (Dey and Steyaert, 2012: 93).

As a result of many of the issues discussed previously within the general SE and SEship literature review, a critical stream of literature began to emerge (Christie and Honig, 2006; Choi and Majumdar, 2014; Nicholls and Cho, 2006; Peredo and McClean, 2006), which aimed to both "assess different perspectives" (Bull, 2008: 269), and challenge "the taken for granted ways of thinking of social enterprise" (Seanor *et al*, 2007: 12), as a means of mitigating against the relentless "euphoria and optimism" (Bull 2008: 268) of the 'grand narrative' of SEship.

An extensive review of the critical SE and SEship stream of literature revealed that whilst some of the themes reflected the problematic areas identified within the general SE and SEship literature, the justification for the focus on specific emergent key themes was rather different, and premised upon a desire to challenge the status quo through the application of "a skeptical orientation to the ideology of entrepreneurship" (Dey and Steyaert, 2006: 34).

- *Critical approaches to SEship scholarship*

Critical scholarship in SE and SEship research (Ziegler, 2009) has increasingly called for the adoption of social constructivist paradigms and attendant methodologies in SE research (Chell, 2007; Jones *et al*, 2008; Parkinson, 2005; Rotheroe and Miller, 2008; Rotheroe and Richards, 2007), in order to facilitate the revelation of the "power relations of role, identity and practice" (WISE, 2006: 54-55) within SE activity.

The contention made by Wells *et al* (2010: 35) that "issues of power cannot be understood in isolation from contextual, structural and socio-economic factors" fits well with both the notion of the social construction (Grimes, 2010; Lehner and Kansikas, 2012) and enactment (Corner and Ho, 2010; Gawell, 2013) of SE and SEship, and the fundamental purpose of social constructivist methodologies, which serve to "emphasize the relationality between people and their context" (Diochon and Anderson, 2011: 99; Parker and Howorth, 2008).

Exploring the manifestations of power within discourses by applying the tenets of critical discourse analysis (Pärenson, 2011; Parkinson, 2005; Zografos, 2007) has allowed SE scholars to question the validity and purpose of the "aura of strong celebrity and 'brand' image [of] social entrepreneurship both at the societal and individual levels" (Dacin *et al*, 2011: 1209), the "uncritical promotion of the instrumental gospel of market speak" (Humphries and Grant, 2005: 48) within SE and SEship discourses, and the "emotional engineering of the term social entrepreneurship [that] has, despite its rather young pedigree, already been remarkably solidified and naturalized" (Dey and Steyaert, 2006: 7).

Further, it serves to remind scholars to "pay close attention to the persuasive uses of the terms [associated with SE and SEship], as well as to their practical implications [as]…contested, value-laden labels that can be used to reference a wide variety of interests, motives, activities, and outcomes" (Roper and Cheney, 2005: 103), and to be aware of the particular effects of the construction of SE in terms of a "managerially defined rhetoric of enterprise [that] is used to promote efficiency, business discipline and financial independence" (Parkinson and Howorth, 2008: 285).

Finally, it answers the call "to imbue entrepreneurship theory with practitioner knowledge and understanding" (Chell, 2007: 7), and allows practitioners' experientially based sense-making to be fore-fronted, thus "captur[ing] the voices of those most often assumed to be the object of, rather than a subject in the production of, the discourse of which they form the centre" (Parkinson and Howorth, 2008: 305). Critical approaches then, offer researchers the means by which to achieve "a better understanding [of SE and SEship, through…] critically (and empathetically) challenging taken for granted ways of thinking" (Seanor *et al*, 2011: 12).

- *Definitional debate*

There does not (yet) exist a widely agreed-upon definition for either SE (GLA, 2007; Grant, 2008; Shaw and Carter, 2007; Swanson and Zhang, 2012), or SEship (Jiao, 2011; Nicholls, 2008; Smith and Stevens, 2010; Zahra *et al*, 2009), which situation has been judged within the wider SE/SEship academic community as having "ma[de] it difficult for scholars to build upon and contribute to an emerging stream of knowledge" (Desa, 2007: 20), and thus to have "frustrate[d] efforts to produce a comprehensive understanding" (Shaw and Carter, 2007: 419) of the phenomena (Dacin *et al*, 2011).

With SEship having been described as "an immense tent into which all manner of socially beneficial activities fit" (Martin and Osberg, 2007: 30), SE encompassing "a bewildering array of definitions" (Teasdale, 2012: 99), and the third sector - within which SE and SEship are conceptually located (Cabinet Office, 2007b; Carmel and Harlock, 2008; WISE, 2006) - referred to as a "loose and baggy monster" (Kendall and Knapp, 1995), it is little wonder that there remains no definitional consensus (Chell, 2007; Diochon and Anderson, 2011).

In addition to the problems posed to the development of a coherent body of research by the lack of a widely-accepted definition of SE and SEship, critical scholars have identified related issues that add to the ongoing confusion. These include the use of the terms SE and SEship synonymously and interchangeably (Galera and Borzaga, 2009), the fact of "different commentators using the same term to refer to different organisational types" (Teasdale 2010: 92; Shaw and Carter, 2007), an acknowledgement that "[d]isagreements persist about the

domain of entrepreneurship and adding the value-laden prefix "social" further exacerbates this definitional debate" (Zahra *et al*, 2009: 520), and that the academic fixation with attempting to define SE and SEship has little relevance for "practitioners [who consider that] there is little merit in attempting to write an accurate definition" (Jones and Keogh, 2006: 15; Grant and Dart, 2008).

As discussed previously, it is generally agreed that 'legitimacy' (Dart, 2004) for SEs is earned through conformity to dominant discourses (Tracey *et al*, 2011), which are defined as "the legitimating strategies of the key actors who are driving the processes of paradigm building" (Nicholls, 2010: 612). However, the UK's development of dominant discourses of SE premised on "market solutions, trading income and celebration of the visionary entrepreneur" (Ridley-Duff, 2007: 385), have been critiqued for their tendency to "privilege one group of social enterprises over another" (Ridley-Duff and Southcombe, 2012: 178), which has resulted in the emergence of three further problematic outcomes, which are:

> "selection (i.e. a distinction between 'this and not-this'), hierarchies (i.e. binary oppositions in which one term always governs the other) and censorship (i.e. mechanisms by which elite groups get to refuse to discuss, and label as uninteresting or vulgar, issues that are uncomfortable for them)" (Steyaert and Dey, 2010: 240).

Furthermore, the acknowledgement of the 'spill-over' effect on SE and SEship theory-building and research of the lack of definitional consensus within mainstream entrepreneurship (Certo and Miller, 2008; Zahra *et al*, 2009), as well as the recognition that many SEs do not define themselves as such in spite of meeting the discursive and definitional criteria (Grant and Dart, 2008; IFF, 2005; Seanor and Meaton, 2007; Spear *et al*, 2009) has been identified as a potentially problematic area for contemporary SEship research. This is particularly so in regard to issues of diversity in SEship (Bridgstock *et al*, 2010; Humbert, 2012), where it has been found that whilst Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) SEship occurs at a significantly higher rate than its White counterpart (Harding, 2006; Harding and Cowling, 2004), the BAME community continues to feel "a degree of suspicion between [itself] and the social enterprise movement and related policy agenda" (Sepulveda *et al*, 2010: 15).

- *Diversity within SE and SEship*

Linked to the lack of definitional consensus (Shaw and Carter, 2007) outlined above, the diversity evident within the SE sector (Dart *et al*, 2010; Mason *et al*, 2007; Ridley-Duff, 2007; Shaw and Carter, 2007) is becoming an issue of increasing concern amongst scholars wishing to challenge the homogeneous (heroic) portrayal of 'successful' SE and social entrepreneurs (Dacin *et al*, 2010; Meyskens *et al*, 2010; Short *et al*, 2009) evident in the dominant discourses (Bacq and Janssen, 2011).

Fears have been expressed as to the isomorphic outcomes (and associated reduction in diversity) that could derive from the politically motivated discursive construction of the "rules" and associated "admiration of success" (Griffith, 2012: 8) of SE, and both the assumptions underpinning, and veracity of, the "grand narrative" of SE (Dey and Steyaert: 85, 2010; Mauksch, 2012) have been called into question for their inherent reductionism in "downplay[ing] the agency of practitioners in constructing the meaning of social enterprise" (Teasdale, 2012: 107), and simultaneously presenting SE as an "ideal solution that does not need any counter-options" (Dey and Steyaert, 2012: 102).

In recent years a small, but growing, body of work has begun to emerge within the SE and SEship literature that questions the absence of women-centred research (Humbert, 2012; Teasdale *et al*, 2011; Lyon and Humbert, 2013; McAdam and Treanor, 2011; Pines *et al*, 2012), as well as research exploring other diversity markers, in the face of significant evidence relating to the engagement with SEship of "groups of individuals not attracted to mainstream enterprise" (Shah, 2009: 108).

Indeed, SEUK (2013: 42) reported that "close to half (48%) of BAME-led [SE] organisations are also women-led", which two diversity markers were individually identified by Patricia Hewitt in 2003 as requiring specific research:

> "we need to deepen understanding of particular aspects of social enterprise to help more diverse businesses grow - those run by black and minority ethnic people, women, under- represented groups, those in rural communities" (DTI, 2003: 3).

Whilst there has been an acknowledged "lack of research undertaken on social enterprise activity within these [BAME] communities" (Sepulveda et al, 2010: 2), the political importance of the BAME SE sector was recognised in the publication of the 2008 Government Equalities Office document 'Social enterprise: making it work for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Women' (GEO, 2008), and the 2009 Social Enterprise Coalition document 'A strategy for the social enterprise movement to improve the engagement and support of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) social enterprises' (SEC, 2009).

However, in spite of the fact of women's, and BAME SE activity having been on the Labour government's (1997-2010) policy agenda, and the existence of a plethora of evidence documenting the presence of significant women- and BAME-led SE activity in the UK (Harding 2007; Harding and Cowling, 20064; Harding and Harding, 2008), diversity in these areas of SE and SEship continues to remain woefully under-researched (Bridgstock *et al*, 2010; Humbert, 2012; Sepulveda *et al*, 2010).

Other areas of SE activity in which organisational diversity can be seen include: the types of revenue streams used (Dees and Anderson, 2003; Grant, 2008; Haugh, 2005, 2007; Lane and Casile, 2011; Moizer and Tracey, 2010), the "size, structure and the sectors in which they operate" (Peattie and Morley, 2008: 20; BoE, 2003; HoC, 2008; SEC, 2007; Shaw and Carter, 2007), the governance structures employed (Mason *et al*, 2007; Ridley-Duff, 2008; Zografos, 2007), and the level of profit distribution (Bacq and Janssen, 2011; Chell *et al*, 2010; Jones and Keogh, 2006; Spear and Bidet, 2005).

In fact, SE organisational diversity is evident in the whole "mix of resources, goals and management cultures [which] makes them complex hybrid organizations" (Ohana and Meyer, 2010: 443).

- *'Success' and social value creation*

The issue of 'success' in SE activity remains a highly contested and contentious subject, with "the definition of success [not being] clear or universally agreed upon" (Lane and Casile, 2011: 248), and the relationship between the what and how of value creation and its subsequent measurement, being acknowledged to

be largely dependent on the political agenda being served (Carmel and Harlock, 2008; Diochon and Anderson, 2011; Griffith, 2012; Steyaert and Dey, 2010; Teasdale, 2010).

The rhetoric surrounding of the 'grand narrative' of SE promotes a vision of success largely borrowed from mainstream entrepreneurship discourses, founded upon concepts of "enterprise, innovation, [and] competitiveness" (DTI, 2002: 8). However, in the bid to create "a plot that promises improvement while radiating an aura of success" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 89), there exists a tendency to continuously recycle "the same examples of success" (Skoll Foundation, 2007: 22), which "become heralded as archetypal examples of this form of entrepreneurship to a broader public" (Dacin *et al*, 2011: 1209).

The measurement of social outcomes, which ostensibly represent SEs' main point of derivation from mainstream enterprises (Bacq and Janssen, 2011; Moss *et al*, 2011; Perrini *et al*, 2010), remains problematic (Bull, 2006; Swanson and Zhang, 2012) in spite of the development in recent years of a "new set of conceptual frames through which the richness of value creation can better be determined" (Nicholls, 2011: 122).

Difficulties in terms of "when to measure, what to measure, and how to measure it" (Puttick and Ludlow, 2012: 4), alongside the acknowledged "time lag before performance will be affected in order to determine causation" (Ruebottom, 2011: 177), and the costs associated with the often "burdensome" (Spreckley, 2011: 54; Peattie and Morley, 2008) task of social outcome measurement has meant that SEs have tended to indentify "their own non-financial metrics of success based on mission, industry, and ideal impact" (Neck *et al*, 2009: 18), supported by "anecdotal evidence [which] is easier to collect and interpret" (Lane and Casile, 2011: 248).

As noted by Neck *et al* (2009) previously, practitioner-centred research has demonstrated that the level of success perceived by SE managers is often directly correlated with organisational values and identity (Moss *et al*, 2011; Nicholls, 2011; Perrini *et al*, 2010; Seanor and Meaton, 2007; Westall, 2009), and local embeddedness/context (Mair, 2010; Peattie and Morley, 2008; Smith and Stevens, 2010), which demonstrates the conceptual and causal link for

practitioners between "values as morality…[and] the measurement of outcome value" (Westall, 2009: 5).

In this way, SEs (and the SEurs who manage them) have been found to overwhelmingly reject the notion of "profit as the paramount measure of value and human activity" (Jones and Keogh, 2006: 15), which in turn suggests that "conceptualizations of success and performance among[st] people managing social enterprises…are radically different to those gleaned from a reading of the social entrepreneurship rhetoric" (Parkinson and Howorth, 2008: 286).

The identified tensions and contradictions between rhetoric and reality relating to 'success' in SE and the links to the discursive construction of the same, represent interesting emergent themes worthy of further investigation. However, in so doing, it is essential to remain mindful of "the assumptions that underpin our measures of success […because in] creating these measures, we are defining what, and who are legitimate" (Ruebottom, 2011: 179; Bull, 2006).

- *Social entrepreneurial identity*

Critical SE scholars have increasingly focussed attention on the narrative construction of personal (social) entrepreneurial identity (Bjursell and Melin, 2011; Hytti, 2003; Seanor and Meaton, 2007), as a means by which to access to new "understandings and meanings through language and discourse" (Bull, 2008: 273) of SEship as an enacted process.

The narrative construction of identity is a linguistic tool through which the individual shows themselves to be "similar to and different from others" (Seanor *et al*, 2011: 5), in what can be understood as a fluid, social exchange (Rae and Carswell, 2000; Rae, 2005):

> "identities are not created in the entrepreneur's mind, nor externally by the society
> and its structure, but are constructed diagonally between entrepreneurs and others
> in everyday conversations and life" (Hytti, 2003: 22-23).

The presence of the ongoing definitional debate in SE and SEship, alongside the documented fact of the existence of both SEs and SEurs demonstrating an unwillingness to 'label' themselves as such (Delta/IFF, 2010; Seanor and Meaton, 2007), makes the exploration of SEurial identity pertinent as a means

by which to discover new 'understandings and meanings' around the topics of SE and SEship.

This is especially true of issues relating to the processional nature of the development of a SEurial identity (Muñoz, 2009; Jones *et al*, 2008) which may offer insight into motivating factors that influence engagement with SE, as "social entrepreneurs may see places for business where others do not because of their life and work experiences, beliefs, and attitudes" (Steinerowski *et al*, 2010: 5). Additionally, it provides a lens through which to explore practitioners' understandings of, and relationships with, dominant discourses of SE/SEship (Dart, 2004; Dey, 2010; Humbert, 2012), and the "resistance to political narratives that…[may] arise in the face of asymmetrical power relations" (Mason, 2012: 126).

Finally, a focus on identity formation can provide insight into SEurs' construction of the organisational identity of their own SEs (Froggett and Chamberlayne, 2004; Grimes, 2010; Moss *et al*, 2011) and the associated "intersection of personal and organisational social enterprise narratives" (Cornelius *et al*, 2008: 366), with due consideration given to the documented fact that the major investment made by social entrepreneurs into their SEs tends to be based less on financial resources than it is on "personal credibility, framing and reputation effects" (Desa, 2007: 9).

This in turn provides a means by which to explore the ways in which facets of those identities (and the discourses with which they are associated) are moderated and manipulated according to 'audience' being addressed (Teasdale, 2010a), and in this way, experiential knowledge of SE activity can be brought to the formation of theory (Seanor *et al*, 2011) based upon practitioners' own "understanding of themselves, their identity, their beliefs, [and] their own meanings of issues that are going on around them" (Jones *et al*, 2008: 333).

- *Embeddedness of SE*

The emergence of SE in the UK was marked by the development of discourses of SE activity that reflected the prevailing political agenda of reductions to (some areas of) public spending (Cabinet Office, 2010; DiDomenico *et al*,

2009), the simultaneous achievement of 'social justice' for marginalised and disadvantaged individuals and communities (Bland, 2010; Cabinet Office, 2006; Griffith, 2012), within a wider rhetorical framework associated with "modernising and reforming our public services" (DTI, 2002: 6), and more specifically, the part that SEs could play in the delivery of public services (DTI, 2003; Cabinet Office, 2006).

To that end, SE rhetoric was initially heavily associated within discourses of social and economic community regeneration (DTI, 2002, 2003; Hewitt, 2002; HM Treasury, 1999; SITF, 2000), wherein a locally-embedded, community-based conception (Shaw *et al*, 2002) allowed policy-makers to conclude that SEs "are often so close to their customers, they can also really help to add to local wealth creation" (DTI, 2003: 52).

Indeed the conception of SEs as "community based…[and] established to address a specific local or community need" (DTI, 2002: 22) further meant that claims could be made about their ability to quickly identify, and respond to the needs of deprived communities (Haugh and Kitson, 2007; Leadbeater, 2007) in ways which apparently improved upon the "bureaucratic tendencies of statist social democracy" (Roy *et al*, 2013: 65) evident in public sector delivery of social services (Hostick-Boakye and Hothi, 2011; HM Government, 2011; McCray and Ward, 2009; Miller and Millar, 2011).

The notion of embeddedness evident in the political discourses of SE related specifically to the geographical and local embeddedness often associated with concepts of community (Manfredi, 2005; Parkinson, 2005; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Thompson and Doherty, 2006), and sustainability (DTI, 2003; nef, 2005; Schieffer and Lessem, 2009; Weerwardena and Mort, 2006). As such, it represented one aspect – alongside social and discursive elements (Steyaert and Katz, 2004) – of the conceptualisation of (social) entrepreneurship as a socially constructed and contextually enacted process:

> "local communities serve as the context for social enterprise, from which social entrepreneurs emerge, but they comprise also the major beneficiaries, for whom many social enterprises are created, as well as the consumers and employees of these businesses and organisations" (Reid and Griffith, 2006: 3).

The mapping of the geographic location of SE activity has emerged as an issue of interest to both policy-makers and academics (BoE, 2003; DTI, 2004; Muñoz, 2009; SEC, 2003; Smallbone *et al*, 2001), as connections have been sought between geographic location, levels of socio-economic deprivation, amount of SE activity (ECOTEC, 2003; IFF, 2005; Levie and Hart, 2011), the locality-based influences upon emergence of SE clusters, and social innovation diffusion across geographic spaces (Cabinet Office, 2006; Mair and Martí, 2006; Short *et al*, 2009; Westall, 2007).

The academic literature pertaining to the social embeddedness of SEurs and their SEs specifically has provided for diverse avenues of enquiry including: the call for research that explores the connection between embeddedness and social value creation (Dacin *et al,* 2011), the positing of a possible connection between "embeddedness and the important influence of community on women's social entrepreneurial activity" (McAdam and Treanor, 2011: 5; Humbert, 2012), an investigation of the connection between opportunity recognition and the local embeddedness of SEurs (Carter and Shaw, 2007; Haugh, 2007; Mair, 2010), and the exploration of the potential implications of embeddedness on the development of SE activities in terms of access to resources and social innovation (Mair and Martí, 2006).

The topic of the embeddedness of SEurs and their SEs is worthy of further investigation, as it has the potential to provide fresh insights into many areas of the SEurial process as outlined above, and draws connections with other emergent key themes such as those of gender (Humbert, 2012; McAdam and Treanor, 2011), ethnic identity (Sepulveda *et al*, 2010), and other aspects of diversity (Mair and Schoen, 2005).

- *Tensions managing a double/triple bottom line*

Whilst the 'grand narrative' of SE and SEship posits the unproblematic combination of economic and social outputs for SEship (Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Teasdale, 2012), critical scholarship has increasingly questioned this representation, suggesting that SE can be better understood as "a combination of two concepts that do not naturally fit together and yet which seeks acceptance as common sense" (Roper and Cheney, 2005: 102).

Hjorth (2013: 37) proposed that the political construction of SE and SEship is underpinned by a belief that "formerly social problems, re-defined as economic, [can] become subject to managerial expertise and in this way be solved…[within which] framing, the social is weakened, and the economic (measurability and thus controllability) is strengthened".

Thus the tensions inherent in managing an enterprise attempting to create simultaneous social and economic value have been widely acknowledged both by SE scholars (Dees and Anderson, 2003; Haugh, 2005; Hostick-Boakye and Hothi, 2011; Hynes, 2009; Seanor *et al*, 2007; Scott and Teasdale, 2012), and by policy makers (BoE, 2003; Cabinet Office, 2006; DTI, 2002), and explorations of those tensions have shown that they manifest in a myriad of forms which include issues relating to: HR – specifically recruitment and retention of staff (Cabinet Office, 2002; Ohana and Meyer, 2010; Steinerowski *et al*, 2010), and managing paid and volunteer staff (Allinson *et al*, 2011; Peattie and Morley, 2008); the higher costs associated with meeting both economic and social goals (Cabinet Office, 2007b; BoE, 2003); business skills deficits (Smallbone *et al*, 2001; Hynes, 2009); the demands of managing diverse revenue streams (Frumkin and Keating, 2011; Weerawardena *et al*, 2010); the complexity of maintaining competitive advantage whilst retaining meaningful social outcomes (Moizer and Tracey, 2010); the risk of mission drift (Austin *et al*, 2006; Ko, 2012; Todres *et al*, 2006); the ability (or not) of the client/customer to pay (Westall, 2007); the attendant risk of failure for SEs operating for the benefit of poor communities (McBrearty, 2007); and the future implications for SEurs of association with a previous failed social venture (Dacin *et al*, 2010; Smith *et al*, 2012).

The limitations in the SE literature highlighted by the critical SE scholarship can be seen to largely mirror those found in the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship research, such that the critical SE literature has similarly called for a focus on, and critical evaluation of, "the paradigmatic assumptions" (Chell, 2007: 14) made by the adoption of specific theoretical positions (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009; Bull, 2008), alongside a recognition of the marginalisation of SE and SEship research within the Academy (Battle Anderson and Dees, 2006; Nicholls, 2010), and an awareness of the power

implications implicit in "the influence of resource rich providers as direct or indirect funders or as gatekeepers to case study materials, key social entrepreneurs, and other data sources" (Nicholls, 2010: 626).

Additionally, it has been suggested that there is a need to develop theories that both "highlight the local embeddedness of social enterprises" (Shaw and Carter, 2007: 427; Chell, 2007; DiDomenico *et al*, 2010; Smith and Stevens, 2010), and take account of the 'non-traditional' social value creation of SE that represents "the central criterion characterising social entrepreneurs[hip]" (Galera and Borgaza, 2009: 215; Austin *et al*, 2006; Kerlin, 2006; Mason *et al*, 2007; Perrini *et al*, 2010)

The political effects of the "social construction of target populations" (Park and Wilding, 2013: 2) – in this case the SEur, and her/his associated SEurial identity – is important for two reasons: first, because of its effect on SEurial propensity which, as individuals seek "to be part of a particular group of similar others (i.e. the in-group) and distinctive from other groups (i.e. out-groups)" (de Clercq and Honig, 2011: 360), causes potential SEurs to evaluate their 'fit' with a particular SEurial identity construction as they assess the feasibility of their engagement with it (Dacin *et al*, 2011); and second, for the effect that it has on how SEship is enacted by the SEurs as they attempt to mimic archetypal forms of 'successful' SE delivery legitimised within the 'grand narrative' (Ruebottom, 2013), such that their SEs':

> "goals and activities [become] congruent with broader societal norms, beliefs, and values" (Foreman and Whetton, 2002: 622).

In summary then, critical scholarship has opened-up the field of SE and SEship to more nuanced investigation for the purpose of "critically (and empathetically) challenging the taken for granted ways of thinking of social enterprise" (Seanor *et al*, 2011: 12). By so doing, problematic issues have been (and continue to be) revealed (Dacin *et al*, 2010; Nicholls, 2010; Sepulveda *et al*, 2010), and the political implications of such issues for both practitioners, and the academic and policy communities, have been exposed (Ruebottom, 2013; Steyaert and Katz, 2004; Teasdale *et al*, 2013).

3.9 SE and gender: the emergence of a feminist critique of SE research and theorising

As discussed previously, the SE and SEship field of research is one that is deemed to be at the 'nascent' stage of its development (Dacin *et al*, 2011), and which currently lacks "rigorous, theory-driven empirical work that explores the distinctiveness of social ventures or that explains the motivations behind these distinctions" (Moss *et al*, 2011: 806).

The reasons for this are various but include the fact that, like feminist scholarship, SE/SEship-focussed scholarship is similarly marginalised within the Academy (Bull, 2007; Connolly and Kelly, 2011; Jones *et al*, 2008), and that:

> "as an under-researched sector SE suffers from a tendency towards myth and assumption, and…an important role for future research is in challenging these" (Peattie and Morley, 2008: 56).

As an academic discipline, SE research has as often been undertaken by social science departments as by business schools (Kerlin, 2006), which within the UK has been (at least partially) explained by the strictures imposed by the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which demands that academics seek to publish in 'elite' journals (for the purpose of both University rating, and career progression) and so:

> "acts to reinforce traditional disciplinary boundaries and push scholars to concentrate on the longest standing management journals with a strong '[REF] rating'" (Peattie and Morley, 2008: 101).

As a result, and in spite of several prestigious business schools in the US (Harvard and Duke), and in the UK (Oxford) (Jiao, 2011; Nicholls, 2010) having opened specialist centres for SEship research, and indeed developed MBA courses in SEship (Seelos and Mair, 2004), it is nevertheless true that "social entrepreneurship remains elusive from mainstream management literature" (Desa, 2007: 1).

As such, research-active academics in business schools are less likely to risk researching SE (rather than mainstream entrepreneurship) for the simple fact that whilst there exist several elite journals either specialising in, or regularly

publishing, work relating to (male-centred) mainstream entrepreneurship (de Bruin *et al*, 2006; Neergaard *et al*, 2011), there exist only two specialist SE/SEship journals, one of which is unranked and the other of which is ranked at one (out of four) stars according to the ABS (Association of Business Schools) ranking system (Granados *et al*, 2011).

This situation mirrors the evidence presented in the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship, whereby women academics are forced by the REF (or equivalent) and promotions criteria to side-line their work on women entrepreneurs in favour of mainstream, "academically 'legitimate" research (Stevenson, 1990: 444). Thus, the constraints imposed upon both SE scholars and feminist scholars by institutionalised norms and expectations act as discursive practices which delegitimise research into SE/SEship and women's entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006). The cumulative disadvantage experienced by scholars specialising in women's engagement with SE/SEship is therefore self-evident, and is reflected by the paucity of research focussing on women's SEship (Teasdale *et al*, 2011; Treanor and McAdam, 2011) in a situation excellently summarised by Humbert (2012: 10):

> "[w]hile there is a dearth of research into gender effects in the third sector, patterns of inequities present in the private sector may be largely replicated in the third sector, albeit on a smaller scale. The extent to which these patterns are similar, or different, remain critically under-researched [...and] none of this work to date has been applied to social entrepreneurs".

In the very first article of the first-ever published volume of the Social Enterprise Journal, Helen Haugh (2005) proposed a focus for future research on the gender of SEurs, on the basis of evidence derived from the GEM studies that suggested that the number of women engaging in SE/SEship was significantly higher than for mainstream entrepreneurship (GEM 2004; 2006). However, in spite of this recommendation, very little research on women's involvement with SE/SEship has been undertaken to date (Datta and Gailey, 2012; Humbert, 2012; Lyon and Humbert, 2013; Teasdale et al, 2011), which omission risks replicating the development of masculine-gendered theory highlighted by the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship research and theory-building (Treanor and McAdam, 2011).

At present, the feminist scholarly contribution to the emergent SE/SEship literature appears to have stalled at the point of the call for the inclusion of women-centred research however, whilst qualitative research on women SEurs and their SEurial activity remains almost non-existent (for a notable exception see: Datta and Gailey, 2012), it is likely that the same key themes that emerged from the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship would be applicable to SEship and to women's experiences within the SE sector.

Where quantitative research on women SEurs in the UK exists, problematic issues identified include the fact that "women are still under-represented on boards when considered as a proportion of the population or the proportion of women's employment in social enterprises" (Lyon and Humbert, 2013: 1; Teasdale *et al*, 2011), that women SEurs earn significantly less than their male counterparts (Estrin *et al*, 2014), and that diversity amongst SEurs still represents a problematic omission from contemporary SE/SEship theorising (McAdam and Treanor, 2011). Furthermore, other women-focussed quantitative studies have found, for example, that "women may be motivated to become social entrepreneurs by a desire to improve the socio-economic environment of the community in which they live and see social enterprise creation as an appropriate vehicle with which to address local problems" (Levie and Hart, 2011: 200), and that women-run SEs do not 'underperform' compared to men-run SEs, that women-run SEs are as (socially) innovative as their men-run counterparts, and that "perhaps due their specific sensitivity towards social needs, women social entrepreneurs are notable 'lead innovators' when it comes to social innovation" (Huysentruyt, 2014: 21).

3.10 Conclusion

As noted previously, the fact that SE and SEship are acknowledged to be under-researched fields makes it perhaps unsurprising that within an under-developed research arena, there is a dearth of research relating to women's (social) entrepreneurship – a marginalised topic even within mainstream entrepreneurship. However, there exists an increasingly vocal community of scholars within the SE/SEship community who have recognised the problematic nature of this omission, and who are consequently seeking to address it. This

desire is borne-out by, for example, the 2014 International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship (IJGE) call for papers for a Special Issue entitled 'Furthering a gendered understanding of social entrepreneurship'.

However, whilst there is clearly both the desire and the will to gain a clearer understanding of the issue of gender as it relates to SE and SEship, until such gender-aware research is undertaken, and subsequently approved for publication, no new theory development in this area will be forthcoming.

Chapter Four: The conceptual framework of the study

4.0 The development of the conceptual framework

This section presents the themes, pertinent to the conceptual framework, and drawn from the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship, and the social entrepreneurship literatures. It demonstrates how the interconnections between the dimensions of gender and power are explored in this study.

4.1 The feminist critique of entrepreneurship dimension

As a body of critical scholarship, the feminist entrepreneurship literature serves two distinct, yet entwined purposes. The first of these is a revelatory, "consciousness raising" (Mavin *et al*, 2004: 294) function, whereby feminist scholars apply feminist theory coupled with a 'gender lens' approach (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011; Bird and Brush, 2002; Brush *et al*, 2009) in order to the demonstrate the gendered nature of nominally 'gender-neutral' processes, institutions, and practices (Brush and Cooper, 2012; Mavin *et al*, 2004; Tedmanson *et al*, 2012), and the discourses and discursive practices that constantly reinforce (and render invisible) gendered norms which perpetuate women's subordination and disadvantage (Ahl, 2006; Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Zimmerman and Brouthers, 2012).

The second, and complementary function of the feminist critique of entrepreneurship research, is to demonstrate the practical implications of the invisibility of institutionalised gender practices for women as both entrepreneurs (Ettl and Welter, 2010; Greene *et al*, 2003; Harrison and Mason, 2007; Lewis, 2006), and research scholars (Ahl, 2006; Campbell, 2011; de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Stevenson, 1990), and to expose the limitations imposed upon entrepreneurship research output and knowledge development, of the continued dominance of traditional, 'malestream' approaches (Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Foss, 2010; Gupta *et al*, 2009; Hart and Metcalfe, 2010).

The six key themes derived themes from the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship research were:

- *The limitations of traditional positivist methodologies (particularly for women-centred entrepreneurship research)*

Traditional objectivist, positivist approaches have been widely critiqued for continuously reproducing and legitimising gendered norms (Brush *et al*, 2009; Limerick and O'Leary, 2006; Maxfield *et al*, 2010) that present women as 'less suited' to entrepreneurship than men (Ahl, 2006; Marlow, 2002; Ogbor, 2000), for their claim to represent the sole means by which 'legitimate' knowledge can be created (Hart and Metcalfe, 2010; Shaw, 2010; Stevenson, 1990), for their inability to capture the gendered experiences of entrepreneurs (Gupta *et al*, 2009), and thus for their failure to provide a vehicle for the consideration of viewpoints that deviate from the conventional, androcentric norm of entrepreneurship (Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Foss, 2010; Lewis, 2006).

The feminist response to these limitations has been to encourage the use of feminist theory coupled with a gender lens in research (Brush *et al*, 2009; Maxfield *et al*, 2010), to promote the application of 'non-traditional' methodological approaches (Gupta *et al*, 2009; Moore, 1990; Stevenson, 1990) that reflect the lived experiences of entrepreneurs (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Foss, 2010; Mirchandani, 1999), and to incorporate constant reflexivity into the research process in order to acknowledge both the political nature of knowledge creation (Ogbor, 2000; Parker, 2010), and the disruptive and transformative nature of critical scholarship (Limerick and O'Leary, 2006; Shaw, 2010).

- *The androcentricity of entrepreneurship and its associated discourses*

Entrepreneurship theory has historically been developed by male theorists through the study of male-only samples of entrepreneurs (Brush *et al*, 2009; Holmquist and Sundin, 1991), which has resulted in entrepreneurship being gendered to an unacknowledged masculine norm (Smith, 2010; Ogbor, 2000), which has in turn resulted in lower normative (social) support for women entrepreneurs (Baughn *et al*, 2006; Rodrígues and Santos, 2009; Shaw *et al*, 2009). Wider discourses associated with entrepreneurship, for example, perceived core skills and competencies required, and most suitable personality characteristics etc., are also strongly gendered to a masculine norm (Ahl, 2006; Lockyer and George, 2012), creating psycho-social barriers to women's engagement with entrepreneurship whereby women and girls fail to conceive of themselves as 'fitting' the socially constructed (masculine) entrepreneurial

identity (Fielden and Dawe, 2004; Leffler, 2012; Marlow *et al*, 2011; Wilson *et al*, 2009), and thereby lowering the (social) legitimacy of the women who do become entrepreneurs, as well as that of their businesses (Carter and Shaw, 2006; Nelson *et al*, 2009).

Feminist (and other critical) scholars contend that the creation and dissemination of critical scholarship "can help to reconstruct defunct patriarchal institutions and challenge flawed visions" (Shaw, 2010: 46), through its "toleran[ce] to ambiguity, diversity and pluralism" (Ogbor, 2000: 605).

- *The diversity of women entrepreneurs and their enterprises*

Traditional approaches (as discussed above) invariably present 'women' as an homogenous group (Mirchandani, 1999; Stevenson, 1990), which fails to recognise or acknowledge diversity in any form amongst and between women and their businesses (Engelstad and Gerrard, 2005; Lewis, 2006; Maxfield *et al*, 2010).

In order to capture the wide diversity amongst and between women entrepreneurs, feminist scholars have suggested the development of research projects that compare women with other women (rather than with men) (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Maxfield *et al*, 2010), in order to capture the differences between groups of women entrepreneurs (Lewis, 2006; Mirchandani, 1999), the use of methodological approaches that allow women's 'voices' to be heard (Foss, 2010; Gill and Ganesh, 2007), and the application of constructivist epistemologies that capture the socially constructed nature of reality (with specific reference to gender, entrepreneurship, and knowledge/truth) (Ahl, 2006; Brush *et al*, 2009).

- *The embeddedness of entrepreneurship*

Feminist (and other critical) scholars have long argued the fact that entrepreneurship is a social constructed phenomenon (Anderson and Smith, 2007; Brush *et al*, 2009; Campbell, 2011), shaped by the historical, social, cultural, political, geographical and economic environment in which it is enacted (Cardon *et al*, 2005; Goss, 2005a; Welter, 2011).

As such, feminist scholars contend that entrepreneurship cannot meaningfully be explored without due reference to, and a sociologically-informed understanding of, the contextual factors that affect both the entrepreneurs themselves, and the businesses that they run (Ahl, 2006; Carter and Shaw, 2006; Ettl and Welter, 2010), with specific reference to gender as a social construct (Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Ely and Padavic, 2007; Wilson *et al*, 2007a).

- *'Success' in entrepreneurship*

Traditional approaches to entrepreneurship research, informed by economic rationality, and objectivist epistemologies (Jayasinghe *et al*, 2006), have come to rely on measurable economic outputs as proxies for business 'success' (de Bruin et al, 2007; du Reitz and Henrekson, 2000). These approaches have been critiqued for their "apolitical and uncritical analyses of the nature of the relationship between the entrepreneur and her/his real world context" (Jayasinghe *et al*, 2008: 244), and their inability to capture the sociologically-based (gender, class, race, disability, sexuality etc.) issues that may constrain or moderate entrepreneurial behaviours, and thus the outcomes achieved (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009; Brush *et al*, 2009; Constant, 2009; Mirchandani, 1999). Furthermore, without knowing (and considering in relation to data analysis) which aspects of an entrepreneur's work output or life/achievement (s)he values most highly, and thus prioritises (Parker, 2010; Roomi *et al*, 2009; Winn, 2005), identified gender-based differences (which assume a masculine norm from which women deviate) are reduced to sex-based, individual 'preferences' (Levie and Hart, 2011; Verheul *et al*, 2009), deemed to 'prove' women's deviance from the unacknowledged masculine norm of entrepreneurial behaviour (Grunig, 2006; Nelson *et al* 2009).

Building on the contention that institutionalised "gender practices seem unbiased in isolation, but typically reflect masculine values and the life situations of men who have dominated in the public domain of work" (Nelson *et al*, 2009: 60), feminist (and other critical) scholars have suggested that more holistic, qualitative, and subjective approaches to success measurement (Dalborg *et al*, 2012; Gill and Ganesh, 2007; Jayasinghe *et al*, 2007) would allow for gender-based (and other) structural constraints and their effects on

associated entrepreneurial decision-making, to be contextually assessed and analysed (Brush *et al*, 2009; Welter, 2011), thereby countering the effect of gender-blindness (Bruni *et al*, 2004; Mavin *et al*, 2004), and revealing the often hidden cumulative effect of structural constraints on women entrepreneurs (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Foss, 2010; Marlow *et al*, 2011).

- *Attitudes to entrepreneurship (as fluid over time)*

Essentialist approaches to entrepreneurship research have routinely found (amongst other things) that women are more 'risk averse' than men (Marlow *et al*, 2011; Maxfield *et al*, 2009), that they tend not to possess the same values as entrepreneurial men (Carter *et al*, 2001; Greene *et al*, 2003), and that when they do establish enterprises, they do not seek growth in the same way as men (Brindley, 2005; Zimmerman and Brouthers, 2012).

Such findings demonstrate the gender-blindness associated with sex-difference research, and the lack of nuance offered by such simplistic analyses (Nelson, 2010; Marlow, 2002; Shaw *et al*, 2009). As such, they conceive of women entrepreneurs as a failing (in comparison to men) homogenous group (Carter, 1989; Carter *et al*, 2001), whose relationship with entrepreneurship is static and unidimensional (Mirchandani, 1999; Stevenson, 1990), rather than being one of continuous evolution (Bjursell and Melin, 2011; Hytti, 2005; Williams, 2009), constrained or enabled by the temporal and environmental context in which each woman lives (Brindley, 2005; Winn, 2005). This in turn serves to reinforce negative stereotypes of women as entrepreneurs (Gupta *et al*, 2009; Zalevski and Swiszczowski, 2009), continuously "producing and reproducing a hegemonic sense of reality" (da Costa and Saraiva, 2012: 590).

The feminist critique has therefore suggested that by approaching entrepreneurship research with a gender lens, women's relationship with entrepreneurship can be explored and assessed within a life-time context (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Hughes *et al*, 2012), which "provides a framework for understanding differences among women entrepreneurs" (Gunnerud, 1997: 267), that the gender subtexts applied to women entrepreneurs such that "a boundary [is drawn] between the public and private (assuming different logics of action in each domain and splitting the woman's life in two non-communicating

domains), and…women [are] represent[ed] only in relation to the reproductive life-cycle" (Bruni *et al*, 2004a) can be revealed and challenged, and that the effects of the ebb and flow of the gendered constraints on women's entrepreneurial intentions and activities can be better understood and theorised (Brush *et al*, 2009; Jennings and McDougald, 2007; Mirchandani, 1999).

In addition to the above key emergent themes from the feminist critique of traditional entrepreneurship research, there emerged clear links between the component parts of the critique as demonstrated in Figure 4.1 below.
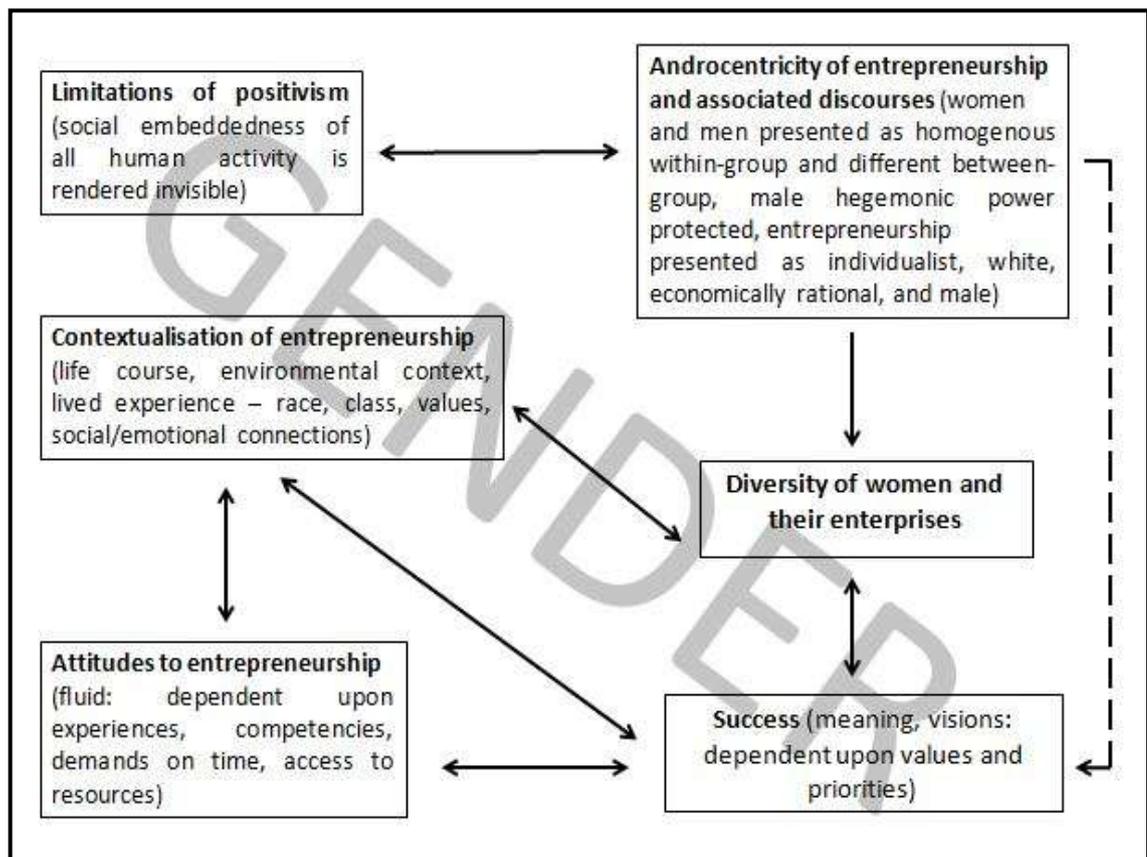
Figure 4.1: The feminist critique of entrepreneurship dimension

Every aspect of the feminist critique is informed by an understanding of gender "as a socially constructed articulation of biological sex which creates, sustains and embeds as normal, female subordination" (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: 556). As such, the "unequal power relations" (Benschop and Verloo, 2006: 21) inherent in the social constructions of gender (and other lines of 'difference' e.g. class, race etc.) are made central to the collection and analysis of data by feminist

scholars (Bourne, 2010; Chowdhry and Nair, 2002; Hartmann, 1976; Jacques, 1992; Mirchandani, 1999).

In this way, the reality of women's day-to-day lived experiences within "patriarchal system[s] of social organisation" (Andersen 1993: 334) are fore-fronted, which itself provides a methodological means by which "to climb the often insurmountable boundaries and barriers between us, 'others' and the '*other*', encouraging a fresh, and no less valid or 'real', perspective on the lived experience of individuals who otherwise do not get heard" (Imas *et al*, 2012: 569).

Additionally, by making the experiences of "subjects who are marginalised and underprivileged" (Foss, 2010: 85) central to the research process, the manifold gender-based social sanctions that both moderate and constrain women's behaviours (Dick and Hyde, 2006; Gupta *et al*, 2009; Heilman, 2001; Winn, 2005) can be revealed, explored, and brought to bear on data analysis and subsequent theorising (Achtenhagen and Welter, 2011; Bird and Brush, 2002; Nelson *et al*, 2009).

Approaching entrepreneurship as a socially constructed and thus socially embedded process (Bjursell and Melin, 2011; Bourne, 2010; Brush *et al*, 2009; Díaz García and Carter, 2009) allows feminist scholars to explore the inter-relations and interactions of different aspects of women's lives upon their entrepreneurial experiences as outlined in Figure 4.1 above. In this way, entrepreneurship is acknowledged to "no longer [be] reducible to positivist and prescriptive formulae but is recognized for its uniqueness, its fluidity and the poignant human interplay essential to its enactment" (Campbell, 2011: 40).

The recognition of the importance to the entrepreneurial experience of the 'interplay' between entrepreneurs, the environments in which they live and work, and the people and institutions with whom/which they interact – named by Calás *et al* (2009: 564) as the "social dynamics of entrepreneurship" – is fundamental to the aim of critical scholarship in "bringing forth a relativised critical empiricism, yet recognizing that there is no knowledge, empirical fact, logical argument or formal principle that is *a priori* certain" (Ogbor, 2000: 631).

Thus, the links between the individual emergent issues from the feminist critique of entrepreneurship research, in terms of both gender-blindness, and social embeddedness, become sites for the revelation of previously 'unseen' or 'hidden' knowledge (Bendl, 2008; Calás *et al*, 2009; da Costa and Saraiva, 2012; Limerick and O'Leary, 2006; Ogbor, 2000; Welter, 2011), and allow researchers to purposefully examine the "blind spots and weaknesses in our understandings of [wider] organisational functioning" (Martin, 2000: 215), and of "entrepreneurship as intensely social activity, embedded in local cultures, ethnicity, and gender" (Downing, 2005: 198).

4.2 The social entrepreneurship dimension

As discussed in detail in the previous chapter, the critical SE/SEship literature revealed seven key themes of contention, which are summarised briefly below:

The call for the adoption of *critical approaches to SEship scholarship* which identically to the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship, calls for the application of social constructivist epistemologies (Diochon and Anderson, 2011; Grimes, 2010; Lehner and Kansikas, 2012; Parker and Howorth, 2008) and an increase in the use of qualitative methodologies (Chell, 2007; Jones *et al*, 2008; Parkinson, 2005; Rotheroe and Miller, 2008; Rotheroe and Richards, 2007) as a means by which to explore manifestations of power (Wells *et al*, 2010), and to "challenge taken for granted ways of thinking" within SEship research (Seanor *et al*, 2011: 12).

The *definitional debate*, which centred on the lack of agreed-upon definition of either SE or SEship, an attendant questioning of the value - to academics, practitioners, and other stakeholders - of the continued search for consensual definitional agreement (Dart *et al*, 2010; Grant and Dart, 2008; Jones and Keogh, 2006a; Neck *et al*, 2009; Skoll, 2008), and an emergent critical evaluation of whose particular interests would be served by such an outcome (Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Lyon and Sepulveda, 2009; Peattie and Morley, 2008; Teasdale, 2012).

The issue of *diversity within SE and SEship*, which sought to challenge both the prescriptive nature of the narration of SE and SEship by "key paradigm-building

actors" (Nicholls, 2010), and the lack of theory-building based on data derived from socially subordinated groups engaging in SEship – for example, women and BAME individuals (Humbert, 2012; Lyon and Humbert, 2013; McAdam and Treanor, 2011; Pines *et al*, 2012; Shah, 2009; Teasdale *et al*, 2011).

The notions of *'success' and social value creation* as contested and politically-charged terms (Carmel and Harlock, 2008; Diochon and Anderson, 2011; Griffith, 2012; Steyaert and Dey, 2010; Teasdale, 2010), which are often premised upon little more than the continuous recycling of the same stories of success (Skoll Foundation, 2007), which "become heralded as archetypal examples of this form of entrepreneurship" (Dacin *et al*, 2011: 1209). Critical SE/SEship scholarship therefore seeks to challenge both the veracity of the creation of the *idea(l)* of SE and SEship by 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010), as well as the ways in which such constructions delineate the boundaries of 'success' in SE/SEship, and therefore legitimise (and delegitimise) certain forms of achievement (Bull, 2006 ; Parkinson and Howorth, 2008; Ruebottom, 2011).

The construction of *SEurial identity* as a means of exploring practitioner understandings and conceptualisations of SE and SEship, in orderl "to imbue entrepreneurship theory with practitioner knowledge and understanding" (Chell, 2007: 7), which fore-fronts practitioners' experientially based sense-making, thus "captur[ing] the voices of those most often assumed to be the object of, rather than a subject in the production of, the discourse of which they form the centre" (Parkinson and Howorth, 2008: 305). In addition, the exploration of SEurial identity formation as a process (Muñoz, 2009; Jones *et al*, 2008) provides a vehicle for the investigation of the "intersection of personal and organisational social enterprise narratives" (Cornelius *et al*, 2008: 366), through which the influences and interrelations of practitioners' "understanding of themselves, their identity, their beliefs, [and] their own meanings of issues that are going on around them" (Jones *et al*, 2008: 333) can be explored in relation to the SEs that they establish.

The *embeddedness of SE* as a means by which to explore the veracity of dominant discourses of the community embeddedness of SEs (Manfredi, 2005;

Parkinson, 2005; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Thompson and Doherty, 2006), the social geography of SEs in terms of location and attendant level(s) of socio-economic deprivation (ECOTEC, 2003; IFF, 2005; Levie and Hart, 2011), the locality-based influences upon emergence of SE clusters, and social innovation diffusion across geographic spaces (Cabinet Office, 2006; Mair and Martí, 2006; Short *et al*, 2009; Westall, 2007), and the relationship between embeddedness and social value creation (Dacin *et al,* 2011) with particular reference to its interaction of "embeddedness and the important influence of community on women's social entrepreneurial activity" (McAdam and Treanor, 2011: 5; Humbert, 2012; Levie and Hart, 2011).

The *tensions managing a double/triple bottom line* which issue seeks to challenge the presentation by 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) of the managerial complexity of working to simultaneous multiple bottom lines as largely unproblematic (Bull, 2008; Roper and Cheney, 2005; Teasdale, 2011), and which further morphs social problems into economic ones which can thereby be 'solved' through the application of entrepreneurial and managerial approaches (Hjorth, 2013).
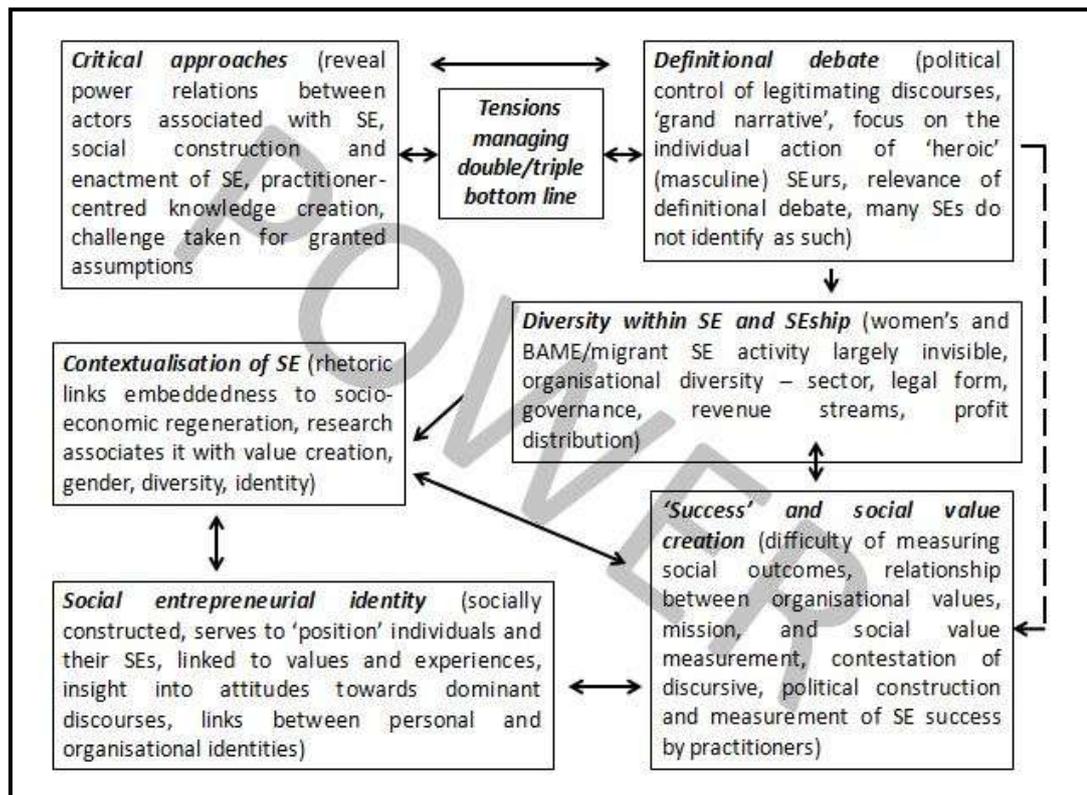
Figure 4.2: The SEship dimension

4.3 The emergent conceptual framework

When the SEship dimension is viewed side-by-side with the feminist critique of entrepreneurship dimension as demonstrated in the Conceptual Framework shown in Figure 4.3 on page 96, the similarities and parallels between the emergent themes of each are quite startling.

Directly in common are issues relating to 'diversity', 'success', and 'embeddedness', whilst topics with similar theoretical and thematic underpinnings include those of 'attitudes to entrepreneurship' and 'social entrepreneurial identity', the 'limitations of positivism' and the 'critical approaches', and the 'androcentricity of entrepreneurship and associated discourses' and the 'definitional debate'.

The nexus represented by the specific study of women's experiences of SEship therefore lends itself perfectly to a medling of the two thematic streams represented by Figures 4.1 and 4.2 into a conceptual framework (Figure 4.3) that acknowledges both the theoretical and practical importance of the emergent issues from both the feminist critique and the critical SEship literatures.

Limitations of positivism (social embeddedness of all human activity is rendered invisible)

Androcentricity of entrepreneurship and associated discourses (women and men presented as homogenous within-group and different between-group, male hegemonic power protected, entrepreneurship presented as individualist, white, economically rational, and male)

Contextualisation of entrepreneurship (life course, environmental context, lived experience – race, class, values, social/emotional connections)

Diversity of women and their enterprises

Attitudes to entrepreneurship (fluid: dependent upon experiences, competencies, demands on time, access to resources)

Success (meaning, visions: dependent upon values and priorities)

GENDER

Critical approaches (reveal power relations between actors associated with SE, social construction and enactment of SE, practitioner-centred knowledge creation, challenge taken for granted assumptions)

Tensions managing double/triple bottom line

Definitional debate (political control of legitimating discourses, 'grand narrative', focus on the individual action of 'heroic' (masculine) SEurs, relevance of definitional debate, many SEs do not identify as such)

Contextualisation of SE (rhetoric links embeddedness to socio-economic regeneration, research associates it with value creation, gender, diversity, identity)

Diversity within SE and SEship (women's and BAME/migrant SE activity largely invisible, organisational diversity – sector, legal form, governance, revenue streams, profit distribution)

Social entrepreneurial identity (socially constructed, serves to 'position' individuals and their SEs, linked to values and experiences, insight into attitudes towards dominant discourses, links between personal and organisational identities)

'Success' and social value creation (difficulty of measuring social outcomes, relationship between organisational values, mission, and social value measurement, contestation of discursive, political construction and measurement of SE success by practitioners)

POWER

Figure 4.3: The conceptual framework of the study

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4.4 Conclusion

The gender-aware nature of the work undertaken by feminist scholars is centred on the revelation of unequal power relations which, whilst not underpinned by feminist theory *per se*, represents the same concern of critical SE and SEship scholarship. As such, it is proposed that a gender-aware focus on issues of power, with particular reference to gendered experiences, and the effects of the control of legitimating discourses of SE/SEship by 'resource-rich actors' (Nicholls, 2010), should facilitate the countering of the invisibility of women's SEship within contemporary research, as well as its subsequent exclusion from the extant theorising of SE and SEship.

Furthermore, as discussed and evidenced in both the feminist critique and the critical SEship literature, a social constructivist approach provides an ideal framework within which to explore women's experiences of (social) entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2007; Foss, 2010) as socially constructed and embedded activities (Bourne, 2010; Brush *et al*, 2009), whilst a focus on practitioner-derived meanings and understandings of SE and SEship provides a robust method by which to make central the "agency of practitioners in constructing the meaning of social enterprise" (Teasdale, 2012: 107), and the conceptual and causal links that they perceive between between their life experiences and subsequent SEurial activities, and   their "values as morality…[and] the measurement of outcome value" (Westall, 2009: 5).

Chapter Five: Methodology

5.0 Introduction

The application of a feminist epistemology and methodology in the study was theoretically underpinned by feminist scholarship, and provided a framework upon which to both design and deliver the study, and to undertake the subsequent analysis of the data derived from the interviews with the women SEurs.

As such, the adopted approach sought to develop gender-contextualised SE theory (Harding, 2004; Haugh, 2005; McAdam and Treanor, 2011) through a focus on women as research subjects whose knowledge and experiences would be normalised and legitimised (Ahl, 2006; Shaw, 2010; Stevenson, 1990) through their inclusion - as expert practitioners - in the process of the co-creation of new SE knowledge and theorising.

This chapter is presented in three parts, the first comprising an overview of the ontological and epistemological position adopted alongside a discussion of the wider research approach, which is organised thematically as follows: a presentation of the feminist philosophy underpinning the study, a reflexive discussion of my positioning as researcher, an account of how the women participants were given voice within the study, and an explanation and justification of the adoption of Low and McMillan's (1988) framework for research, alongside a brief description of how each of their six research specifications was met.

The second part of the chapter provides information regarding the data gathering process, and is arranged as follows: Sampling, which comprises the sample design, a discussion of the ethical procedures followed, and a description of the selection criteria used for both key informants (KIs) and the women social entrepreneurs (WSEs); Data Gathering (phase one), which covers the pilot study process, the practical and methodological lessons learned, including a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of conducting interviews in various spaces (specifically a café environment, and the workplace), and a discussion of the methodological implications of adopting Skype as the preferred data gathering tool; and Data Gathering (phase two)

which provides a brief explanation of the way in which the second phase was carried out, outlines the research tools employed in the development of the revised interview guide, and presents the research interview guide employed in the study.

The third and final section, entitled Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques, elucidates the specific data analysis techniques employed in the analysis of the emergent interview-derived data, and concludes with a discussion and justification of the methodological approach adopted for the study.

5.1 *Philosophical foundations: feminist scholarship, contested knowledge, and feminist-informed research*

Feminist entrepreneurship scholarship works to challenge the androcentricity of mainstream, traditional entrepreneurship research and theorising (Ahl, 2006; Hurley, 1999), which excludes and devalues women's contribution to both scholarship (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Shaw, 2010), and economic development (Ferber and Nelson, 1993, 2003; Marlow *et al*, 2008), thereby constraining the development of new knowledge, based upon diverse examples of enacted entrepreneurial practice (Ogbor, 2000):

The 'monolithicism' of traditional entrepreneurship scholarship is founded upon an ontological worldview that considers men to represent the norm from which women deviate (Carter and Shaw, 2006; Marlow, 2002), and which simultaneously considers women and men to be essentially different (Ahl, 2006; Engelstad and Gerrard, 2005).

It is unsurprising then, that where traditional entrepreneurship research has belatedly included women as research subjects (Mirchandani, 1999; Moore, 1990) the assumption of sex-difference based on biological sex, has provided a framework for the continuing exploration and analysis of differences as opposed to similarities between women's and men's entrepreneurial experiences (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Ely and Padavic, 2007), resulting in output within which "authors are primarily concerned with documenting possible differences…[and] less concerned with what causes these patterns" (Foss, 2010: 87).

This divisive approach, which remains in widespread use across many disciplines (O'Donnell *et al*, 2004; Tadros, 2010; Cohn *et al*, 2004), has been critiqued by feminist scholars (Gunnerud, 1997; Limerick and O'Leary, 206) who have derisively termed it 'add women and stir' (McDowell, 1993) on account of its conflation of the terms 'sex' and 'gender' which are used interchangeably and synonymously (Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Harrison and Mason, 2007), in research wherein sex is "used as a control or as a proxy for variables based on notions of gender that have been conceptually linked to sex, which restricts the usefulness of the research findings" (Powell and Greenhaus, 2010: 153).

The effect within entrepreneurship of the positioning of women and men in a hierarchical binary opposition to one another (Engelstad and Gerrard, 2005) has been the emergence of a dominant discourse wherein "entrepreneurship is typically seen as a masculine field" (Gupta et al, 2009: 409), within which entrepreneurial success rests upon a clearly masculine and "elitist notion of entrepreneurs as the chosen few, as mythic, Herculian figures" (Smith, 2010: 29).

Feminist scholars posit that such essentialist constructions have created "discursive practices" (Ahl, 2006: 596) that continually reinforce and reproduce gendered stereotypes of entrepreneuship to the detriment of women (Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Foss, 2010), which results in both lower normative support (Baughn *et al*, 2006; Langowitz and Minitti, 2007), and less social credibility and legitimacy for women's entrepreneurship (Rouse and Kitching, 2006; Marlow *et al*, 2008).

In response, calls for contextualised research into women's entrepreneurship seek to reveal the effects of gender on women's engagement with, and enactment of entrepreneurship (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Brush *et al*, 2009; DeTienne and Chandler, 2007), whilst simultaneously building and developing theory that reflects the problematic themes highlighted by the feminist critique of traditional entrepreneurship research (Ahl, 2006; Ashe and Treanor, 2011; Fleck *et al*, 2011), for example:

- the "consequences of adapting theories of entrepreneurship, developed through analyses of men's lives, to the experiences of women" (Mirchandani, 1999: 225),

- "the notion that enterprise culture, entrepreneurship, business practices and business ownership are gender-neutral" (Lewis, 2006: 454),

- the "fragmented, reductionist explanations" (Sinisalo and Komulainen, 2008: 37) attendant upon "the assumptions of masculinity that underpin scientific research" (Bruni, 2004: 412),

- the assumption "that entrepreneurs are animated solely by the pursuit of independence, freedom and profit-making" (Clarke and Holt, 2010: 69),

- the failure to acknowledge "that the world is in constant evolution and that entrepreneurship itself is a socially constructed phenomenon" (Brush *et al*, 2009: 16),

- the assertion that "patriarchal capitalism [functions] not only as a gendered system but also as a class and racial system built on dynamics of domination and subordination" (Calás *et al*, 2009: 561),

- and a failure to acknowledge the fact that the social and economic context within which women operate their businesses (Harrison and Mason, 2007) can all contribute to the so-called entrepreneurial "female underperformance hypothesis" (Du Rietz and Henrekson, 2000: 1), which renders invisible the masculine entrepreneurial archetype (Lewis, 2006; Roberts, 2010) that is unconstrained by the gendered expectations attendant upon being a woman entrepreneur (Shaw *et al*, 2009; Winn, 2005).

Feminist entrepreneurship scholarship then, can be understood as contributing to the wider stream of political and critical scholarship which applies feminist theory to both the revelation and subsequent contestation of female subordination and oppression (du Bois *et al*, 1987). This in turn acts to maintain the "strong links between academic feminism and feminist activism" (Jackson 2004: 76).

5.2 An enacted, gender-aware feminist approach to women-centred research

The study adopts a social constructivist epistemological approach, broadly concerned with "how masculinity and femininity [are] constructed, and what effect this has in regard to gender/power relations" (Ahl, 2007: 680).

In order to create a robust doctoral study with the capacity to capture, and incorporate themes elucidated above from both the feminist critique of traditional entrepreneurship research, and the nascent SE literature, the following feminist-theoretically informed foci were selected:

- 'Lens of gender' approach wherein "[t]he focus on gender [is] pursued without the notion of an essentialist 'woman' at its core" (Mirchandani, 1999: 233)

- Women-centred data gathering centred on investigations of women's experiences of SEship, with a "commitment to prioritising women's voice" (Mavin, 2006: 354)

- A commitment to highlight the social and economic contribution of women SEurs in acknowledgment of the fact that "[d]espite the increase in research on social entrepreneurs in recent years, very little consideration has been given to the contribution that women make as social entrepreneurs" (Humbert, 2012: 3)

- An exploration of women SEurs' conceptions of 'success', as a contested term within the feminist critique of traditional entrepreneurship (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Gill and Ganesh, 2007), and as an outcome that for social enterprise incorporates a double, and sometimes triple, bottom line (Neck *et al*, 2009; Nga and Shamuganathan, 2010)

- An investigation into the effect of life-stage on women social entrepreneurs' experiences, recognising that some women must manage the demands of a "combination of social and economic responsibilities" (Verheul and Thurik, 2001: 330), and that the often conflicting demands of such roles may change over time such that "depending on the stage of her life at which a woman starts a new venture, the various [gendered constraints] can have more or less influence on the entrepreneurial process" (Brush *et al*, 2009: 19)

- An examination of women SEurs' construction of entrepreneurial identity within a gender-aware framework, taking account of the constraints relating to socially constructed gender norms (Ahl, 2006; Lewis, 2006) with particular reference to the traditional construction of the entrepreneur as the "rational, egotistical, self-centred...heroic, economic superman" (Goss, 2005: 206)

- A focus on specific barriers and opportunities identified by women SEurs within a gender-aware framework as a means of assessing the gendered, social construction of entrepreneurship (Brush *et al*, 2009; de Bruin *et al*, 2007), of institutions (Acker, 1992), and of women (Butler 1990), within a hierarchical, gendered social order (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008; Syed and Özbilgin, 2009) that "has proven to be incapable of thinking not-the-same without assigning one of the terms a positive value and the other, a negative" (Eisenstein and Jardine, 1988: xxv).

5.3 Reflexivity in feminist research: an overview

"What we come to know is shaped by the means by which we come to know it" (Hurd, 1998: 196).

The process of reflexivity forms an integral component of feminist research practice (Hesse-Bieber, 2007), and is premised upon the achievement of critical awareness by researchers of "their working methods and the network of meanings and power that are tied to these" (Engelstad and Gerrard, 2005: 6) in acknowledgement of the fact that all forms of knowledge creation inevitably serve the interests of some and not others (Harding, 1991).

By engaging in reflexive thought throughout the research process (Lewis, 2011) feminist researchers aim to move beyond the masculinist limitations of positivist methodologies (Oakley, 1981), which "require that research objects are abstract(ed) from context" (Engelstad and Gerrard, 2005: 3) in the name of scientific objectivity (Ahl and Marlow, 2012), and to create robust, rigorous research output that makes central the voices of subordinated individuals and wider groups (Verloo and Lombardo, 2007) occupying singular, or indeed multiple, marginalised identities (Hill Collins, 2000) within society.

Sue Wilkinson (1988: 494) suggested that the process of reflexivity could best be understood as comprising two separate, but inextricably linked aspects, those being 'personal', and 'functional' reflexivity. The first of these she described as relating to:

> "the researcher's own identity: as an individual, a woman, and a feminist… [acknowledging that] her research is often an expression of personal interests and values (long denied within the positivist paradigm)" (*ibid.*: 494).

Feminist researchers therefore seek "to make [their] position vis-a-vis research known rather than invisible" (Mattingly and Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995: 428-429), and to continuously reflect upon their position within the research process as co-creators of knowledge (Lewis, 2011). Thus, 'personal' reflexivity can be understood to describe the process of "self-critical, sympathetic introspection and self-conscious *analytical* scrutiny of the self as researcher" (England, 1994: 244).

The second aspect – 'functional' reflexivity (Wilkinson, 1988: 494) – relates to the "continuous, critical examination of the practice/process of research to reveal its assumptions, values, and biases" (*ibid.*: 495). In the case of feminist research practice, 'functional' reflexivity has largely derived from feminist critiques of mainstream (malestream) research practice, including methodologies, and accompanying ontologies and epistemologies (Ogbor, 2000), and serves to forefront the fact that because "practices of research occupy a privileged social position, it is incumbent on the critical researcher to correct the biases of dominant research by revealing to the broader research community the value of apparently marginal practices" (Calás *et al*, 2009: 561).

Thus, the two aspects of reflexivity described by Wilkinson (1988) can be seen to come together at the nexus of personal politics, experience, and action, providing proof positive that "the topics one chooses to study (and also the theories and methods one utilises) are likely to derive from personal concerns" (*ibid.*: 494).

For feminist researchers then, the epistemological belief in the subordination of women relative to men (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Marlow and McAdam, 2012) leads to a focus on both women's diverse and contextualised experiences of

subordination (Mirchandani, 1999) relating to the presence and management of multiple identities and personal subjectivities (Essers and Benschop, 2009; Hill Collins, 2000), in addition to the manifestations and mechanisms of such subordination (Ahl, 2006, 2007; Millen, 1997), as a means by which both to raise consciousness of and challenge the multiple inequalities associated with the maintenance of the hegemonic status quo (Maguire, 1996; Mavin *et al*, 2004).

In conclusion, the specific feminist-informed methods employed during the research design and implementation processes (Driscoll and McFarland, 1989) seek to minimise power imbalances within the researcher/researched relationship (Sprague, 2005), and attempt to facilitate the generation of gender aware situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) that serve as a counterpoint to the "overgeneralizing, universalizing claims" (Rose, 1997: 308) endemic in positivist approaches. Similarly, the data analysis process is undertaken mindful of the fact that any "analysis presented…is [acknowledged to be] one that has been selected, interpreted and shaped by the author" (Lewis, 2011: 8).

5.3.1 Reflexivity within the study: situating the researcher

> "Self-reflexivity acknowledges the researcher's role(s) in the construction of the research problem, the research setting, and research findings, and highlights the importance of researcher becoming consciously aware of these factors and thinking through the implications of these factors for her/his research." (Pillow, 2003: 179)

This section will be presented in the first person as, in line with feminist reflexivity, ownership is taken of my subjective position as a woman researcher, relative to my feminist-informed research project. The use of the personal pronoun further stands as a refutation of the positivist claim to the need for emotional, psychological, and personal 'distance' (objectivity) from the research project, the research participants, and the research outcomes (Steyaert and Dey, 2010).

As such, deliberately locating myself (my personal subjectivity) in relation to my research serves as a "challenge [to] the norm of objectivity that assumes that the subject and object of research can be separated from one another and that

personal and/or grounded experiences are unscientific" (Limerick and O'Leary, 2006: 100).

The research project was undertaken as a result of my desire to explore women's experiences of SEship as a social and economic phenomenon from a feminist perspective as a direct result of my own, personal experiences:

In 2008, having spent five years at home caring for my two young children, I had the opportunity to attend several (free) courses run by a local training provider, which sought to raise awareness within the local community of SE as a 'new' model of business for potential entrepreneurs. As a result of attending these courses, I began exploring an idea for a SE that would serve to fill a gap that I perceived in the provision of local services to mothers with young children – offering child-centred activities, alongside employment, education, and benefits advice sessions, and a family-friendly café. The potential opportunity that I had identified was based on my own experience of what I felt to be the consistent social and economic exclusion of stay-at-home mothers of pre-school aged children, experienced in several markedly different contexts, those being a metropolitan area (London), a rural location (West Norfolk), and finally an urban environment (Norwich).

I therefore embarked upon the PhD process as a white, privately educated, middle class, mid-30s, married, feminist, mother of two children, whose difficulties in negotiating the path to the establishment of a locally-based, women-focussed SE had fortuitously and unexpectedly provided me with the opportunity to undertake advanced post-graduate study.

5.3.2 Reflexivity within the study: study design

As a result of my own experiences in the world of SEship, I came to this research project with a desire to explore the nature of other women's experiences of SE and SEship in the UK, as a means by which to 'situate' and contextualise my own experiences.

I spent the first year of my PhD undertaking an extensive literature review, that revealed to me the androcentric bias in mainstream entrepreneurship research, including the preference of many top-tier business and entrepreneurship

journals for the use of quantitative methods (Gartner and Birley, 2002; Neergaard *et al*, 2011), the theoretical generalising of white, male-derived data to the general entrepreneurial population (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Mirchandani, 1999), and the attendant lack of inclusion of 'alternative' voices – for example those of women, and BAME entrepreneurs (Gill and Ganesh, 2007; Welter, 2009). It also exposed me to the vocal and growing body of feminist critical literature on entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006; Brush *et al*, 2009; Calás *et al*, 2009), and to other streams of critical scholarship, particularly within the emergent SE literature (Ziegler, 2009).

5.3.3 Undertaking a feminist literature review: reflexivity in action

During this period in my work, I was privileged to be able to deeply immerse myself in general feminist literature which provided me with the opportunity to develop my own burgeoning feminist identity. As a result of reading a raft of mostly second wave feminist thought, I found myself moving, on a personal political level, from a liberal feminist perspective to a more critical (radical) feminist stance. This experience made clear to me the ways in which as a white heterosexual-identified, married woman I benefitted from significant levels of social privilege, whilst simultaneously exposing the ways in which my liberal feminist-inspired egalitarian ideals of the nature of intimate relationships were sadly lacking in my own domestic situation.

This revelation gave me insight into the processes by which women may feel 'compelled' to deny the presence of inequalities in their lives as a result of having a vested interest in maintaining the status quo such that, as my own experience had shown me, inequalities are ignored/minimised/denied at a personal level in order to retain the social privileges of a heterosexual 'partnership' – particularly where children are involved. In my own case, I was eventually able to see and understand my own ability to simultaneously have a feminist consciousness and knowledge of gender inequalities in all their various manifestations, whilst still assuming a subconscious strategy of gender blindness within my own home and relationship.

These aspects of my personal reflexive journey had massive eventual ramifications for my own life, but allowed me to sympathetically and

experientially understand the social pressures that heterosexual-identified mothers face in adhering to the traditional gender roles and stereotypes that provide them and their children with social prestige in a male-dominated, hetero-normative world. Furthermore, it revealed the on-going, and problematic nature of the power deficit inherent in occupying a female body, whilst simultaneously attempting to negotiate power and prestige in male-normed professions and social spaces.

The second part of my literature review, which ran simultaneously to the first, concerned an exploration of feminist academic scholarship. During this process I found myself compulsively drawn towards a social constructivist epistemology, with its "focus…on ongoing and context-specific social practices and on the relationships that are created through them" (Calás *et al*, 2009: 560). This approach resonated strongly with me as a means both of understanding and interpreting the politics inherent in social interaction, and in turn making sense of and critically evaluating my own and other women's actions and experiences.

Using social constructivism as a way in which to deconstruct the presence and nature of power within my own experiences opened my eyes to the 'invisible' political processes that underpin each and every manifestation of domination in society and social interaction, and helped me to see the individual and collective benefits reaped by members of dominant groups in their enactment of micro and macro subordinating actions.

In this way, I was able to discern the complexity of the links between gender, gender stereotypes, gender performances, gendered discourses, and the subordination of women to men, and further to see the ways in which multiple and shifting levels of subordination serve to mask the patterns of domination enacted between and amongst groups of people in every day interactions.

My attraction to feminist theory as a tool for exploring discourse and power was similarly experientially based, being heavily influenced by the time I spent as an undergraduate student of applied English language and linguistics. My degree had provided me with the opportunity to explore the inextricable links between language and power, and had, for the first time, exposed me to the linguistic and discursive construction of gender and gender-based power relations. For

those reasons, feminist theory struck me as a personally meaningful, as well as theoretically and politically robust way in which to bring together my interests in linguistics, gender, and SE.

5.3.4 Reflexivity in the research design and delivery: power, social distance, and voice

My decision to employ the use of semi-structured interviews as a means of data gathering, was made in order to facilitate the elicitation of "narrative data" (Mavin *et al*, 2004: 296) on the specific topics of interest and/or contention highlighted by the literature review process (Ettl and Welter, 2010). This method was selected premised upon the feminist contention that approaches that centre on "[t]he feminine voice, emphasize the need to speak with, and listen to, women's perspectives [in order] to direct political change" (Bird and Brush, 2002: 45).

By additionally choosing to interview only women participants, I sought to embed my feminist politics into my study design and delivery, and to make women's experiences, voices, and stories the focal point of my work believing, as I do, that "learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women's ideas altogether or having men speak for women" (Reinharz, 1992: 19).

My adoption of a social constructivist framework for the study meant that I was mindful of the potential for power disparities between myself (as the researcher) and the women participants (as the researched) within the interview process, which I sought to minimise by engaging in a reflexive process that led to the use of 'mirroring' techniques based upon the principles of neurolinguistic programming (NLP).

The purpose of these verbal and physical 'mirroring' techniques (Clabby and O'Connor, 2004) was to both create rapport, and minimise social distance during the interviews and involved, for example, reflecting the body language and verbal tone of the individual participants by deliberately adopting similar body posture(s) and non-verbal signals as the interviewees, whilst simultaneously reflecting back their verbal tone and language-use (Walker,

2002). Thus, if a particular research participant adopted a very informal tone, for example, the use of swear words as a means of verbally 'underlining' issues of emotional and therefore psychological importance, then I too adopted that style of speech and verbal interaction.

I was also mindful of the influence of context in the interview process, and so carried out all my interviews in the informal setting of the living room in my home. In this way, I hoped that the informality of the context in which the women participants 'met' me – which interaction represented a symbolic invitation into my home - would help the women to feel at ease, and would thereby facilitate the creation of an atmosphere more similar to an informal conversation between acquaintances with similar interests, than to an 'interview' *per se*.

I also made a conscious decision to dress in casual clothes – jeans and a t-shirt – in place of formal business attire, and chose to have a hot beverage (pot of tea/cup of coffee) with me while I conversed with the women. Again, these elements were brought to the interview setting in order to intimate a 'homely' and informal environment for the interviews, and to minimise any perceived 'threat' posed to the women by my role within the process, as an academic researcher.

Finally, I considered the issue of social distance, which relates to "how much [the interviewer and interviewee] differ from each other on important social dimensions such as age or minority status" (Monette *et al*, 2014: 181). Whilst I had sought to represent BAME women SEurs in my sample, only one of the interviewees was non-white, and whilst several of the other interviewees were non-UK nationals, they were all nonetheless of European descent.

As a result of the uniformity, in terms of ethnicity, of the research cohort, the issue of minority status was not very prevalent, However, the one BAME participant – a British Pakistani woman – did mention the dual issues of race and class during the course of her interview, explaining that in her opinion the barriers that she had faced in her life were less related to gender, and more to do with ethnicity and socio-economic background:

"I don't think of my barriers as being the fact that I'm a woman, you know, I think about it as my past growing up on an [Council] estate, and about me being Pakistani, and I would actually say that in my experience of being in workplaces, and encountering barriers, that more often that comes down to class, not gender".

The non-British nationals – French, Canadian, Italian, Spanish, and Dutch - with whom I spoke all had sufficiently similar socio-economic, educational, cultural, and experiential backgrounds to my own to ensure that the social distance between us was minimal, and did not negatively impact upon the data gathering process. This situation was helped by my personal experience of the somewhat different cultural mores of continental Europe and the UK.

With regard to the issue of age, my age at the time of interview – 35-36 years old – was extremely fortuitous for its ability to minimise age-related social distance between me and the research participants, who ranged from their mid-20s to their mid-60s. Residing, as I did, in the middle of the full age range of the participants, meant that I was not so old as to be considered generationally removed from the younger participants, was a peer in terms of age with the majority of the participants (aged 35-44), and was old enough to be older than the adult children of the participants in the 55-64 age group. As a result, there was limited age-related social distance in our interactions, which facilitated the creation of a peer-to-peer atmosphere within which to conduct our interview-based conversations.

5.3.5 Feminist research and 'voice': reflexive approaches to power in the creation of new knowledge

The issue of giving women 'voice' through feminist research is a core issue, and in the case of the feminist-informed research in entrepreneurship, the use of women-only samples has been proposed as a valid means by which to challenge and disrupt the hegemony of masculine discourses (Neergaard *et al*, 2011).

As such, feminist research serves to create space for the opinions, experiences, and beliefs of women to be both expressed, and heard (Bird and Brush, 2002; Harding, 1993; Stacey, 1988).

The practicalities, however, of giving voice to research participants have been subject to much debate amongst feminist researchers for a number of reasons. The first of these is the fact that in spite of the mediating function of reflexivity, the risk remains that the power differential between the researcher and the researched can nevertheless serve to reinforce paternalistic relationships (England, 1994), such that "the research relationship maintains a colonial relationship of one person with power, the researcher, who will then demonstrate humility and generosity toward the research subject" (Pillow, 2003: 185).

An associated problem relates to the possibility that cultural and experiential differences between the researcher and the researched may mean that "the listener may not 'hear' what is important to the narrator" (Reissman, 1987: 172). In such situations, the commonality of gender identity may not be sufficient to create a meaningful bridge between the situated experiences of different women, which can subsequently create significant barriers to both understanding, and the eventual representation, by the researcher, of the interviewee's subjectivity and experiences (England, 1994).

As discussed previously in relation to the British Pakistani woman SEur whom I interviewed the presence, or indeed perception, of an unbridgeable social distance between the researcher and the researched can lead the participant to decide not to elucidate on issues that are central to their subjective experience. Whilst such distances can occur centrally, where the social distance creates a barrier to meaningful communication and understanding, or peripherally, where it affects some but not all aspects of the communicative event, the result will nevertheless be the collection of 'incomplete' data. This in turn means that possibly central themes and issues could be missed (or left undeveloped) and that subsequent theorising could become similarly inadequate.

The second site of possible contention is the acknowledgment that "[e]xisting ideologies constrain what may be possible in terms of that identity in any given cultural context" (Hamilton, 2014: 706). This fact has the potential to create conflict when a woman's ideologically constrained identity aligns with the very patriarchal institutions that feminist scholarship seeks to challenge such that

research participants "not only treat [their experiences] as gender-neutral, but also seek to conceal [their] gendered nature" (Lewis, 2006: 453).

The application of a gender lens to the analysis of such data reveals and critiques the gendered nature of the issues that the research participant seeks to deny, and as such poses a potential threat to the carefully constructed social and political reality within which the research subject resides. Thus, the conflicting interests of the researcher and the researched have the potential to create a sense of betrayal, intrusion, and exploitation for the research participant such that a research participant:

> "should be able to say what [she] want[s] to say, when [she] want[s] to say it, perfectly clearly, without any well-meaning [researcher] jumping in and analysing things as she wants to see them, and not as they might have been intended" (MacMillan, 1996:144).

Whilst it is agreed that strategies employed, especially by women, relating to the "active suppression of gender difference" (Linstead, 2000: 300) should be revealed and deconstructed for the part that they play in the maintenance of women's subordination, the 'revelatory' nature of feminist research can itself contribute to the 'gender microaggressions' (Solorzano, 1998) suffered by women, and as such care must be taken when considering the implications for individual women research participants of where, and in what ways such analyses should be presented, bearing in mind the admonition that:

> "it may not be possible or appropriate for one group of women to speak on behalf of another, or to assume that those who speak have the knowledge and right to do so in the interests of those spoken for" (Griffin, 1996: 171).

5.3.6 Giving women 'voice': mediating power differentials and possible misrepresentation within the interview process

Within my results and discussions chapters, I chose to utilise large chunks of verbatim text extracted from individual interviews in order to demonstrate the development of themes pertinent to the women interviewees. By so doing, I made space for "subjects' voices [to] speak for themselves" (Riessman, 1987: 191).

However, in spite of this deliberate strategy I was nevertheless mindful of the fact that both the included, and excluded, text was purposely selected (or not selected) by me in support of the theory development that the PhD process required. As such, and as reflected in Hurd (1998), both the data analysis and the attendant conclusions drawn from that analysis would reflect my epistemological position, as well as my feminist politics, and the gender lens that I applied.

Thus, whilst the verbatim quotes represented the literal 'voices' of some of my research participants – it was not possible to include quotes from every woman interviewed as a result of both the sheer volume of data derived from approximately fifty-three hours of interviews.

It has been suggested that the co-creation of knowledge between the feminist researcher and the research participants can be facilitated through a process whereby informants are actively encouraged to engage in the review of conclusions drawn from the data by the researcher in order to gauge their 'validity' (England, 1994).

However, I found the suggestion to be problematic for two reasons: first, I felt that a request for participants to offer not only their (unpaid) time to me for the interview process and subsequent review of the transcribed interviews, but to additionally make a commitment to a potentially open-ended review process, was unethical from a feminist perspective on account of both the temporal and financial demands associated with such requests. In a world where 'time is money', and women routinely earn less than men, it seemed deeply problematic to assume that the benefit that my study would derive from engaging the participants in this way would outweigh the temporal and financial losses suffered as a result by the women participants.

Second, for the reasons discussed previously, I felt that the critical engagement in a review process of those participants whose situation demanded the adoption of gender denying strategies in their lives would serve only to create conflict, dissonance, and an atmosphere of judgementalism that I wished to avoid. A specific example of this occurred with Jackie, who described a clearly gendered division of childcare responsibilities within her family unit.

She was, however, unwilling or unable to view her situation as gendered (to her disadvantage), instead describing the arrangement as "self-inflicted because I had my baby late…so I've got to resolve that issue myself". As such, she was unable to locate her personal experience within the wider experiences of many mothers of young children, or to see it as being symptomatic of a wider gender-based problem within society whereby, the gendered division of domestic labour and caring work in heterosexual relationships is reduced to the level of individual choice (Beagan *et al*, 2008), thereby masking both the gendered, negative impacts of such arrangements on women (Shaw, 2010; van Hooff, 2011), and the attendant benefits of these discriminatory arrangements reaped by men (McMahon, 1999; Ridgeway and Correll, 2004).

The reflexive experience of attempting to negotiate the complications and contradictions of truly giving the women interviewees voice in my work made me critically aware that in spite of my best efforts, the power disparity between research subjects, and the person with editorial control of their (individually reviewed and agreed-upon) transcribed data, was such that I ultimately had to accept, as noted by Pillow (2003: 186), that "practices of reflexivity, however mutual, which are still based on some form of 'truth' gathering, work to continue to situate the researcher's own need and desire for 'truth' as primary".

However, whilst my desire as the author of this thesis was to locate and develop themes that would facilitate theory development based upon the connections that I perceived within the elicited data, I was nonetheless clear that following the suggestion made by Gartner and Birley (2002: 387) I sought opinions rather than facts about the women's experiences of SEship.

Thus, in line with feminist theory, the conclusions proffered within this thesis represent a 'snapshot' of the wider (social) entrepreneurial experience, evidenced by a group of women SEurs operating their SEs in a UK context, during a global economic recession in the early 2010s. Such 'partial perspectives' (Haraway, 1988) seek to counter the hegemonic power of "prevailing world-views" (Ogbor, 2000: 606), and to provide alternative, non-mainstream readings of social phenomena (Foss, 2010; Hart and Metcalfe, 2010), gaining their validity "because partial perspectives are embodied and

situated [and are therefore] responsible and accountable; and they are objective" (Engelstad and Gerrard, 2005: 3).

5.3.7 Feminist research methodologies and methods

> "…a model supported by a positivist science, such as the mainstream discourse of entrepreneurship…cannot really support a deep critical reflection or any kind of divergent reflection" (da Costa and Saraiva, 2012: 590)

The question of the relative merits of the methodologies and specific methods employed by entrepreneurship researchers is another area of concern for feminist (and other critical) scholars (Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Brush *et al* 2009) attempting to publish their work in elite, yet deeply conservative journals (Ahl, 2004):

> "[r]esearch that matters should be rescued from the clasp and tyranny of journal ranking systems that favour a limited repertoire of research methods" (Özbilgin 2009: 8).

The fact that many of the top tier journals favour quantitative research methods has been widely reported by feminist scholars (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Hart and Metcalfe, 2010; Neergaard *et al*, 2011), and equally, the limitations of such approaches have been elucidated (Gartner and Birley, 2002; Ogbor, 2000; Stevenson, 1990; Welter, 2011). However, because these elite journals serve as gatekeepers of the definition of "what is visible, discussable, achievable and identifiable within [a given] discipline" (Mavin *et al*, 2004: 298), such procedures have been shown to represent discursive practices which reinforce masculine hegemonic power through the 'silencing' of women as the source and producers of legitimate knowledge (Ahl, 2006; Neergaard *et al*, 2011; Shaw, 2010).

It has therefore been concluded that such "research perpetually recycles limited malestream theories" (Limerick and O'Leary, 2006: 101), which has led feminist scholars to suggest the application of qualitative or mixed research methods as opposed to purely quantitative methods, could provide a means by which to challenge the masculine hegemony endemic in positivist research:

> "[c]ollecting qualitative (and thus contestable, ambiguous, inconclusive) data is another way to unmask the assumptions of masculinity that underpin scientific research" (Bruni 2004: 412).

The value of feminist-informed research, which seeks to "challenge the basic structures and ideologies that oppress women [and to]...foster empowerment and emancipation for women and other marginalised groups" (Brooks and Hesse-Biber 2007: 4), lies in its ability to reveal the naturalised and invisible assumptions and philosophies that underlie androcentric, traditional approaches to research (Bruni *et al*, 2004; Maxfield *et al*, 2010; Ogbor 2000), and to offer alternative ways in which to conduct research "which can help to reconstruct defunct patriarchal institutions and challenge flawed visions" (Shaw, 2010: 46).

Further, by engaging in a process of continuous critical reflexivity (Lazar, 2007; Sampson *et al* 2008) "premised on the significance of gender asymmetry…the ethical impact of the research, and the consciousness-raising and transformative capacity of the research" (Limerick and O'Leary 2006: 106), feminist research also seeks to provide alternative ways in which to view the world, and to interpret the complexities of socially embedded human interaction and behaviour (Nelson 2010; Marlow 2002; Shaw *et al* 2009), and thus to "make a constructive contribution to entrepreneurship research by introducing enhanced conceptual, epistemological and methodological reflection" (Johansson, 2004: 273).

Thus, social constructivist theories (Chell, 2000; Ely and Padavic, 2007) underpinned by the contention that all human (inter)actions are "situated social practices, concerned more with what people 'do' than what they 'are'" (Nadin, 2007: 457) are therefore employed alongside (mostly) qualitative methods (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009; Gartner and Birley, 2002) set within interpretivist paradigms (Kirkwood, 2009) as a means of expanding the academic community's "repertoire of aids to understanding entrepreneurship" (Anderson, 2005: 588).

5.4 The adoption of Low and MacMillan's (1988) framework

Building on the recommendations made in Low and MacMillan's (1988) much-cited review of entrepreneurship research (Gartner, 2001; Ireland *et al*, 2005; Lasch and Yami, 2008), the following section presents a justification of the "six key specification decisions…purpose, theoretical perspective, focus, level of analysis, time frame, [and] methodology" (Low and MacMillan, 1988: 140)

applied to the design and delivery of this study as a piece of feminist-informed work, and a discussion of the implications that these had on the overall methodological approach employed.

5.4.1 Specification of purpose

The purpose of the study is to provide an exploratory, feminist-informed examination and subsequent theorisation of women's experiences of SEship in the UK in order to better understand the processes of SEship as acts of embedded social, political, and economic action.

The term 'entrepreneurship' has been described as "a broad label under which a hodgepodge of research is housed" (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000: 217), and while a widely agreed-upon definition continues to elude scholars (du Gay, 2004; Verheul *et al*, 2005; Zhang *et al*, 2009), there is general consensus that entrepreneurship is "a complex set of contiguous and overlapping constructs" (Low, 2001: 18), that is both "a process of 'emergence'" (Mueller *et al*, 2012: 996), and "often a high-risk undertaking" (Kwong *et al*, 2012: 77) usually associated with the "creat[ion] of a new organization" (Somerville and McElwee, 2011: 319).

As such, it "is considered to be critical to the contribution to local and national economies, regional development, and employment generation" (Higgins and Elliott, 2011: 348-349), and is founded upon the "creat[ion of] new realities; transforming ideas into new ventures, and transposing old ideas into new situations" (Nicholson and Anderson, 2005: 154).

Alongside such traditionally agreed-upon theories has developed a growing body of literature that posits entrepreneurship as "a rooted phenomenon that can only be fully understood with reference to context, conditions and historical processes (Mason and Harvey, 2013: 4). Such a contextualised, socially embedded view (Brush *et al*, 2009, Higgins and Elliott, 2011) of the process of entrepreneurship considers the behavioural choices of entrepreneurs as being "always a matter of socially constrained or opportuned agency" (Dick and Hyde, 2006: 545), and the process of entrepreneurship as being exemplified through "the creation and extraction of value from an environment" (Jack and Anderson, 2002: 468).

Approaching entrepreneurship research within the framework offered by a social constructivist ontology, and attendant feminist epistemology, allows the revelation of the differential, gendered effects on women SEurs of both cultural expectations of women, particularly with regard to family and home (Davis, 2010; Steiber, 2009; McGowan *et al*, 2012), and the androcentricy of wider societal and cultural norms (Baker *et al*, 1997; Brush *et al*, 2009; Carter *et al*, 2007).

In order to properly explore the gendered issues relating to entrepreneurship for women – both experientially and theoretically - the study uses a women-only cohort of SEurs, and gathers data through the utilisation of semi-structured interviews, the questions for which are derived from both knowledge gaps, and contentions within contemporary academic and policy literature. By so doing, the study contributes to both the development of non-biased, non-exclusionary, and non-androcentric entrepreneurship and SEship theory, and begins to address the almost total absence of women-focussed research within the emergent SEship literature (Humbert, 2012; Teasdale *et al*, 2011).

5.4.2 Specification of theoretical perspective

In pursuit of an exploration of the outlined themes above as they relate to women SEurs operating and developing their SEs in the context of a global recession (Sealey *et al*, 2008; Waring and Brierton, 2011) in the UK, the study adopts a 'lens of gender' approach (Baines and Wheelock, 2000; Bem, 1993; Gunnerud, 1997; Gupta *et al*, 2009; Marlow and Patton, 2005), embedded within feminist theoretical framework which both "offers an alternative to objectivity in conventional social science" (Foss, 2010: 84), and answers the call "for a more conceptually informed and convincing analysis of the implications of the association between gender and entrepreneurship" (Neergard *et al*, 2011: 22).

Research that applies a gender lens, views women as a "socio-economically subordinated" (Neergaard *et al*, 2011: 4) group, whose engagement in entrepreneurial activities is considered to be "less desirable" (Brush *et al* 2009: 16) than men's, and whose entrepreneurial identities are "consistently portrayed as something less than men, or, at best, a complement" (Ahl, 2007: 678).

By pursuing revelatory research of this nature, concealed gendered power discrepancies (Ahl, 2007; Brush *et al*, 2009; Mirchandani, 1999) can be exposed and subjected to critical examination (Ashe and Treanor, 2011; Limerick and O'Leary, 2006; Maxfield *et al*, 2010; Ogbor, 2000).

In this way, feminist theoretically informed women-centred research acts as a counterpoint and challenge (Ahl, 2007; Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Ashe and Treanor, 2011; de Bruin *et al*, 2007) to the androcentricity of the majority of mainstream entrepreneurship literature and theory development (Bruni *et al*, 2004a; Bourne, 2010; Tillmar, 2007), in terms of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions and approaches traditionally employed (Ahl, 2004, 2006; Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Calás *et al*, 2009).

Furthermore, it questions the validity of the corresponding reductionist (da Costa and Saraiva, 2012; Dalborg *et al*, 2012, Hytti, 2005; Marlow, 2002; Ogbor, 2000) output that perpetuates the hegemonic dominance "of an entrepreneurial model that is capitalist, Western, white, male heterosexual, [and] of European or North American origin" (da Costa and Saraiva, 2012: 589).

5.4.3 Specification of focus

The study focuses on the exploration of SEship "as a socially constructed process embedded within everyday practices that shape and are shaped by a field of gender relations" (Bourne, 2010: 10), and draws upon data derived from the self-reported, socially embedded (Brush *et al*, 2009; Diaz Garcia and Carter, 2009; Shelton, 2010; Steyaert and Katz, 2004), and temporally dynamic (Morris et al, 2012; Mueller *et al*, 2012; Steyaert, 2007; Williams, 2009) experiences of the women participants regarding the establishment, and in some cases growth, of their SEs in the UK.

The specific focus on an exclusively women-comprised research sample reflects the feminist theoretical underpinnings of the study, which seeks to create space for the "voices of women and other 'minorities' [who] have been systematically marginalized" (Campbell, 2011: 42) to be heard (Mavin, 2006; McGowan *et al*, 2012; Neergaard *et al*, 2011), and to facilitate the development of new knowledge and theory (Engelstad and Gerrard, 2005; Foss, 2010; Lewis,

2006; Shaw and Carter, 2007) with particular reference to the emergent SEship literature.

The rationale for women-focussed work derives from the feminist critique of traditional approaches to entrepreneurship research and theorisation, and serves to:

> "provide new insights into organizational theories by examining the historical context in which these theories emerged, the research methods in which the theories are grounded, and the assumptions underlying the theories themselves" (Hurley, 1999:54).

To date, such critical work has revealed the androcentricity within organisations and institutions (Acker, 1992; Ahl, 2006; Calvert and Ramsey, 1992; Lockyer and George, 2012) created, defined, and legitimated by "white males [who] have created organizations and adopted management practices that have met male needs, reinforced male values and best fit male experiences of the world around them" (Ogbor, 2000: 621-622).

Within societies in which there remains a cultural expectation for women to provide the majority of unpaid domestic labour and childcare (Craig and Sawrikar, 2009; Thomas and Hildingsson, 2009; Jennings and McDougald, 2007), the result is that "women cannot become workers in the same sense as men [...] the construction of the worker presupposes that he is a man who has a woman to take care of his daily needs" (Pateman, 1988: 131, cited in Marlow, 2002: 86).

In this way, the links between gender-based barriers for women at micro (individual/family level), meso (institutional level), and macro (national/cultural level) can be revealed (Brush *et al*, 2009; Purkayastha, 2003), and the "top-down effects of context on entrepreneurship and bottom-up processes influencing context" (Welter, 2011: 176) can be simultaneously acknowledged, understood, and theorised, such that the effects of cumulative disadvantage can be exposed (Clark and Corcoran, 1986, Hill Collins, 1991; Fernandez-Mateo, 2009; Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach, 2008).

Within entrepreneurship research, the feminist critique has specifically problematised (amongst other things) the androcentricity of traditional research

norms which purport to be 'gender-neutral' (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Carter et al, 2001; Brush and Cooper, 2012; Limerick and O'Leary, 2006), yet which "use[s] instruments developed and tested on samples of men" (Brush et al, 2009: 15) to undertake research on women's entrepreneurship. As a means of redressing the (im)balance, researchers working on women's entrepreneurship "have focused on the need to correct the sampling bias by collecting parallel information on female business owners" (Mirchandani, 1999: 228).

In addition to the androcentric research 'instruments', feminist scholars have also criticised the application of theories of entrepreneurship derived from male-only samples to all entrepreneurs, on the basis of the reductionism and essentialism of such approaches (Engelstad and Gerrard 2005; Foss 2010). The assumption that behavioural norms observed in capitalist, white, middle class, European, heterosexual male entrepreneurs (Costa and Saraiva, 2012; Gill and Ganesh, 2007; Ogbor, 2000; Tedmanson *et al*, 2012; Wilson and Tagg, 2010) can be unproblematically applied to all people engaging in entrepreneurial behaviour (Ahl, 2002; Brush and Cooper, 2012; Marlow, 2002; Mirchandani, 1999) has been critiqued, as has the attendant assumption of homogeneity amongst (particularly women) entrepreneurs (Bourne, 2010; Carter and Shaw, 2006; Dalborg *et al*, 2012; McMullan, 2012; Tedmanson *et al*, 2012; Tillmar, 2007).

Such presumptions have the effect of 'othering' non-white, non-male etc. entrepreneurs (Ahl, 2004; Bendle, 2008; Bruni *et al*, 2004, 2004a; Lewis, 2006; Marlow *et al*, 2008), thus rendering the study of these supposedly non-normative forms of entrepreneurship as 'niche' or 'special interest' (Hughes *et al*, 2012; Neergard *et al*, 2011), which in turn lowers the legitimacy and value of 'non-normative' entrepreneurship as a research topic (Ahl, 2002, 2006; Calvert and Ramsey 1992; de Bruin *et al* 2007; Mirchandani 1999; Ogbor 2000; Stevenson, 1999).

Many of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological themes emerging from the developing stream of critical SE scholarship - "which unveils a skeptical orientation to the ideology of entrepreneurship" (Dey and Steyaert, 2006: 34), and serves to question and challenge both the politicised 'grand narratives' of SEship and their attendant assumptions (Dey and Steyaert, 2010;

Teasdale, 2012), and the application of mainstream entrepreneurship theories and research foci to the SE sector (McAdam and Treanor, 2011; Datta and Gailey, 2012; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Seelos *et al*, 2010) - mirror those within the feminist critical work.

Examples of these cross-over themes include SE as a socially constructed phenomenon (Chell, 2007; Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Mueller *et al*, 2011; Ruebottom, 2011), the importance of the effects of context and embeddedness on SE (Kindle, 2010; Kistruck and Beamish, 2010; Smith and Stevens, 2010), the value of contextualised narrative and person-centred experiential approaches to the exploration of SE (Diochon and Anderson, 2011; Jones *et al*, 2008; Morris *et al*, 2012; Seanor *et al*, 2011), a focus on the wider, non-economic goals and value creation of SEs (Felício *et al*, 2013; Haugh, 2012; Palmås, 2012; Steinerowski *et al*, 2010), and explorations of the loci of power within SE (Dacin *et al*, 2011; Steyaert and Dey, 2010; Teasdale, 2010; Teasdale et al, 2011).

The focus then, of a qualitative study of the experiences on women SEurs in the UK offers a unique synergistic opportunity at this point in time to meaningfully bring together two bodies of critical literature, and to thereby begin to simultaneously fill acknowledged gaps within both streams of work.

5.4.4 Specification of level of analysis

Low and MacMillan (1988: 151) suggest that "researchers may choose among five levels of analysis: individual, group, organisational, industry, and societal levels".

In pursuit of a feminist-informed, socially embedded approach to this study, several assumptions inform the epistemological basis for the work, which in turn affect the level of analysis chosen. The following assumptions relating to the feminist theoretical framework and associated women's entrepreneurship literature apply: women as a group, are socially subordinated to men (Martin, 2006; Rudman and Glick, 2001, UN Women, 2011), and are constrained by gendered social norms, expectations, stereotypes etc. in ways rarely, if ever, experienced by men (Shaw *et al* 2009; Winn, 2004). The phenomenon of entrepreneurship (including SEship) is socially constructed (Mueller *et al*, 2011;

Steyaert and Katz, 2004) towards a masculine norm (McAdam and Treanor, 2011; Mirchandani, 1999), and gender-based norms, expectations, and stereotypes interact with masculine norms of entrepreneurship to create cumulative disadvantage for women considering and/or enacting entrepreneurial behaviours (Brush *et al*, 2009; Langowitz and Minniti, 2007). Women (social) entrepreneurs are likely to attempt to mitigate the effect of gender bias by conforming to male norms and/or denying the existence of gender bias (Bruni *et al*, 2004a; Lewis, 2006; Limerick and O'Leary, 2006; McAdam and Marlow, 2010; Nadin, 2007).

Added to the assumptions listed above, are four key concepts taken from the critical scholarship on entrepreneurship, which also effected to the choice of level of analysis in the study. These are an assertion that (the lack of) societal/cultural normative support for women's entrepreneurship is "embedded in overall attitudes about entrepreneurship and gender equality" (Baughn *et al*, 2006: 703), that "economic behaviour can be better understood within its historical, temporal, institutional, spatial, and social contexts" (Welter, 2011: 165), that "[t]he richness of entrepreneurship lies in how it is personally experienced" (Morris *et al*, 2012: 11), and that the personal construction of women's entrepreneurial identity provides:

> "a consideration of the agency of women business owners in creating an enterprise persona, even if it is at odds with the dominant identity of the buccaneering, growth focused entrepreneur [and further]…allows us to broaden our understanding of women's business experience, their reasons for going into business and the type of business person they want to be" (Lewis, 2011: 12).

Based on the assumptions derived from feminist theory generally, and the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship scholarship specifically, coupled with the four key concepts taken from the general critical entrepreneurship scholarship, the level of analysis chosen for the study rests with the individual women SEurs, with the data derived from their experiences viewed through a contextualised, gender lens that takes account of the 'historical, temporal, institutional, spatial, and social contexts' within which the women live and work.

5.4.5 Specification of time frame

Given the temporal and financial constraints imposed by the PhD process, a "short time frame" study (Low and MacMillan, 1988: 153) approach was adopted for the study. This was based on a single-contact, interview-based data collection method enabled by the recruitment of a diverse cohort of research participants selected to represent a range of participant ages, sectors within which the women SEurs operated, nationalities and ethnicities of the women participants, geographic locations within the UK, and age of the businesses.

By so doing, it was possible to capture a wide spectrum of life, and entrepreneurial experiences from the women participants across a variety of contexts, through which the "richness of insight" (*ibid.*: 153) that Low and MacMillan recommended bringing to entrepreneurship research was thereby acquired.

5.4.6 Specification of methodology

Ogbor (2000: 613) asserted that "methodology is related…to a particular frame of reference", which in the case of this study was informed by the paucity of both empirical (Certo and Miller, 2008; Dacin *et al*, 2010; Hynes, 2009; Short *et al*, 2009), and women-focused research within the SE/SEship literature, and the feminist theoretical framework that I embraced. The study therefore sought to elicit the contextualised and "situated knowledges" (Haraway, 1988: title) of the women SEur research participants, drawing on emergent themes from the SE/SEship literature, and critical (feminist) entrepreneurship scholarship.

Entrepreneurship theory originally developed within the field of economics (Brewer, 1988; Cope, 2005; Hoselitz, 1951), and as such developed research norms based on the use of quantitative methodologies embedded within positivist and objectivist epistemologies (Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al*, 2004; Brush *et al*, 2009; de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Hart and Metcalfe, 2010), that "generally treated entrepreneurs as fixed entities" (Higgins and Elliott, 2010: 347), and aimed to discover "a fact, rather than an opinion" (Gartner and Birley, 2002: 387).

Such approaches have been subject to significant critique based both on the basis of their inability to capture the "messy 'real-life' variety of entrepreneurship" (de Bruin *et al*, 2007: 331), and for the fact that they "all too

often yield fragmented, reductionist explanations" (Sinisalo and Komulainen, 2008: 37). As a result, studies employing interpretive research methodologies have begun to emerge (Cope, 2005b; Jamali, 2009; Steyaert, 2007), which seek to challenge the "taken for granted assumptions" (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009: 129) which "so profoundly influence…variables, theoretical and measurement models, and methodologies" (Gupta *et al*, 2009: 413).

As a result of these critiques, research foci have begun to shift towards the use of qualitative methods (Gartner and Birley, 2002) often situated within "social constructionist" (Higgins and Elliot, 2010: 350) or "radical subjectivist" (Chiles *et al*, 2010: 157) paradigms, which seek to develop "alternative medium[s] for understanding [entrepreneurship]" (Anderson, 2005: 587).

In support of this backlash effect against traditional, mainstream research it is argued that the "alternative ways of thinking and seeing" (Hyrsky 1999: 31) facilitated by contextualised approaches (Hindle, 2010; Fletcher, 2007; Mason and Harvey, 2013; Welter, 2011; Zahra, 2007) provide deeper, more nuanced views and interpretations (Hytti, 2003; Foss, 2010; Shaw and Carter, 2007) of "the complex and dynamic process of entrepreneurship" (Chiles *et al*, 2010: 157).

It is further contended that such approaches "make a constructive contribution to entrepreneurship research by introducing enhanced conceptual, epistemological and methodological reflection" (Johansson, 2004: 273), whilst simultaneously challenging the "philosophical assumptions" (Chiles *et al*, 2010: 139) of the "existing orthodoxies" (Clarke and Holt, 2010: 69) that represent the status quo within mainstream entrepreneurship research.

As a critical piece of feminist-informed scholarship exploring "the connection between knowledge creation and politics/values/ideologies" (Ogbor, 2000: 608), the study employed a contextualised narrative approach to data gathering (Ashe and Treanor, 2011; Bjursell and Melin, 2011; Bendl, 2008; Neergard *et al*, 2011), based on the elicitation of data through semi-structured interviews which method was chosen to encourage "the informants talk about themselves, their firm, and its strategic activities in their own words using their own images, symbols, and metaphors" (Kisfalvi, 2002: 495).

The elicitation of contextualised narratives from the women research participants facilitated "the voices of informants to be heard, and their meanings and interpretations to be articulated" (Wallace, 2005: 78), whilst simultaneously acknowledging the power and influence of discourses "as a structuring principle of society, in social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivity" (Weedon, 1997: 41).

Additionally, the collection of subjective, person-centred contextualised narrative data "acknowledges that the world is in constant evolution and that entrepreneurship itself is a socially constructed phenomenon" (Brush *et al*, 2009: 16), thereby providing the entrepreneurship research community with an opportunity to "broaden our learning about entrepreneurship...[by drawing] on some of the less 'accepted' methods of doing research such as content analysis, ethnographic study, or narrative approaches" (de Bruin *et al*, 2007: 329).

These approaches in turn facilitate the development of theory rooted in the "first-hand, real authentic experiences of entrepreneurial lives" (Foss, 2010: 83), which allowed the experiences of the women SEur research participants to be evaluated within the context of the associated wider, dominant, and gendered discourses of both SE/SEship, and women/motherhood, and the attendant contradictions and tensions explored.

The methodology chosen for this study, aimed to support a contribution to the theoretical development of SEship theory by providing a conduit through which "a coherent story of what we believe to be the nature of entrepreneurship, as experienced" (Gartner and Birley, 2002: 388) could emerge, and which would position the women research participants as the expert "situated knowers" (Hill Collins, 2000: 19), whose knowledge and experience could help "create a more nuanced view of social entrepreneurship and develop greater theoretical insight into the phenomenon" (Shaw and Carter, 2007: 423).

5.5 Sample design

Three key components derived from the feminist-informed theoretical and conceptual framework - which comprised women-centred work, diversity, and context - were used to inform the sampling criteria for the study. Thus,

participants were selected on the basis that they were: a) *women* SEurs, b) drawn from sectorally and personally diverse backgrounds representative of the *diversity* of women's SEship, and c) operating in *different geographic locations* within the UK.

By focussing specifically on diversity in relation to the women SEurs, the study sought to highlight both the "commonalities" (Winn, 2004: 145), and the "differences and divisions" (Lewis, 2004: 466) in the experiences of the women "based on shared gendered norms" (Hanson and Blake 2008, 138), whilst being simultaneously alert to "heterogeneity within particularistic articulations of subordination" (Shaw *et al*, 2009: 27).

The focus on geographic location aimed to draw attention to the effects of context (Buckingham *et al*, 2010; Welter, 2011) with particular reference to community embeddedness (Humbert, 2012; Trettin and Welter, 2011), and the regional/local socio-economic and political situation (Di Domenico *et al*, 2010; Seelos *et al*, 2010; Smith and Stevens, 2010) within which women were operating their SEs.

The exploratory nature of this study was driven by the paucity of research on women as SEurs (Humbert, 2012; McAdam and Treanor, 2011; Teasdale *et al*, 2011), and as such the research themes selected to inform the sample design were largely drawn from the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship, rather than from the SEship literature. However, the sampling frame developed was fully consistent with a feminist theoretical framework due to its being qualitative in approach (Bruni *et al*, 2004; Limerick and O'Leary, 2006), theory-driven (Foss, 2010; Parker, 2010), and designed specifically "to give women a voice in a field in which they are marginalised" (Ahl, 2006: 610).

In order to reach as wide an audience of potential participants as possible, a call for research participants was put out to a pool of SE-specialist academics known personally to the researcher, to national and local SE support, training, and funding organisations, to local and national SE networks and member organisations, and to online SEship discussion forums.

Additionally, an online Google search was used in order to obtain the names of women SEurs who had participated in the Labour government's SE

Ambassadors programme, and these women were 'cold' contacted through the publically available e-mail addresses associated with their SEs.

Social media - specifically Twitter – was used to identify UK-based women-owned/run SEs, and when contact was made with individual women SEurs, a snowball sampling technique (Bourne, 2010; Nelson *et al*, 2009) was then utilised, whereby contacts were encouraged to suggest further participants for possible inclusion in the study.

In recognition of the lack of women-focussed SEship literature, several key informants from SE support, training, and funding organisations were recruited for interview. These interviewees were also all women, and were approached in order to provide a "source of validation for a variety of social and other important contextual data" (Kodithuwakku and Rosa, 2002: 441), and to validate the proposed transference of emergent themes arising from the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship to the context of women's SEship. The key informants were also asked to identify any further issues of importance for inclusion in the study which they thought had been 'missed'.

5.6 Ethical procedures: abiding by University regulations

In accordance with the University of East Anglia's research ethics guidelines, I completed a research ethics application (below), which enabled my Supervisor to assess the possible need for a referral to the Norwich Business School Research Ethics Committee for approval prior to undertaking data collection.

The application posed questions relating to the research proposal in order to determine the level (if any) of risk posed to participants by the research, and covered such topics as group vulnerability (including ability to provide informed consent), the possible use of 'financial inducements', health and safety (including possible risk of harm to physical, mental, psychological health) of both the researcher and the participants, the safe storage of data, confidentiality, and the ability of participants to withdraw from the study without negative consequences.

Due to the nature of both my study and the research cohort, after a short discussion, my Supervisor was able to sign a statement asserting that my

proposed work "does not raise ethical problems that must be considered by the NBS Research Ethics Committee", and the application was duly submitted to the Postgraduate Research Office for processing in September 2011, and I was able to begin my data collection.

5.7 The sample

A total of four key informants (KIs) and thirty women SEurs (WSEs) were recruited to the study. All the WSEs were founder/owner/managers of UK-based SEs, and those who self-referred as study participants did so in response to advertisements asking specifically for 'women social entrepreneur' participants.

Diversity within the research cohort was marked by geographic location, sectoral location of the SE, age of the SE, nationality of participants, and life-stage of participants. Recruitment was carried out over the course of more than a year, and through a variety of mediums, in order to ensure the diversity of the research cohort. Where non-compliance according to the designated diversity markers employed in the study occurred, for example where the recruitment process failed to naturally provide participants from each part of the UK, targeted recruitment in the specific geographic area was undertaken to remedy the situation.

The data gathering process proceeded in two phases; the first consisted of the KI interviews, and the pilot interviews with two WSEs, the second phase comprised the roll-out of the fully revised interview guide with the participating 28 WSEs reflecting the diversity markers chosen for the study.

To ensure the anonymity of the research participants, each was allocated a pseudonym by which they were referred to throughout the thesis. This approach protected the personal and organisational anonymity of the participants, whilst allowing both for the revelation of basic non-identifying demographic data and for the derived interview data to be contextually discussed.

5.7.1 Selection criteria for the KIs

The KI interviews were conducted in November 2011 with female front-line staff, recruited from SE support, training, and funding organisations. The organisations were selected to include different geographic and socio-economic

environments in the UK - metropolitan, urban, and rural locations - in order to examine the similarities and differences in gendered (and other) problems identified by the key informants according to their location.

Table 5.1 below provides some basic demographic data relating to the organisations for which the KIs interviewed worked.

Key informant	Service provided	Scope	Date of establishment	Legal form	No. of employees	Geographic location
KI 1	Enterprise support, funding	Regional	1999	Limited by Guarantee	12	North of England
KI 2	Enterprise support, training	Urban	1995	Limited by Guarantee	11	North of England
KI 3	Enterprise support	Urban/Rural	2003	Industrial and Provident Society	4	North West of England
KI 4	Enterprise support, training	Urban/Rural	1991	Limited Liability Partnership	5	East of England

Table 5.1: KI (1-4) employer organisation demographic data

The key emergent themes from the KI interviews are shown in Table 5.2 on the following page, alongside the new questions derived for the WSE interviews in response to the issues raised.

Issues raised	Interview question(s) developed
Frustrations attendant upon the poor level of understanding of social enterprise and its benefits within society in general	Does your customer have buy-in to your social mission or are they simply purchasing a quality service/product from you? Does the general public understand what SE is? Do they care? Implications?
Lack of appreciation and experience of the practical matters involved in running an enterprise amongst politicians e.g. cash-flowing, which if not handled prudently can cause the enterprise to fail	Social enterprise has been on the political agenda for more than 10 years: Do you think that the politicians who promote it really understand what it is, how it works, and its benefits? Do they understand that side of things (cash flow, volunteer management etc.)?
Sense of unacknowledged privilege amongst politicians who do not appear to have any personal experience of the types of issues that social enterprise commonly attempt to tackle – social exclusion, poverty, abuse	Many social enterprises serve specific disadvantaged communities – disabled, poor, elderly etc.; Do you think that the politicians understand/have experience of the issues facing these groups? If not, do you think that their lack of knowledge could/does have a detrimental effect on policy development?

Table 5.2: Examples of emergent themes from the pilot KI interviews presented alongside the interview questions developed from them

5.7.2 Selection criteria for the WSEs

A total of thirty WSEs were interviewed for the study. The women were recruited from around the UK, were owner/managers of SEs in a variety of sectors, and included non-British nationals. The women came to the study through a variety of means including direct, targeted contact, self-referral in response to 'calls for participants' posted in online SE forums, advertised through social networks, or through SE 'specialists' e.g. academics, support/member organisations etc., and via 'snowball' recruitment whereby interviewees suggested further possible interview candidates from within their network.

Figure 5.3 shows a tweet disseminated by SEUK in support of participant recruitment:

Figure 5.3: A participant recruitment tweet disseminated by SEUK on the author's behalf

Where specific diversity markers selected for the research cohort were not present, for example, when WSEs from a certain region did not appear in the research cohort, a targeted approach was employed whereby specifically targeted referrals were sought from specialists, through membership networks, via social media and other research participants. By so doing, the integrity of the research sample was maintained and diversity, according to the study criteria, was ensured.

Figure 5.4 on the following page shows a call for Wales-based participants, addressing a sample deficit:

Figure 5.4: Targeted recruitment advertisement posted to the RSA Wales webpage

The final research cohort consisted of thirty WSEs, and basic demographic information are provided on the following pages for both the WSEs (Tables 5.5 and 5.6), and for their SE organisations (Tables 5.7 and 5.8).

Name	Sue	Holly	Claudette	Anne	Rosemary	Audrey	Emma	Jane	Joanna	Fiona	Christina	Frankie	Nelly	Mary	Debbie	Chrissie
Age	55-64	55-64	55-64	55-64	55-64	45-54	45-54	45-54	45-54	45-54	45-54	45-54	35-44	45-54	45-54	45-54
Education	UG	UG	UG	PG	UG	PG	Post-16	Post-16	PG	PG	PG	UG	PG	PG	Post-16	PG
Nationality	GBR	GBR	GBR	GBR	GBR	GBR	GBR	GBR	GBR	GBR	NLD	GBR	GBR	IRL	GBR	CAN
Dependent children	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Prior business management experience		Yes					Yes				Yes	Yes				Yes
Prior SE experience	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table 5.5: Basic demographic data relating to the WSEs and their organisations. Joanna (this page) and Jennifer (following page) were interviewed during phase one as part of the pilot study

Name	Margot	Caroline	Lynette	Maria	Diane	Jessica	Lucille	Suzanne	Sinéad	Nisha	Jasmine	Alexandra	Rachel	Jennifer
Age	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	35-44	25-34	25-34
Education	UG	PG	UG	PG	PG	N/A	UG	UG	PG	PG	PG	PG	PG	UG
Nationality	CAN	FRA	GBR/ITA	ESP	GBR	GBR	FRA	GBR	GBR	GBR/PAK	GBR	GBR	GBR	GBR
Dependent children	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Prior business management experience	Yes					Yes						Yes		
Prior SE experience	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table 5.6: Basic demographic data relating to the WSEs and their organisations (continued). Joanna (previous page) and Jennifer (this page) were interviewed during phase one as part of the pilot study

Name	Sector	Legal form	Year of est.	Location
Sue	Training/education (adult); Performing arts	LBG	1996	Midlands
Holly	Business development/support	LBS	2009	North-West
Claudette	Business development/support	LBG	2008	Midlands
Anne	Training/education (adult); Business development/support	CIC	2010	South
Rosemary	Re-use; Retail; Training/education (adult)	CIC	2010	West
Audrey	Lobbying and Campaigning	Private Ltd	2003	South-East
Emma	Business development/support	I&PS	2004	Midlands
Jane	Re-use; Manufacturing; Retail	I&PS	2008	South
Joanna	Advice/support services; Training/education (adult)	LBG	2010	Midlands
Fiona	Disability support services (adult)	LBG	2011	East
Christina	Business development/support	LBG	2012	South-East
Frankie	Business development/support	CIC	2009	West
Nelly	Sports/leisure	LBG	2009	Wales
Mary	Mental health support services	LBG	2011	South-East
Debbie	Re-use; Mental health support services; Disability support services (adult)	LBG	2006	Wales
Chrissie	Financial services	LLP	2009	South-East

Table 5.7: Characteristics of the participants' social enterprises

Name	Margot	Caroline	Lynette	Maria	Diane	Jessica	Lucille	Suzanne	Sinéad	Nisha	Jasmine	Alexandra	Rachel	Jennifer
Sector	Re-use; Manufacturing; Retail	Business development/support	Training/education (youth)	Financial services; Training/education (adult)	Mental health support services; Training/education (adult)	Clean energy; Business development/support	Re-use; Training/education; Business development/support	Training/education (child)	Training/education (adult); Mental health support	Retail	Training/education (adult); Business Development/support	Urban planning; Public engagement; Consultancy	PR; Marketing consultancy	Publishing; Training/education (adult); Disability support services; Training/education (adult); Sports/leisure
Legal form	Private Ltd	CIC	LBG	LBS	I&PS	CIC	CIC	LBG	CIC	LBG	LBS	CIC	LBG	LBG
Year of est.	2007	2007	2007	2012	2011	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011	2011	2011	2008
Location	South-East	South-East	South-East	Scotland	West	South-East	South-West	Midlands	South	South-East	Scotland	South-East	Midlands	Midlands

Table 5.8: Characteristics of the participants' social enterprises (continued)

5.8 Data gathering

Data were gathered in two distinct phases over the course of a twelve month period, beginning in November 2011 to ending in October 2012. The first phase related to the pilot interviews with two WSEs, alongside key informant interviews with four KIs. The interview questions were subsequently amended to take account of issues raised in the pilot interviews with the WSEs, in addition to the topics suggested for inclusion by the KIs. The second phase consisted of interviews with the remaining WSE participants.

All data were gathered through the use of semi-structured interviews (Bourne, 2010; Mavin *et al*, 2004; Tillmar, 2007), the questions for which were initially derived from a comprehensive review of three strands of literature, those being the mainstream entrepreneurship, feminist-informed entrepreneurship (including the feminist critique of the same), and SEship literatures.

5.8.1 Phase one - WSE interview design (pilot)

The original interview guide designed for the women SEurs employed a life story approach which method was chosen for its use "in eliciting new and deeply contextual insights into the entrepreneurial process" (Rae and Carswell, 2000: 222). It was initially felt that the collection of processional data would help facilitate an understanding of the effects of both life-stage, and the passage of time on WSEs' entrepreneurial intentions (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Williams, 2009; Winn, 2005).

To this end, a life story interview guide was developed, informed by the work of Atkinson (1998, 2001). As discussed above, the specific content of the questions was derived from a comprehensive literature review and the interview guide covered the following themes: about you, the establishment of your SE, context, your enterprise, motivations, visions of success, and entrepreneurial identity.

5.8.2 Pilot study – methodological and practical lessons learned

My initial intention was to conduct all the interviews face-to-face, preferably within the SEur's workspace, in order to gain observational insight into the

functioning of the working environment, and the SEur's interaction with it and with their staff and colleagues, or other stakeholders using the space.

As such, my pilot interviews were all conducted face-to-face, but only one of the two WSEs interviewed during this phase has a designated office space, and of the four KIs also interviewed, two requested to be interviewed off their work premises. As a result, interviews were mostly carried out in cafés selected by the women, which presented both advantages and challenges.

Due to the fact that so many of the women either had no designated office space (i.e. worked from home), or preferred not to meet within their workplace, it was unsurprising that participants chose to meet in a public place, rather than invite me into their homes.

Whilst we had exchanged e-mails prior to meeting, none of the women could be absolutely certain that I was indeed who I purported to be – that is to say a woman (rather than a man 'posing' as a woman on the internet), and a bona fide academic researcher. Thus, whilst I attempted to mitigate such fears by only using my official, University-provided e-mail address in my correspondence with the women SEurs, and additionally provided links to my University PhD profile page which included a photograph and details of my proposed study, the women would not have been certain of me until we met face-to-face, and I undertook the interview.

Therefore, mindful of their personal safety and of the advice proffered to women meeting strangers for the first time, all the women chose to meet either in a public place (a café) or in the case of those women who had designated offices, in their workspace at a time when other staff members would also be present in the building.

5.8.3 Advantages and disadvantages of conducting interviews in a public (café) environment

The pilot stage interviews carried out in café environments provided an interesting learning opportunity for me to reflect on the relative advantages and disadvantages of such an approach. The safety and security offered by a busy,

public environment was important to both me and the interviewees, as women. As noted above, whilst I could be more certain that the women whom I had arranged to meet were legitimate contacts – I was able to research them and their organisations through information publically available on the internet – we were all mindful of our personal safety meeting strangers in the context of a 'rape culture', which describes a cultural milieu in which:

> "[m]ost women experience the fear of rape [or other forms of violence] as a nagging, knowing sense that something awful could happen, an angst that keeps them from doing things they want or need to do, or from doing them at the time, or in the way they might otherwise do. Women's fear of rape is a sense that one must always be on guard, vigilant and alert…" (Gordon and Riger, 1991: 2).

The gendered nature of the organisation of face-to-face interviews was based on the fact that "women are more afraid of all victimizations [than men]…principally due to their perceived risk of such offenses and their fear of rape in everyday life" (Ferraro, 1996: 667), and represented a pertinent feature of the pilot phase of my data collection. As a result, I was forced to consciously acknowledge the constraints placed upon my own and other women's lives by the constant underlying fear of rape and other forms of violence, and the attendant "assiduous state of vigilance and the deployment of well-developed coping strategies [that permit] women [to] continue to use particular spaces and domains [albeit] in a highly restricted way" (Pain, 1997: 234).

Thus, possessing a personal and experiential understanding of the 'rules' imposed upon women's movement and behaviour in a rape culture – that we do not place ourselves in (geographic or social) situations that could be perceived to 'invite' sexual assault and violence (Grubb and Turner, 2012; Valentine, 1989), and due to the fact that female socialisation ensures that "women know that they are held responsible for avoiding rape, and should they be victimised, they know they are likely to be blamed" (Gordon and Riger, 1991: 2) – it was inconceivable, even as another woman, that I might request the women to invite me into their homes to conduct our interview, or that I would ask them to meet me in anything other than a very well-lit, well-populated public place, during the daytime or immediately after work (as opposed to at night).

For these reasons, cafés were chosen as the preferred meeting place by all but one of the women – the singular woman who did not choose a café invited me into her workplace, where other people were present (although not in the same room) during the interview. However, whilst the café environment allowed both the individual women and me to feel safe and unthreatened, the nature of the café space made it less than ideal as a place for data collection.

The first problem that we encountered was the transient nature of a busy café environment, which meant that people were constantly entering and leaving the premises, opening and closing the doors, and by so doing, letting in both traffic noise from outside, as well as gusts of cold air which did not help create a properly relaxed atmosphere.

The second issue concerned the noise and distraction created by the constant flow of patrons – talking to companions, barristas, or servers, moving tables and chairs, removing or putting on their coats and bags. Added to that was the astonishing level of noise created by the coffee-making process - both by the industrial-sized coffee machines, and also by the barristas incessantly 'banging' the coffee grounds out of the machinery into the collection drawers, and servers calling out food orders to patrons.

Whilst the environmental problems were distracting at the time, the third and far more serious issue emerged during the transcription process, when I found that the ambient noise within the cafés - particularly the hissing of the steam vents, and the almost continuous loud banging associated with the barristas emptying the coffee machines - seriously and adversely affected the quality of the recordings made by my digital voice recorder.

A brief investigation of the problems identified through the use of a café environment within which to conduct data gathering activities within the qualitative literature on women's entrepreneurship (using key words: 'café'; 'telephone/phone'; 'personal/in person'; and 'interview') provided only one example of other research data being gathered through interviews with women entrepreneurs in such an environment.

This particular paper (Gill and Ganesh, 2007: 275) also incorporated the collection of data in "the participant's business, or in a conference space", which appeared to reflect the most visible trend which was the singular, or in combination, use of face-to-face and/or telephone interviewing in an undisclosed location (Ezzedeen and Zikic, 2012; Lockyer and George, 2012; Lewis, 2011; Nelson *et al*, 2009; Winn, 2005 etc.).

Whilst many of the academic papers reviewed during this process did not provide details of where data gathering interviews took place, the fact that a combination of face-to-face and telephone interviews was the most prevalent research methodology employed, suggested that the benefits identified during the course of my own research through the use of both face-to-face interviews and Skype as data gathering methods in this research were similarly experienced by other women-focussed researchers.

Furthermore, the almost entire lack of mention of interviews being conducted in public places suggested that the limitations identified above relating to ambient noise pollution, and the constant movement of people in and out of public spaces made such venues unsuitable for the uninterrupted gathering of interview data, a point made by Deakin and Wakefiled (2013: 7), who noted that "distraction can interfere with the flow of an interview and may affect interviewee concentration, and subsequently, the data gathered may be affected".

Thus, as discussed above in relation to my own research, the benefits of being able to build a personal rapport through face-to-face interviews clearly underpinned the use of that method for other women researchers focussed on the experiences of women entrepreneurs, and the temporal, geographical, and physical flexibility of telephone-based (Skype) interviews similarly appeared to enable the accommodation of the demands of the lives of both the women participants, and the researchers themselves. Finally, the problematic nature of conducting interviews in public places also appeared to reflect the methodological approaches utilised by other women-focussed researchers, in spite of the benefits that such places offered in terms of safety for the women.

5.8.4 Pros and cons of conducting interviews in a workplace environment

As mentioned previously, one of the interviewees invited me to interview her at her place of work (office), which was in a city-centre location, in a shared, converted factory building.

Entrance to the building was gained when the receptionist released the door following an intercom exchange. I was asked to wait in the reception seating area while my interviewee was contacted and came to collect me. All of these initial processes provided a much more formal, business-like framework within which to undertake the interview, but also provided a great deal of security to my contact – any visitor was only allowed into the building after an appointment was confirmed in the diary held at reception, and the face-to-face meeting was initiated at the interviewees instigation i.e. at the point at which she was ready to come downstairs and collect me.

Having been taken upstairs into the office space occupied by her SE, the interviewee introduced me to her colleagues as we passed through the shared, open-plan office space, before leading me into the Board Room where we sat in chairs opposite each other and undertook the interview.

The positive benefits of the office space environment were manifold: first, it allowed the interviewee to retain large amounts of control over the timescale and the manner of the interview process, second, is also made clear the fact that I was a visitor to the interviewee's personal (work) space, which served to mediate the potential power dynamics associated with the encounter in her favour.

The third benefit related to the safety aspect of meeting an unknown contact; in addition to the safety precautions offered by the entry phone system, which allowed the receptionist to both see the visitor, as well as to check the validity of the claim to an appointment before allowing entry, the fact that the interviewee was able to lead me through a shared office space allowed her to implicitly communicate her whereabouts to her colleagues whilst in the company of a stranger, gave them the opportunity to see me (and simultaneously communicated to me, the visitor, that I had been seen), and allowed the

interviewee to enter a private space (the Board Room) with a stranger, safe in the knowledge that her colleagues were within shouting distance, and would be anticipating her emergence from the meeting within a preordained timeframe.

The final benefits related to the calm and undisturbed environment represented by the Board Room in which we could conduct our conversation. As a result of her colleagues being aware of the nature and purpose of my visit, we were left undisturbed (except for a surreptitious 'welfare check' by another member of staff after about an hour) for the entire duration of the interview. The recording derived from the interview was clear, and there was a very noticeable lack of ambient noise pollution. Interestingly, this interviewee was the youngest SEur whom I interviewed that did not actually own (or part-own) the SE for which she worked, although she had been instrumental in its establishment and held a managerial position.

From a researcher perspective, I did not consider that conducting an interview in an office-based context had any shortcomings, other than the time and costs associated with national long distance travel, accommodation and childcare costs (and the 'pulling of favours' to arrange the informal, overnight care of my children in my absence),

5.8.5 Methodological implications of the pilot phase

As a result of the experience that I gained from the pilot study, I made a decision to explore Skype as an alternative method of data collection. My initial attraction to Skype as a methodological tool occurred for research and personal reasons.

The cumulative effect of the lessons learned undertaking the pilot phase of my data collection, coupled with the limitations imposed upon me by my personal circumstances, meant that the use of Skype as an alternative means of undertaking the remaining interviews appeared to be both reasonable and realistic. Furthermore, it underscored the absolute necessity of an awareness and understanding of the implications of both gender and context, for the meaningful interpretation of situations experienced, and subsequent decisions made, by individuals during the course of their lives.

5.8.6 The experience of using Skype as an alternative data collection method to the traditional face-to-face interview

The use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) methodologies, such as Skype, for the collection of qualitative, interview-based data is a relatively new phenomenon (O'Connor *et al*, 2008), that has gained rapid popularity for the benefits that it offers researchers as a means by which to reach geographically dispersed research participants (Sullivan, 2012), at almost no cost (Bertrand and Bordeau, 2010).

Skype provides a free to download and use service that enables PC-to-PC videoconferencing (using webcams) over a broadband internet connection (Cater, 2011). In order for Skype to be used successfully, both PCs involved in the 'call' require the Skype application to be installed, and if the video element is required in addition to the voice element, then webcams are also required (Hay-Gibson, 2009).

The positive benefits for me as a researcher of using Skype to conduct my interviews were manifold, and included the lack of cost associated with the use of this technology, the flexibility that it offered in terms of *when* I was able to conduct the interviews i.e. the fact that I could use it to make contact with women outside of traditional office hours to suit their own needs/schedules, its 'immediacy' i.e. the fact that the interview could commence without the social (hospitality) 'niceties' associated with a face-to-face meeting, the freedom from having to travel to meet research participants (and the costs and complications associated with that), and the fact that a virtual 'face-to-face' interview could be conducted from my own home, and indeed sometimes from the participants' homes also, without need for consideration of the limitations placed on women's lives and movements by the rape culture discussed above.

5.8.7 Skype: a feminist method for data collection? Reflections on the experience of using Skype to conduct interviews

My experience of using Skype as a data collection method was overwhelmingly positive, in spite of the frustrations associated with the somewhat unreliable service provision of broadband internet.

Through the use of Skype, I had greater flexibility to arrange interviews throughout the day and evening to suit both the women participants and myself. For example, several of the asked to be interviewed in the evening when their working day had ended, whilst for others the flexibility centred on their physical location during the interview i.e. it provided them with the ability to participate in interviews from their home-based offices, which as discussed previously, would not have been appropriate in a 'real' face-to-face situation.

In this way, Skype allowed me to work in a way that met both mine and my interviewees' needs, whilst virtually eliminating cost, keeping both me and my participants safe from (potential) harm, facilitating the extension of my working day beyond core school hours, and allowing me to reach women all over the UK – from Scotland, to Wales, to the south coast of England, and everywhere in between.

The fact that Skype allowed an interview to take place with a minimum of social niceties meant that the women did not have to play 'host' to me, and could rather sign in and out of the interview at will. This meant that when the interview was concluded, the women (and I) could simply terminate the call, and get on with the rest of our day/evening. The disruption factor of traditional face-to-face interviews was thereby avoided, and I believe that the ease with which the women were able to participate in my research facilitated their positive engagement in the process.

5.8.8 Limitations of the use of Skype

The limitations of using Skype were relatively few, but where problems occurred, tended to centre on the occasional unreliability of my own or the interviewee's broadband connection – when the bandwidth became narrow, both audio and video clarity was compromised, and sometimes a call was lost altogether (Hay-Gibson, 2009). This problem could often be solved (without affecting the flow of the interview too adversely) by switching off the video function, which served to reduce the demand on the broadband connection, thereby improving the quality of the audio.

The quality of the audio feed was the most important aspect of the Skype connection, as it was the digital recording of the audio output that was eventually transformed into transcribed text for subsequent data analysis. As such, my concern with the maintaining a Skype connection centred more strongly on the audio feed than the video feed, which made the (mutually agreed upon) decision to sacrifice the video content in favour of the audio, a logical one.

A second aspect of the broadband continuity issue emerged when, from time to time, the connection would disappear altogether. A loss of connectivity would prompt Skype to automatically 'attempt to retrieve the call', and if the automated, programme-based retrieval system failed, one or other of the users would be required to reinstigate the call (by selecting the 'call' button within the programme) in much the same way as when a landline or mobile telephone call is unexpectedly disconnected, and one of the callers needs to phone the other again.

The second issue that I encountered was that one of the women interviewees was not very tech-savvy, and did not know how to install Skype prior to the interview (Bertrand and Bordeau, 2010). However, whilst she lacked confidence, she was willing to follow my suggestions, and after I supplied her with a link to the Skype website, was able to successfully install the programme onto her computer by using the easy-to-follow instructions provided for installation on the Skype webpage.

The third issue turned out to have a very minimal impact upon the data collection process, but involved 'no-shows' i.e. women not being available on Skype at the agreed time on the agreed date (Deakin and Wakefield, 2013). This situation occurred only once and the interview was rescheduled for a later time that afternoon.

This experience prompted me to provide all future interviewees with my mobile phone number prior to interview, so that they could alert me in case of a problem. Two other women subsequently sent me text messages to inform me

of delays to the start of our scheduled interviews, which I was able to accommodate unproblematically.

The fourth and final issue that I encountered related to my decision to conduct my interviews from home. As a result of that decision, I experienced occasional interruptions to the interviews when, for example, callers knocked on my front door, or the landline telephone rang. Similarly, there were occasions when, during the course of an evening interview, one of my children would come downstairs in need of my attention, which necessitated brief pauses within the interview processes.

However, these context-specific interruptions were minimal, were kindly received by the affected participants, and were sometimes replicated by situations faced by the interviewees themselves, for example, when colleagues needed to speak to them, or when their own families required their immediate attention. As such, the interruptions were seen by both me and the individual interviewees as a normal part of our lives as both professional women, and mothers/wives/partners etc.

5.8.9 Phase two – WSE interviews

Phase two comprised the Skype interviews with the remaining WSEs, which lasted on average 1.5 to 2 hours, and were digitally recorded using a digital Dictaphone placed next to the PC's external speaker.

The recruitment and interview process followed a rolling trajectory whereby participants were constantly sought and recruited whilst interviews were being undertaken, over the course of a year.

Participant approval of gathered data was also sought on a rolling basis, as previously completed interviews were transcribed and e-mailed to participants for inspection, verification, and editing if required.

5.9 Research tools

The interview guide was developed based on the emergent findings from the review of both the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship theory and research, and from the SEship literature (with specific reference to the critical

stream). As such, the questions posed reflected the themes identified and discussed in the conceptual framework chapter, and concentrated on the themes mirrored in both the critical SE literature, and the feminist critique of mainstream entrepreneurship scholarship.

The key areas for exploration through the interviews centred on the impacts of gender, and the life experiences of the women participant's on their decisions to establish SEs (as opposed to mainstream enterprises). Specific areas of interest were:

- (Social) enterprise as a vehicle for social change (Calás *et al*, 2009; Miller and Wesley, 2010)

- Measures of success (de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Ruebottom, 2011)

- Effects of gendered life experiences on (social) entrepreneurial intention/practice (Ettl and Welter, 2010; Humbert, 2012)

- (Social) entrepreneurial identity (Jones *et al*, 2008; Lewis, 2011)

The major change made to the post-pilot interview guide was the incorporation of the emergent themes from the data gathered in the KI interviews, and the decision to adapt the questions in the revised interview guide to fit a context-aware approach, allowed the researcher to 'streamline' the interviews to deal with the issue of replication, and to reflect the participants' acknowledged time constraints as owner-managers of SEs. Additionally, it reflected the social constructionist underpinnings of the feminist theoretical framework which sought to promote the development of "insights into the social and structural relations in which entrepreneurs operate" (Chell, 2007: 2).

The questions were divided into sections that reflected the contextual level of the data sought, in line with the call from feminist scholars for attention to be paid to the influence of contextual factors on women's entrepreneurship (Brush *et al*, 2009; Ettl and Welter, 2010). Thus, the micro-level questions related to issues concerning the individual women SEurs' personal and SEurial experiences (Calás *et al*, 2009; Mirchandani, 1999), the meso-level questions related to local/regional environment, and local governmental policy on SE as a

reflection of national policy agendas, and the macro-level questions related to the national socio-economic context, and the national policy landscape within which the women were operating their SEs (Mason and Harvey, 2013; Welter, 2011).

Within the macro-level questions, sub-headings were created in order to enable thematically coherent questions to be asked, for example, questions relating to the Conservative Party's Big Society policy agenda, voluntary action and SE, and definitions of SE.

The open-ended questions were designed as a means of encouraging the women SEurs to share 'stories' rather than simply 'information', as a means of eliciting data for the purpose of theory-building (Nelson *et al*, 2009). This method was adopted after the initial life-story approach was discarded due to the time-demands that it imposed upon the research participants, and provided a way in which to obtain rich, experiential data (Lewis, 2011; Morris *et al*, 2012) relating to the nature of enacted SEship, which serve to:

> "enhance the comprehensiveness of our explanations for entrepreneurial phenomena and deepen our understanding of the complexities and compromises involved in entrepreneurial processes" (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003: 593).

5.10 Qualitative Analysis Techniques

The initial data analysis conducted involved a context-focussed critical discourse analysis of the policy documents and other publications (Miller, 1997) relating to the development of SE policy in the UK since 1997 encompassing both the Labour governmental tenure (1997-2010), and the ConDem coalition government (2010-2015), in order to facilitate the revelation of the "complex workings of power and ideology in discourse" Lazar (2007: 141).

The purpose of this analysis was to provide contextual data with which to better understand the emergence of the SE sector in the UK, and the influence that the 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) had on its development. Furthermore, the analysis of policy and related SE documents facilitated an investigation of the development of dominant discourses of SE and SEship in

the UK, alongside the revelation of the influencing factors relating to the emergence of the only governmentally-sanctioned definition of SE (DTI, 2002).

Next, all data collected in the form of transcribed interviews were collated and subjected to a two phase manual thematic coding process. In order to protect the anonymity of the women participants, each woman was assigned a pseudonym (Ettl and Welter, 2010) with which any directly quoted data used in the thesis was ascribed to.

The first phase involved iterative cross-case comparative analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in order to compare responses across the sample to the major analytical themes derived from the literature review, for example, motivation for SEship, definition of SE and SEship, SEurial identity, and the effect(s) of governmental policy agendas. This generated initial categories (first order codes), which were subsequently grouped to create wider themes which reflected the aim and objectives of the study.

The second phase built-upon and complemented the first through the use of inductive within-case analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This stage provided the opportunity to identify further data relating to the first order codes, and to explore the emergent commonalities in the conceptual and cognitive links between each participant's personal values, life experiences, SEurial identity, and visions of success, as well as to reveal the commonalities between the women's conceptions and conceptualisations of SE and SEship. These common themes were designated as second order codes, and provided the framework for the subsequent exploration, discussion and conclusions, which in turn provided the basis for eventual theorising.

5.11 Conclusion

In spite of the limitations of the methodological approach outlined previously, the qualitative research approach used was consistent with the adopted feminist theoretical framework, which calls for the collection of rich, experiential data (Jones *et al*, 2008; Seanor *et al*, 2011) in relation to women's entrepreneurship, and as such reflected the ongoing critique of the limitations of positivist research

evident in both feminist (and other critical) scholarship (Ahl, 2006; Gartner and Birley, 2002; Hart and Metcalfe, 2010; Higgins and Elliott, 2010).

The flexibility offered by the use of Skype as a data gathering method meant that the women SEur participants were inconvenienced as little as possible by the interview process, whilst simultaneously being provided with increased flexibility in terms of time and location during the interview process (Deakin and Wakefield, 2013; Hanna, 2012), and effectively retaining the majority of the positive benefits associated with traditional face-to-face interviews (Hay-Gibson, 2009; Sullivan, 2012).

The development of an interview guide informed by emergent themes from the SE, and critical feminist literatures, as well as documents published by 'key paradigm-building actors' provided a robust theoretical and contextual base for the research, and the consultation process undertaken with key informants from within the UK SE sector – "chosen on the basis of their knowledge of [social] entrepreneurship" (Baughn *et al*, 2006: 694) – further improved the robustness of the methodological approach utilised.

Finally, the application of both iterative and inductive data analysis techniques to within-case and between-case data scrutiny, alongside the discourse analysis of documentation published by 'key paradigm-building actors' within the UK SE sector, provided the study with a robust methodological foundation in spite of the acknowledged paucity of empirical SE research upon which to build new knowledge (Bull 2008; Hynes 2009; Pärenson, 2011), and allowed the data to 'speak' to the identified research gaps – specifically the lack of research on women's SEship (Humbert, 2012; McAdam and Treanor, 2011; Teasdale *et al*, 2011) – as well as to provide evidence of other gaps, unidentified in the literature to date.

Chapter Six: Findings - Political construction of SE: discursive and rhetorical conceptualisations of the 'idea(l)' of SE

6.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the first and fourth objectives of the study, which concern the contextualisation of the contemporary SE landscape in the UK, and definition/meanings of SE. These topics are addressed through a detailed investigation of the development of the contemporary UK SE landscape through the presentation and critical analysis of governmental policy documents, and other stakeholder documentation available in the public domain.

Alongside this, the emergent academic critique of the 'grand narrative' (Dey and Steyaert, 2010) of SE and SEship is considered, and by so doing, the implications of the political positioning of SE are revealed, and the politicised development of meanings around the terms SE and SEship over time, explored.

Public perception and understanding of the term 'social enterprise', and indeed 'social entrepreneurship', in the UK remains confused (HM Government, 2011; SEC, 2009; WISE, 2006) in spite, more than a decade ago, of governmental recognition that "[t]o many outside the sector, social enterprise is an unknown concept" (DTI, 2002: 13), and the subsequent commitment "to raise the profile of social enterprise through awards, media coverage, visits, speaking events and publications" (DTI, 2003c: 10).

The academic SEship literature shows similar evidence of the "seemingly endless definitional debate among academics" (Mason, 2012: 123) around the topics of SE and SEship (Dacin *et al*, 2011; Kistruck and Beamish, 2010; Nicholls and Cho, 2006; Peattie and Morley, 2008; Zahra *et al*, 2009), with recent (critical) scholarship displaying "a growing desire to leave behind definitional debates regarding social entrepreneurship and instead focus on its antecedents and consequences" (Grimes *et al*, 2013: 460), whilst simultaneously reporting empirical evidence of the frustrations expressed by practitioners regarding lack of relevance to the enactment of SEurial activity of the debate (Jones and Keogh, 2006).

6.1 Social enterprise policy development under New Labour (1997-2010) and the emergent academic critique

In early 1998, the Home Office published a press release that announced the recipient list of its £11 million Voluntary and Community Unit's (VCU) grants for the year 1998-1999. The then Home Office Minister with responsibility for the voluntary sector, Alun Michael, stated that "The grant awards demonstrate the Government's strong commitment to the voluntary sector…[which represents] a powerful means of social inclusion…[investment in which] will mean better co-ordination of existing voluntary activity and will be the springboard to imaginative and diverse new work" (Home Office, 1998).

Notable amongst the award winners was the Institute for Community Studies in Bethnal Green, East London, which was given £30,000 towards the development of an "ambitious and innovative 'School for Social Entrepreneurs' that will prepare enterprising people who wish to bring their strengths to the voluntary sector" (Home Office, 1998).

The concept of a school for SEurs was first mooted by Leadbeater (1997: 4) who recommended that the government:

> "[f]und research into the feasibility of creating a Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, a kind of business school for social entrepreneurs, which would service social entrepreneurs from the public, private and voluntary sectors".

Later in 1998 the Home Office published a 'Compact on relations between the government and the voluntary and community sector in England', which made clear the government's vision for its work with the voluntary sector, and set out "the key principles and undertakings" (Home Office, 1998b: 3) of the relationship, alongside its aspirations for future development.

The provision of funding for capacity development within the voluntary sector was specifically highlighted within the document as a key governmental objective, with a commitment "to pay particular regard to the concept of strategic funding, ensuring the continued capacity of voluntary and community organisations to respond to Government initiatives" (Home Office, 1998b: 5).

Such an assurance was consistent with the New Labour 'third way' approach, which attempted to effect a "repositioning [of] the state as a guarantor, but not necessarily as a provider, of public services" (Marks *et al*, 2007: 6). This repositioning occurred within a wider philosophical framework that aimed to seamlessly "reconcil[e] themes which in the past have been wrongly regarded as antagonistic" (Blair, 1998: 1), specifically around the belief that "[w]ith the right policies...entrepreneurial zeal can promote social justice" (*ibid.* 4).

On that basis, the Compact set out the government's uncompromising view on the voluntary sector as being "fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive society" (Home Office, 1998b: 4), asserting that third sector organisations already made "a major and literally incalculable contribution to the development of society and to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the nation" (*ibid.*: 5).

In 1999, HM Treasury published a report entitled 'Enterprise and social exclusion', which attempted to elucidate the barriers to self-employment for those in receipt of state benefits, in order to "make the move from 'benefits to business' as natural and easy as the move from 'welfare to work'" (HM Treasury, 1999: 3).

Echoing the contention that enterprise activity had the ability to promote social justice (Blair, 1998), the report lauded the "vital role that enterprise can play in helping to renew our poorest and most marginal communities" (HM Treasury, 1999: Foreword), calling for "the participation and partnership of many different players" alongside "the active engagement of communities themselves", within the context of "a new period of innovation and experimentation" (*ibid.*: Foreword).

In early 2000, taking the concepts set out in the (1999) 'Enterprise and social exclusion' report, the government made funding available for the development of a two-centre, London-based "social enterprise zone" (SEZ) (Smerdon and Robinson, 2004: 2). The SEZ was designed to bring to each location a "consortium of agencies and local people [who would] work together identifying and subsequently changing statutory rules or laws wherever such changes

[we]re likely to progress the social and economic regeneration of the community" (Robinson *et al*, 1998: 1).

The SEZ concept was derived from the Business Enterprise Zone (BEZ) - developed and implemented by the Conservative government (1979-1997) - which had sought to "stimulate focussed economic regeneration of areas of depressed industrial structure" (Bennett, 1990: 388). It was developed by the Labour government within a policy context structured around the roll-out of "various new government zones" (Robinson *et al*, 1998: 2), in the hope that "[l]ike the BEZ, where statutory regulations had been relaxed to make the area more attractive to business, the SEZ would be an area in which local agencies would be given powers to bend the rules blocking regeneration" (Smerdon and Robinson, 2004: 3). By so doing, it was hoped that the experiences derived from the SEZ project would be useful in the future development of 'evidence-based' governmental policy (Cabinet Office, 1999).

At the beginning of the new millennium, the concept of SE was firmly associated with social regeneration (HM Treasury, 1999; Smallbone *et al*, 2001), resulting in it being largely conceived of as a means by which to stimulate locally-based economic (and attendant social) regeneration (Seanor and Meaton, 2008; Westall, 2001), often in response to acute market failure (Diochon and Anderson, 2009):

> "[s]ocial enterprises were portrayed by government as contributing to tackling area based social exclusion through providing employment; delivering services in areas characterised by market failure; and stimulating enterprise" (Teasdale, 2010: 9).

Within the context of the SEZ project, locally-based economic regeneration was to be effected not by the creation of SEs *per se*, but instead through the application of a holistic approach to the identification and removal of barriers "that frustrate regeneration" (Robinson *et al*, 1998: 2), based upon an acknowledgement of the fact that "communal poverty creates and reinforces barriers, [and that] poverty is not just an individual problem with individual solutions" (*ibid.*: 1).

The link between the concepts of 'social' and 'enterprise' within the SEZ project could therefore be seen to be fully aligned with both the government's 'third

way' philosophy (Blair, 1998) and its published policy approach (HM Treasury, 1999), with the focus firmly placed on the interface of "community development and enterprise" (Robinson *et al*, 1998: 1).

The community-based, multi-agency nature of the project was such that it was founded upon "an integrated strategic plan that [brought] together social, welfare, health and education issues with enterprise, job access and creation, and economic development" (*ibid.*: 3), which served to frame the route out of poverty for communities - and the individuals living in them - within the wider socio-economic sphere based on the "deep-rooted community capacity and resilient partnerships between different sectors" (*ibid.*: 8).

Thus, it was clear that the 'enterprise' aspect of the SEZ incorporated both the establishment of individual businesses, with the attendant creation of employment opportunities, and the development of social capital by which to assist "individuals and groups [to] develop skills and knowledge in local communities" (Angove, 2007: 30). Community-based enterprises were therefore seen as a means by which to "develop skills, create employment and foster pathways to integration for socially excluded people" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 18), a contention borne-out by one of the "three key long-term tests of success" (Robinson *et al*, 1998: 22) of the SEZ, which centred on the attainment of public spending savings based upon "a reduction in need and an increase in community and private enterprise" (*ibid.*: 23).

The 'social' aspect of the SEZ, was conceptualised within a community embeddedness context, such that the complexity of community poverty was understood as involving the interactions of, and barriers created by, "multiple forms of deprivation" (Robinson *et al*, 1998: 3). Impacted at individual, community, and national policy levels, it was noted that community poverty had remained entrenched in spite of the fact that the locality chosen for the SEZ had "been the recipient of every regeneration initiative since the 1960s" (Smerdon and Robinson, 2004: 1).

By assuming a holistic and embedded approach to social and economic regeneration within the SEZ that took account of the evidenced fact that "[w]here jobseekers cannot find appropriate or adequate employment, welfare

rolls grow, regardless of the extent of policy innovation" (Theodore and Peck, 1999: 498), and by simultaneously applying a focus on both demand-side and supply-side interventions through the development of employment-ready individuals and the creation of new and appropriate jobs (Robinson *et al*, 1998; Smerdon and Robinson, 2004), it was hoped that the failings of previous solely supply-side focussed policy interventions (Theodore and Peck, 1999) could be ameliorated, and sustainable regeneration created and maintained through the development of "a model of policy-making that […] would harness mainstream budgets in line with local needs" (Smerdon and Robinson, 2004: 31).

Whilst the SEZ project did not focus on the development of SEs as they came to be understood in later years, it provided much inspiration for both the conceptualisation and the definition of SE developed by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), published in 2002. Foremost amongst the emergent themes were the concept of empowerment/service user involvement based upon "[t]he full and active involvement of local people" (Robinson *et al*, 1998: 2), the eschewing of profit distribution through the "reinvestment of savings, from public services working together, in the SEZ" (*ibid.*: 3) in order to underpin ongoing sustainability, and innovation in service planning and delivery built upon "a new way of thinking that can release new energies and innovations" (*ibid.*: 1).

The specific influences and correlations between the conceptualisation and delivery of the SEZ project, and the formulation of SE policy, including the attendant DTI (2002) definition are explored later in the chapter.

The (2000) Social Investment Task Force (SITF) report 'Enterprising communities: wealth beyond welfare' made recommendations to the government concerning the best ways in which to support sustainable community development based upon the stated belief that "[e]nterprise and wealth creation are vital to building sustainable communities" (SITF, 2000: 4). This premise clearly echoed the assertion made by Prime Minister Tony Blair, that "entrepreneurial zeal can promote social justice" (Blair, 1998: 4), and underpinned a social regeneration programme with "welfare reform at the heart of its political project" (Theodore and Peck, 1999: 486), based upon the

assertion that the lack of employment represented "the most important cause of deprivation and poverty" (HM Treasury, 2000: 15).

The clear correlations evident in policy development between discourses of unemployment and poverty, and the job creation associated with enterprise, were such that "the emphasis ha[d] been on general business start-ups rather than self-employment as a way out of welfare dependency" (HM Treasury, 1999: 101). Whilst contested by some academics (Theodore and Peck, 1999), the discourse of 'welfare dependency', set against that of the 'economic independence' of an earned income (Thompson and Doherty, 2006), was framed as a negative and passive situation to which benefits claimants were 'condemned' through worklessness (Bland, 2010), or disability (Thompson and Doherty, 2006) to a life of poverty and lack of opportunity. As a result,

> "welfare dependency and welfare statism [were cast] as problems to be eliminated through a mandatory neo-liberal programme of workfarism and the introduction of market forces and business practices into delivery of income support and public services" (Jessop, 2003: 19).

The aim of the SITF (2000) report was to explore ways in which "to create wealth, economic growth, employment and an improved social fabric in its most under-invested, that is to say its poorest, communities" (SITF, 2000: 2), with the document presenting "social and community enterprises" (*ibid.*: 18) largely in terms of diversified charitable organisations or co-operatives, defining them as "business[es] that trade in the market in order to fulfil social aims" (*ibid.*: 31).

However, the report also listed three other key, defining characteristics of these types of organisation, which encompassed their desire to "be viable trading concerns", to have "explicit social aims and [to be] accountable…for their social, environmental and economic impact", and to be "autonomous organisations" often with inclusive "governance and ownership structures" whose profits were either "distributed as profit sharing to stakeholders or used to benefit the community" (*ibid.*: 31).

These parameters made clear the assumptions informing the conceptualisation of what the report terms 'community and social enterprise'; first, that community and social enterprises (CSEs) were effectively synonymous, and

interchangeable terms for organisations trading for social benefit, second, that CSEs were expected to be (or to achieve) sustainability as businesses in addition to their creation of social and environmental output (triple bottom line), third, that their governance structures were created to include the active engagement and participation of stakeholders and fourth, that profits created by these community-based business were either shared with stakeholders (as in the case of co-operatives), or used to create further social benefit with in the local community.

The expectation that enterprises based in 'the poorest communities' could realistically achieve all of these outcomes seemed at best to be naïve, and yet the defining features of CSEs provided in the report, showed clear conceptual parallels with the work and ethos of the SEZ, and additionally formed the basis for the development and publication of the DTI definition of SE in 2002.

In support of the remit of the report – which was to explore the development of debt finance for the social economy – the claim was made that "when [government funding or other grants] are the sole or primary source of funds [to CSEs] they have encouraged a culture of over-dependence, which can stifle enterprise and even crowd out other finance options" (*ibid.*: 13).

Echoing the rhetoric associated with the provision of welfare state benefits to individuals, these types of statutory and philanthropic forms of financial support to the social economy were scathingly referred to in terms of "paternalism and dependence" (*ibid.*: 4). The proffered solution, which again reflected discourses around 'welfare dependence', was a shift "towards [a culture] of empowerment, entrepreneurship and initiative" (*ibid.*: 4), which would bring "the successful principles of venture capital, namely: long term equity investment; business support to the entrepreneur, and rapid growth potential of the company backed…to community investment" (*ibid.*: 18).

The unquestioned assumptions made with regard to CSEs in the SITF (2000) report were subjected to significant critique by the academic community in the mid 2000s, when SE began to develop as field of academic research (Nicholls, 2010; Short *et al.*, 2009), the specifics of which are explored later in the chapter.

In 2001, the report 'Researching social enterprise' which was designed to be "a policy oriented scoping study" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 4), was published. It sought to provide an overview of the SE sector exploring, amongst other things, different types of SEs, their value and impacts, the availability of finance and business support to SEs, and the barriers that they faced, in order to create policy recommendations designed to meet their future needs.

The ability of SEs to tackle disadvantage, with particular reference to regeneration, exclusion, and marginalisation was again highlighted:

> "[t]he main contributions of social enterprise are to provide goods and services which neither the market nor the public sector are willing and/or able to provide; to develop the skills of disadvantaged people; to facilitate the social and economic development of communities [...] and more generally acting as a mechanism for facilitating development in disadvantaged communities" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 13).

The unwavering insistence within emergent policy discourses of the "vital role that enterprise can play in helping to renew our poorest and most marginal communities" (HM Treasury, 1999: Foreword) underlay the assumption noted by Reid and Griffith (2006: 3) that:

> "[n]ot only do local communities serve as the context for social enterprise [...] but they comprise also the major beneficiaries, for whom many social enterprises are created, as well as the consumers and employees of these businesses and organisations".

This assumption in turn was informed by a 'localism' discourse (JRF, 2004) - as demonstrated by the SEZ project - whereby the government was actively:

> "engaging in the decentralization and localization of delivery systems, adopting new roles…as orchestrators and animateurs of local experimentation…[creating] initiatives [that] set great store by the empowerment of local partnerships (including some led by the private sector) and the encouragement of local innovation" (Theodore and Peck, 1999: 489).

The themes of 'innovation' and 'experimentation' were entirely consistent with Labour's third way policy approach to social regeneration, and economic development, which placed entrepreneurialism at its core (Blair, 1998; Labour 1997). By conceptualising regeneration policy development within an

entrepreneurial paradigm founded upon "institutional logic, narratives, and myths of commercial entrepreneurship" (Nicholls, 2010: 621), the neoliberal language and the attendant conceptualisations of entrepreneurship - based upon concepts such as 'innovation' (Schumpeter, 1951), and 'risk-taking' (Knight, 1957) - could be directly transposed into the developing discourses of SE as a tool for social and economic regeneration.

The (2001) report 'Value led, market driven: social enterprise solutions to public policy goals', published by the Institute for Public Policy Research, consolidated and extended the government's neoliberal discourses of SE by making links between, for example, SE's apparent capacity for innovation and Schumpeter's (1950) theory of 'creative destruction': "[t]here are examples of social enterprises that […] destroy old ideologies and create new vehicles to pursue social aims" (Westall, 2001: 2).

The report considered the potential offered by SE for "the appropriate and effective delivery of government services" (*ibid*.: 3) - an aspect of work that would be vigorously pursued by government in later years (HM Treasury, 2002), particularly in the delivery of healthcare services (Marks *et al*, 2007; NHS, 2008; SEC, 2005).

Some of the benefits that it was suggested that SE could bring to the health and welfare sector were "models of health prevention involving the active participation of service users", the ability to "more effectively address issues of 'trust' (vis-à-vis private sector providers)", the development of SEs whose outcomes could impact upon healthcare issues such as the "provision of energy-saving schemes or local quality food", as well SEs "built on mutual structures to pool individual welfare entitlements in order to access services" (Westall, 2001: 13).

Its discussion of the use of SEs for the development of human capital (Becker, 1993) was couched in terms of personal empowerment, and social and economic engagement:

> "[t]hey are also part of any commitment to creating full employment…[and] increasing employability [by] creating appropriate employment for those who may

find it hard to work in mainstream businesses, or for whom there are few employment opportunities" (*ibid.*: 3).

Whilst discussions of the possible applications and benefits of SE activity to both development of service provision, and the reintegration of socially disadvantaged and economically marginalised people were laudable, what was noticeably absent in the report was any kind of in-depth, critical assessment and analysis of the potential barriers to the development of such SE activity, or of the appropriateness of schemes of the nature suggested. Such critiques did eventually emerge from within the academic community, and these are explored later in the chapter.

In 2001, Smallbone *et al* published their "policy orientated scoping study" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 4) entitled 'Researching social enterprise'. The purpose of the study was to explore SE as a part of the wider economy, with particular reference to:

> "the different types of social enterprise…the various contributions made by social enterprises…the main sponsors of social enterprise…the extent to which social enterprises are distinct from the general business population […] to review the efforts of enterprise agencies to assist social enterprises […and] to make recommendations concerning future research on social enterprises" (*ibid.*: 4).

Similarly to Westall (2001), Smallbone *et al* (2001) emphasised SE's abilities in "developing skills [and] creating employment (focusing particularly on the needs of socially excluded people) […as well as] offering work and educational experience to young people" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 5). SE's capacity for "providing goods and services which the market or public sector is unwilling or unable to provide" (*ibid.*: 5) was also mentioned, as was its relationship to environmental outcomes and the so-called 'triple bottom line' by "encouraging environmentally friendly practices" (*ibid.*: 5).

In exploring the value of SE, the diversity within the SE sector was highlighted alongside the assertion that: "[t]he potential claims of social enterprise could be reduced to their potential to permit the local accumulation of physical, financial, human and social capital, where each of these in turn refer to specific resources for development" (*ibid.*: 21).

It was argued that different types of SEs would 'permit the local accumulation' of different types of capital, whereby "physical capital referr[ed] to land, buildings, machinery, equipment, financial capital to grants, endowments and loans, human capital to training, education and skill enhancement, and social capital to trust, reciprocity and mutuality" (*ibid.*: 21).

Table 6.1 below shows the different types of SEs and the types of capital associated with them.

	PHYSICAL CAPITAL	FINANCE CAPITAL	HUMAN CAPITAL	SOCIAL CAPITAL
Community Business			✓	
Worker co-ops			✓	
Housing co-ops	✓	✓		✓
Employee owned enterprise			✓	
Development Trusts	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Firms			✓	✓
Intermediate Labour Markets			✓	
Credit Unions		✓	✓	
Charity trading arms				✓

Table 6.1: Different types of SE and different types of capital. *Note* **Reprinted from 'Researching social enterprise', Smallbone *et al*, 2001, London: Centre for Enterprise and Economic Development Research, Middlesex University Business School. Reprinted with permission.**

Interestingly, the development of various types of capital by SEurs formed the topic of an academic paper published in 2000, in which they were described as "individuals who can make a difference by seeing an opportunity to do good and getting on with it" (Thompson *et al*, 2000: 330), thereby representing SEurs as a physical conduit for the "process" (*ibid.*: 329) of SEship.

The paper was noteworthy for the fact that it framed SEurial activity in precisely the same way as emergent government-driven discourses on SE, through the assertion that the organisations used for case studies were "'social' in the sense that they are not owned by identifiable shareholders and profit [wa]s not the driving objective" (*ibid.*: 330). Furthermore, it was claimed that they often operated as intermediaries (or replacements) for the provision of formerly statutory services "where the welfare state is unable or unwilling to help people…[or where] services are provided more efficiently and effectively than they would be if they were in state or local government hands" (*ibid.*: 330).

In this way, the assertions made in the both Smallbone *et al*'s (2001) report, and Thompson *et al*'s (2000) academic paper, gave credence and legitimacy to the government's rhetoric around SE, relating specifically to its apparent ability to solve entrenched social and economic problems through the development of various value-adding forms of capital within deprived communities.

The construction, support, and consolidation of a conceptualisation of SE that appeared to represent a political "panacea" (Beckett, 2011; Sepulveda, 2009) to the economic (and social) ills of both deprived communities and the individuals within them (HM Treasury, 1999; SITF 2000) in what would later be termed the 'grand narrative' (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 85; Teasdale, 2012) of SE, encouraged the development of unsubstantiated myths (Dacin *et al*, 2011) relating to both the restorative social and economic powers of SE, was also claimed to provide an alternative solution to the delivery of services within the community than that offered by an apparently ailing, and cumbersome welfare state (Leadbeater, 1997; Thompson *et al*, 2000).

In late 2001, in apparent recognition of, and response to, "the entrepreneurial potential of the [SE] sector" (Haugh and Kitson, 2007: 985), a designated Social Enterprise Unit (SEnU) was created within the (now defunct) Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The positioning of the SEnU as part of the Small Business Service (SEC, 2005) located within the DTI, as opposed to within the Home Office alongside the Voluntary Services Unit (Alcock, 2010), affirmed both the government's conception of SEs as "dynamic, progressive businesses

that we can all learn from" (DTI, 2002: 6), as well as its aspirations for SEs to become an "integral and dynamic part" (*ibid*.: 6) of the wider economy.

The SEnU's role was to "act as the focal point for th[e] co-ordination […] development and implementation of new policies and programmes for social enterprise" (DTI, 2002: 19), in support of the government's desire to "embed social enterprise on the policy landscape" (Teasdale, 2012: 108). As such, it was the source of both of the major SE policy documents released by the Labour government; the first being the (2002) 'Social enterprise: a strategy for success' published whilst the SEnU was still located within the DTI, and the second being the (2006) 'Social enterprise action plan: scaling new heights' by which time SEnU had been incorporated into the newly-formed Office of the Third Sector (OTS).

The year 2001, was a general election year and whilst SE was not specifically mentioned in the Labour Party election manifesto 'Ambitions for Britain' (Labour, 2001), the theme of enterprise ran throughout the document, reiterating the rhetoric of Prime Minister Tony Blair's aforementioned Fabian Society-published pamphlet (Blair, 1998) by firmly asserting that "fairness and enterprise go together" (Labour, 2001: 8), thereby associating enterprise with "innovation […and] skill development" (*ibid.*: 13).

There emerged a strong conceptual link within the manifesto between the government rhetoric-driven emergent discourses of SE evident elsewhere, and the discourses of mainstream enterprise to which the manifesto made liberal reference. Statements in key policy areas such as regeneration included, for example, references made to farmers' apparent ability to create "economic renewal" (*ibid.* 15) within rural communities through the diversification of "part of their activity into other enterprises" (*ibid.*: 15), which were similarly echoed in relation to innovation in public service delivery, whereby it was suggested that a "'spirit of enterprise' should apply as much to public service as to business" (*ibid.*: 17).

The Labour Party were successfully re-elected to Parliament in 2001, and therefore continued their policy development in relation to SE. In April 2002, the DTI and the Co-Operative Group provided joint funding for the establishment of

the London-based Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC) (DTI, 2002), whose role was to provide a 'mouthpiece' for the SE sector, and so:

> "to influence the policy agenda to improve the environment for social enterprises, to promote and raise awareness of social enterprise, to spread best practice and to build the evidence base on social enterprise" (Shah, 2009: 104).

Drawing its original membership from amongst the "umbrella organisations working in the field of social enterprise, partnership organisations that promote the development of social enterprise, and individual social enterprises" (DTI, 2002: 75), and with close links to Social Enterprise London (SEL) (Bland, 2010) - an organisation formed "by a merger of two co-operative development agencies in London around 1997" (Teasdale, 2010: 8) – the SEC sought "to provide a unified voice for the sector when dealing with the government and other stakeholders" (Haugh and Kitson, 2007: 985).

The provision of funding for the establishment of the SEC provided further evidence of the government's commitment to laying "the foundations…for a stronger social enterprise sector" (HM Treasury, 1999: 5), and to establishing "social enterprise as a clear priority" (Timms, 2002) within policy-making circles.

In a speech to the 2002 DTI Conference made by the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Patricia Hewett, confirmation was given that "there is no doubt at all that […] social enterprise is very firmly on the Prime Minister's radar screen" (Hewett, 2002), and in October of the same year, the government launched the UK's first ever SE policy document: 'Social enterprise: a strategy for success' (DTI, 2002).

6.2 Politically defining SE in the UK

In addition to outlining the government's intentions for the SE sector, the 'Social enterprise: a strategy for success' document also provided the first 'official' definition of SE:

> "[s]ocial enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners" (DTI, 2002: 7).

The definition emerged as the "result of a consultation process involving a wide range of sector leaders" (Jones and Keogh, 2006: 18), but was nevertheless not unproblematic in its development. Indeed, it was only after a period of vigorous lobbying by the co-operative movement concerned about the possible exclusion of "worker co-operatives whose members have a financial stake in the enterprise" (Teasdale, 2012: 111), that a decision was made for the "definition [to be] kept deliberately open to allow a wide range of organisations that define themselves as social enterprises to be included" (Lyon and Sepulveda, 2009: 85).

The DTI (2002) definition brought together aspects of various definitions of SE previously published in governmental reports, as shown in Figures 6.2 and 6.3 and in Table 6.4 on the following pages. By exploring the provenance of each of the features of the DTI (2002) definition, it is possible to show how the conceptualisation of SE changed over the course of the four years from when it was first mentioned in the (1999) HM Treasury policy document 'Enterprise and social exclusion', to when the SEnU's (DTI) official definition was published in the 'Social enterprise strategy' in 2002.

1999

'Enterprise and social exclusion'

"Social enterprises are businesses run for a social objective, rather than for the sake of profits to be distributed to shareholders." (HM Treasury, 1999: 14)

2000

'Enterprising communities'

"The term 'social and community enterprise' is used in this report to describe business[es] that trade in the market in order to fulfil social aims…[which] seek to be viable trading concerns, have explicit social aims and are accountable to their members and the wider community for their social, environmental and economic impact, and are autonomous organisations, often with governance and ownership structures based on participation by stakeholder groups or by trustees and with profits distributed as profit sharing to stakeholders or used for the benefit of the community" (SITF, 2000: 31)

2001

'Researching social enterprise'

"Social Enterprises are competitive businesses, owned and trading for a social purpose. They seek to succeed as businesses by establishing a market share and making a profit. Social Enterprises combine the need to be successful businesses with social aims. They emphasise the long-term benefits for employees, consumers and the community." (SBS definition, quoted in Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 14)

2001

'Value led, market driven'

"[I]t makes sense to see social enterprise as a useful but loose umbrella term which describes organisations that are enterprising in their mode of operation and which exist primarily for a social aim" (Westall, 2001: 25)

Figure 6.2: Defining 'social enterprise': a timeline from UK policy documents and government-endorsed support organisations (1999-2001)

2002	2002	2002	2002
Social Enterprise Coalition	'Private action, public benefit'	'The role of the VCS in service delivery'	'Social enterprise: a strategy for success'
"Social enterprises are businesses which compete with statutory, private and charitable bodies in order to generate profits with which to fund their social and environmental aims." (SEC definition, cited in Liberal Democrats, 2010: 6)	"The term [SE] is used to describe organisations which trade for a social purpose and which are largely self-financing." (Cabinet Office, 2002: 14)	Social enterprises are not for profit businesses driven by social objectives." (HM Treasury, 2002: 23)	"Social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners" (DTI, 2002: 7)

Figure 6.3: Defining 'social enterprise': a timeline from UK policy documents and government-endorsed support organisations (2002)

Essentially, the DTI (2002) definition made four contentions which were: that SEs were *businesses* (as opposed to the more generic and inclusive 'organisations'); that they *traded in support of social objectives*; 3) that they used their *profits to create financial sustainability and further their social mission*; and 4) that they were *not initiated in pursuit of personal wealth generation* for owners/shareholders.

	Businesses	Trade for social objectives	Profits used for sustainability and social mission	Not motivated by personal wealth creation
Enterprise and Social Exclusion (1999)	X	X		X
Enterprising Communities (2000)	X	X	X	
Researching Social Enterprise (2001)	X	X	X	
Value Led, Market Driven (2001)		X	X	
Public Action, Private Benefit (2002)		X	X	
The Role of the VCS in Service Delivery (2002)	X	X		
Social Enterprise Coalition (2002)	X	X	X	

Table 6.4: Defining features of SE drawn from the UK policy documents and government-endorsed support organisations

Many of the conceptions of SE drawn upon in the development of the DTI (2002) definition, located SE "within community (economic) development with its political agenda of alternative democratic structures and processes" (Parkinson, 2005: 5) which, as mentioned previously, was strongly "associated with a neo-liberal discourse promoting the power of business to achieve fundamental social change" (Teasdale, 2012: 100).

In order to remain consistent with the 'third way' philosophy, the Labour government had to build SE policy around an "insistence that social enterprises are businesses" (Jones and Keogh, 2006: 18), whilst simultaneously rendering the existence and management of a double (or triple) bottom line (Doherty *et al*, 2009; Nielsen and Samia, 2008) unproblematic (Cornelius *et al*, 2008):

> "[t]here is no reason why social enterprises should not be professional and commercial in their work while being social in their outcomes as they grow. Accordingly, there is no good reason why they should not be creating jobs and wealth, as well as having social impact" (Harding and Cowling, 2004: 9).

Whilst the DTI (2002) provision of an officially sanctioned definition of SE (Mawson, 2010) provided a common, policy-based frame of reference for SE within the UK, the research community was divided on its usefulness, putting forth arguments ranging on the one hand from critiques relating to the political implication of the "scope for subsequent reinterpretation by government as to what is and is not a social enterprise" (Teasdale *et al*, 2013: 2), to arguments supporting the pursuit of a definition based on "clearly defin[ed] (rather than typical or desirable) characteristics" (Peattie and Morley, 2008: 95-96).

To date, the definitional debate continues to rage (Dacin *et al*, 2011; Kistruck and Beamish, 2010) and will be discussed later in the chapter within a framework based upon the assertion that "amidst the current definitional landscape three main foci can be discerned: the economic entity (a social enterprise), the individual (social entrepreneur), and the process [social entrepreneurship]" (Diochon and Anderson, 2009: 8-9).

In 2003, the DTI commissioned a report from the Bank of England (BoE) to explore the demand and supply of external sources of finance to the SE sector (BoE, 2003). The DTI (2002) policy document had concluded that "many social enterprises are undercapitalised and struggle to access external finance, particularly when starting up, growing or moving away from grant dependency" (DTI, 2002: 64), and in line with the then Prime Minister Tony Blair's commitment to "provide a more enabling environment, [and] to help social enterprises become better businesses" (*ibid.*: 5), tasked the BoE with "review[ing] the provision of debt and equity finance to social enterprises,

including that offered by CDFIs, mainstream banks, business angels, venture capitalists and others" (*ibid.*: 68).

The BoE report specifically acknowledged the existence of a definitional debate around SE, asserting that "[t]he purpose of this review is not to reopen or engage in the debate on what constitutes a social enterprise" (BoE, 2003: 6), and chose to apply the DTI (2002) definition of SE in order to operationalise the mandated research.

The report reflected the conception of SEs as largely being "in transition from their beginnings as voluntary sector organisations, dependent largely on grants and volunteers…working to increase traded income" (DTI, 2002: 13), rather than being businesses established specifically to meet a social need. This view was consistent with the US-style approach to wider social welfare reform pursued by the Labour government (SITF, 2000), and more specifically with the:

> "US tendency to define social enterprises as non-profit organizations more oriented towards the market and developing 'earned income strategies' as a response to decreasing public subsidies and to the limits of private grants from foundations" (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010: 231).

The conception of SEs as largely grant-reliant organisations seeking to create "revenue generation strategies through trading" (DiDomenico *et al*, 2010: 682) had important implications for the development of SE policy, particularly around the perceived need for access to finance (HM Treasury, 1999; SITF, 2000; Smallbone *et al*, 2001; DTI, 2002).

6.2.1 SEs as businesses

The Labour government's insistence on viewing SEs as, first and foremost, businesses meant that their assessment of SEs needs was based on a business-oriented, entrepreneurial paradigm that deemed it "important to emphasise the degree of commonality with other businesses" (HM Treasury, 1999: 14) that SEs apparently demonstrated. The policy focus on the development of finance provision was pursued as a direct result of the government's aforementioned conceptualisation of SEs as businesses, which were known to often require "access to finance, both for start-up and for subsequent development" (Smallbone et al, 2001: 8). It also acknowledged that

for mainstream Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) "banks are the main source of outside finance for new and growing businesses" (HM Treasury, 1999: foreword), and by instigating a BoE investigation of financing for SEs based on evidence gathered from mainstream SMEs, thereby affirmed its assumption of the presence of more similarities than differences between SEs and mainstream SME enterprises (Diochon and Anderson, 2009; Shaw and Carter, 2007).

The issue of the similarities and differences between SEs and mainstream SME enterprises formed a significant part of early research work on SEs within the academic community (Moizer and Tracey, 2010) as a common conceptualisation and definition for SE were sought (Diochon and Anderson, 2011; Teasdale, 2012). However, whereas the research topic provoked debate within the academic literature ranging from the assertion that "the complexity of social enterprise is more than simply an extra dimension to business" (Diochon and Anderson, 2011: 96), to a contention that "the definition of entrepreneurship might be modified to include the creation of 'social and economic value' and may thus be applied to both private, entrepreneurial ventures as well as social enterprises" (Chell, 2007: 5), the government remained unequivocal in its presentation of SEs as "like any other business" (DTI, 2002: 9), demanding that they "see themselves as businesses, seek to become more professional, and continuously raise their standards of performance and their ambitions" (*ibid.*: 29).

The anomalies between the business-like rhetoric, and the reported realities of the emergent SE sector were striking (Mawson, 2010; Parkinson, 2005), and were particularly evident amongst, and between, government-sponsored reports. Examples of these disparities included the questions raised with regard to the meaningfulness of debt/equity finance provision to organisations "providing services that are not profitable enough to attract private sector firms" (HM Treasury, 1999: 14), or whose "financial returns are insufficiently attractive for lenders and equity providers" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 86), alongside conflicting claims that, for example, "property assets and property-based lending are generally a crucial feature of social and community enterprise" (SITF, 2000: 11) but that "typically a combination of status and collateral issues

[amongst surveyed SEs] had restricted access from [banks]" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 25).

Other conflicts emerged that highlighted claims that on the one hand "High Street banks [we]re active in providing finance to enterprises in deprived areas" (HM Treasury, 1999: 71), whilst other reports contended that "in the UK there is no public knowledge of the lending patterns of individual banks in specific communities" (SITF, 2000: 14).

The governmental justifications for the development of 'access to finance' policies for enterprises operating in deprived communities appeared dubious when acknowledgement was made of the conflicts evident in the claims made in various reports, and when it was accepted that such businesses rarely had either sufficient collateral to secure commercial loans, or the ability to generate sufficient profit to service a debt.

When recognition was given to the reported fact of the existence of a "knowledge gap, with little research carried out on enterprise formation and capital requirements in under-invested communities" (SITF, 2000: 18), and the fact that SEs were largely considered to be trading organisations spun-off from charities which often suffered from "a lack of business focus" (DTI, 2002: 61), compounded by a "lack of financial skills in many social enterprises" (SITF, 2000: 64), then the political drive to provide debt finance to SEs seemed unmatched by supporting evidence of need.

When the multiple contradictions outlined above were considered alongside the assertion that "[b]usiness sectors with high potential for social and community entrepreneurs [include] the provision of basic, everyday services such as laundry, cleaning, gardening, and childcare" (SITF, 2000: 11), and that "people in deprived areas are themselves capital poor" (HM Treasury, 1999: 10), it was hard to imagine a situation in which SEs operating within, and for the benefit of, deprived communities could ever reach a stage of ongoing, sustainable self-funding, let alone additionally produce sufficient profit to be able to properly service a repayable, and interest-accruing, debt.

Indeed, the publication of the BoE report provided some interesting results which cast further doubt on the assumptions that had underpinned government-driven understandings of SE evidenced up to that point. Contrary to the assumption that, like mainstream SMEs, SEs could be expected to routinely require access to debt/equity finance, it was found that "fewer social enterprises than SMEs had sought external finance" (BoE, 2003: 57). The recommendation made in response to this finding was not a suggestion that SEs' differences from mainstream SMEs might mean that they had less requirement for external finance, but rather that policy intervention should focus on the need "to build demand for non-grant finance" (*ibid.*: 58).

The widespread presence of a business and financial skills deficit on SE Boards was noted, as was the fact that "[f]or some social enterprises, the business activity may not be sufficiently developed to enable the enterprise to service a loan" (*ibid.*: 58). Again, the recommendation made in the report was not to critically explore the assumption that SEs would generally be capable of servicing debt finance given enough time to develop their business, but rather that business support should be provided, which would "concentrate on building up an enterprise's trading activity" (*ibid.*: 58) and thus "increase investment readiness" (*ibid.*: 58).

The problems associated with managing diverse funding streams were also mentioned in the report, with specific reference to the fact that:

> "[b]orrowing [from financial institutions] tends to be used to meet cash flow requirements (that sometimes arise as a result of grant payments made in arrears) or to purchase or develop assets" (*ibid.*: 59).

The conflicting demands of philanthropic funding and debt finance streams were further elucidated, and the vicious cycle facing SEs of trying to manage dual funding streams whilst attempting to develop their business and achieve sustainability was highlighted:

> "we encountered several…cases in which social enterprises have been unable to borrow against assets purchased with grant money, because of the grant funder's concern to ensure that the assets [we]re retained for the purpose for which they were intended" (*ibid.*: 61).

Thus, what the BoE (2003) report revealed was that SEs often used grant funding to purchase assets, which for mainstream SMEs would represent fixed assets against which debt finance could be secured. However, because the terms of the grants provided to the SEs often formed an asset lock – which, as highlighted above, prevented the fixed asset from being sold or used for any 'purpose [than that] for which they were intended' – the SE was effectively prevented from using such assets as surety against commercial debt finance.

Indeed, on the basis of the revelation of this particular problem, the report specifically suggested that "the 'asset lock' included in the terms of the proposed Community Interest Company [a proposed new legal form for SEs] should not preclude those assets from being used as collateral for loan finance" (BoE, 2003: 61). The further conclusion that debt finance was often 'used [by SEs] to meet cash flow requirements' which problems were acknowledged to 'sometimes' occur as a direct result of retrospective grant payments, demonstrated the perpetual vicious cycle of financial insecurity facing many SEs, without offering any meaningful solution.

Figure 6.5 on the following page demonstrates the myriad, interrelated barriers revealed by the BoE (2003) report, that "grant dependent voluntary sector bodies" (DTI, 2002: 61) faced in attempting to develop "a trading strategy in order to secure a more sustainable income stream" (BoE, 2003: 57).
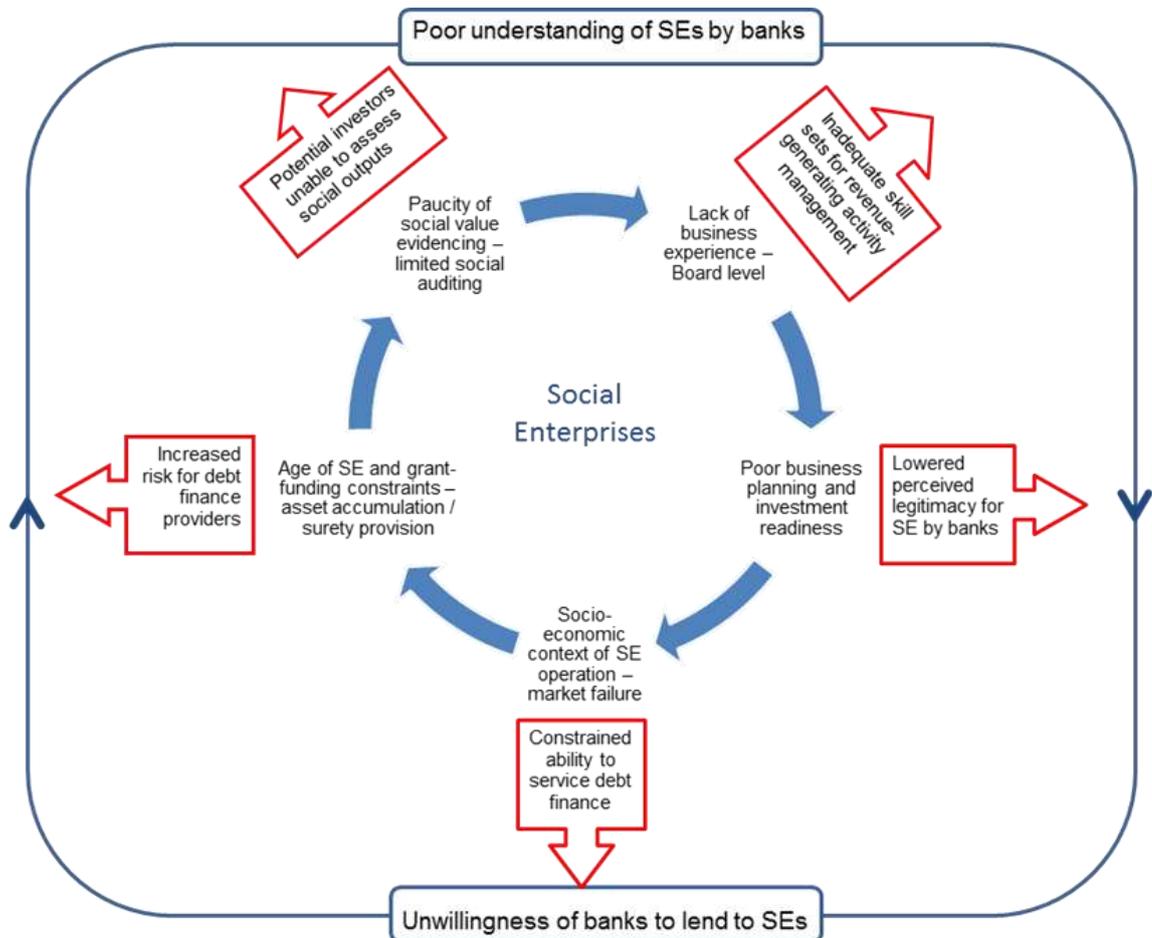
Figure 6.5: The interplay of barriers faced by SEs seeking loan finance from banks

The fact that lending banks were reported to require "a clearer means of distinguishing social enterprises from other borrowers" (BoE, 2003: 60), suggested that like the general public, they had a poor general understanding SE – a finding echoed in the DTI (2002) document – and further implied that contrary to governmental rhetoric, both the lending banks and the BoE considered SE to be sufficiently different in nature from mainstream SMEs as to require (or be entitled to) differential treatment.

The notion of the 'difference' of SE was also highlighted in the HM Treasury (2002) report which, when discussing the business support and training needs of SEs, suggested that "there needs to be more training of Business Links [a national, government-funded SME business development service] advisers on how to work with social enterprises" (HM Treasury, 2002: 24). Similarly, the DTI (2002) document sought to highlight the "particular characteristics and needs of

social enterprise" (DTI, 2002: 8), whilst simultaneously asserting the similarity of SE to mainstream SMEs (Teasdale, 2010).

Perhaps the most significant challenge to the legitimacy of governmental rhetoric around SE to emerge from the BoE (2003) report was the identified lack of business skills amongst SEs, which was attributed to the fact that "many managers and trustees come from the voluntary sector and may not have previous business experience" (BoE, 2003: 33).

The same issue was highlighted in the DTI (2002) document, which stated that "[t]he Government acknowledges that, at present, too many social enterprises appear to have underdeveloped financial management and business planning skills" (DTI, 2002: 68), as well as in the Smallbone *et al* (2001) report, where skills-development needs within SEs were identified in such diverse areas as "marketing, business planning […] management skills […and] staff and volunteer recruitment and training" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 44).

The knock-on effects, in terms of access to debt finance, of the lack of business acumen within many SE Boards (illustrated in Figure 6.6 on the next page) shows how the micro level financial skills deficit would translate into meso level access-to-finance barriers, which in turn would reinforce SEs' lack of credibility with lenders (BoE, 2003; HM Treasury, 2002), and thereby create a second level of exclusion around bank-supplied debt funding for SEs.
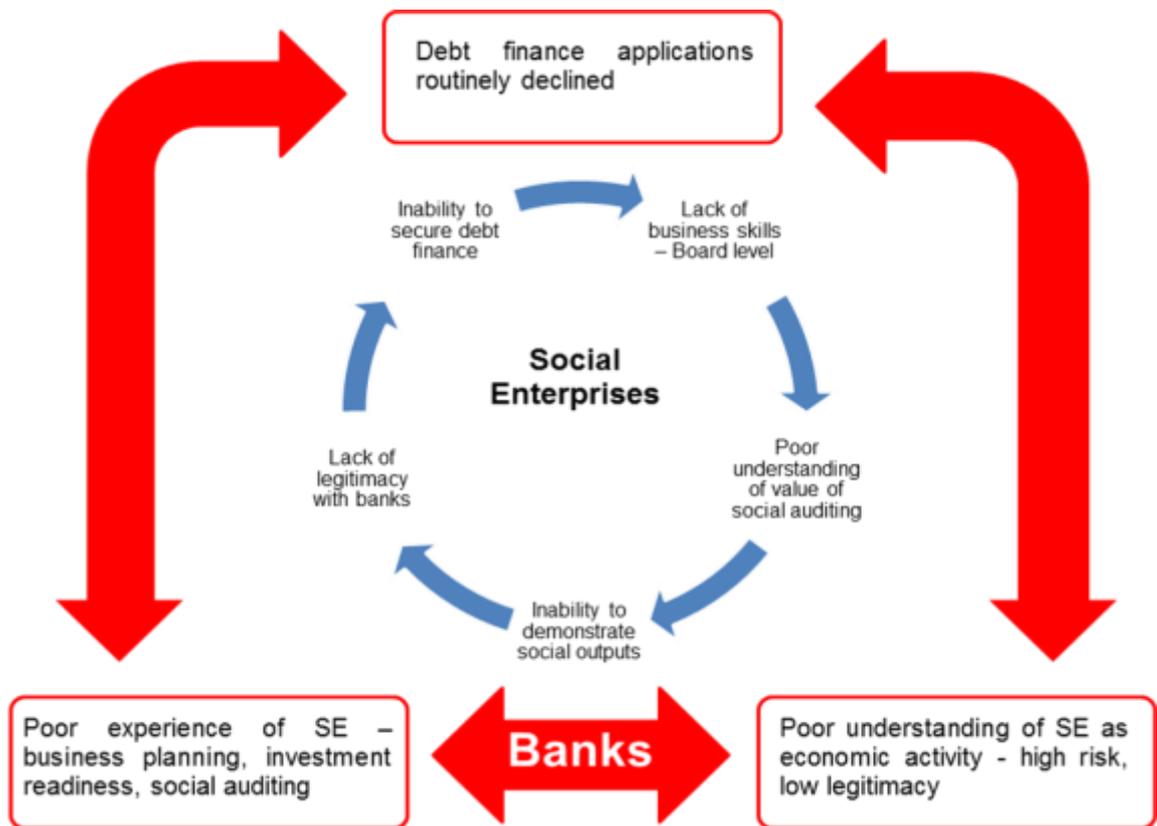
Figure 6.6: Information/skills deficit within and between banks and SEs creates self-reinforcing cycles of negative behaviours

However, in spite of the clearly widely-acknowledged paucity of business skills within the SE sector at the time alongside the problems that these were shown to cause, the political rhetoric rendered such issues invisible with the creation of the aforementioned "grand narrative of social entrepreneurship [which] comprise[d], among other things, a high level of univocity, unambiguousness, one-sidedness as well as a quasi-religious makeover" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 88).

The year 2004 saw the publication by the DTI of a 'good practice guide' to collecting comparable data on SE activity in the UK in order "to help strengthen the evidence base of this vibrant sector" (DTI, 2004: 3). Aimed at "regional and local bodies" (DTI, 2004: 5) wishing to conduct scoping exercises of SEs and wider third sector, the publication was informed by findings from the DTI-commissioned ECOTEC (2003) document and provided consolidated information that reflected the government's SE agenda, and its attendant conceptualisation of SE.

The main section of the document laid out the parameters within which organisations could be assessed for potential inclusion in the SE sector. The main criterion suggested for inclusion, was adherence to the DTI (2002) definition of SE, which could be confirmed by the application of three 'tests'. The first of these related to 'registration' – specifically the formal registration of an organisation with Companies House – which it was claimed "indicate[d] both a degree of permanence and that the organisation ha[d] defined its core values through a process of constitution" (DTI, 2004: 9).

Particular legal forms such as Companies Limited by Guarantee, Industrial and Provident Societies, and Community Interest Companies (CICs) were proffered as being clearly indicative of DTI-compliant SE status, but researchers were advised to consider including "qualifying social enterprises which adopt alternative forms of legal status, such as those which are registered as Companies Limited by Shares" (*ibid.*: 9).

Such advice made clear the almost all-encompassing nature of the 'legal form' approach to identifying SEs, which effectively only excluded sole traders and publically limited companies. As Teasdale (2010) noted, the fact that since "no legal form [is] used exclusively by social enterprises […] any attempt to count the number of social enterprises [is potentially] an exercise in futility" (Teasdale, 2010: 14).

The second test for compliance was the 'trading' test, from which it was concluded that "[s]ocial enterprises with trading income of 50% and above should be included as part of the core group" (DTI, 2004: 9). Within the definition provided, trading income was limited to income earned through the provision (sale) of goods and services, with all non-earned income including "grants, subsidies, supporters' membership fees, voluntary contributions and fundraising" (*ibid.*: 9) excluded. However, as before, a further suggestion was made to the effect that "you may wish to collect information on social enterprises with income under 50%, for example to cover 'emerging' or 'fledgling' social enterprises" (*ibid.*: 9).

The third and final test was called 'pursuit of a social aim', and sought to exclude from consideration, all organisations that did not trade primarily in

support of a social or environmental mission, and which did not reinvest generated surpluses in the business, or in the community, in support of its stated social mission.

However, what the compliancy tests revealed was not so much how SEs could be identified, but rather how difficult it was to identify them. Whilst the general rule might hold that certain legal forms, combined with official registration, might indicate an SE, the reality was that there was no definitive way by which to identify one with absolute certainty using such measures. Similarly, although a 50% minimum trading income was suggested as a potential 'marker' of SE activity, it was simultaneously acknowledged that less established SEs, which might have a lower level of earned income, should nevertheless not be precluded from inclusion.

Finally, the claim was made that SEs should demonstrate the primacy of a social aim – which may or may not be explicitly stipulated as part of the required incorporation process – and that surpluses made should be reinvested "in the business or in the community, in pursuit of these [social] objectives" (DTI, 2004: 9). However, such 'defining features' were proffered in spite of the acknowledgement of the existence within the SE community of 'alternative forms of legal status' including Companies Limited by Share which, by nature, would require the payment of dividends to shareholders, and could legitimately provide owner/shareholders with a means by which to engage in unethical behaviours such as income tax avoidance.

It could therefore be seen that whilst the three compliancy tests were presented as a means by which to identify an apparently robust 'core group' when undertaking SE-based research, their general applicability was highly questionable as a result of the exceptions attendant upon every rule proposed. Their usefulness was therefore uncertain, and even though the document admonished readers to ensure that "only those organisations which satisfy all three tests should be included as part of the core group" (DTI, 2004: 8), the ultimate evidence of the contradictory nature of the government's discursive construction of SE was demonstrated with the offering of a get-out clause that effectively rendered all the previous guidance meaningless: "you may wish to

incorporate additional flexibility and collect information on social enterprises falling outside the tests" (*ibid.*: 8).

The obvious confusion associated with the process of identifying SEs through the application of the three tests (and their exceptions), and the associated acknowledgement of the difficulty in defining SE activity in any way meaningfully, was ultimately rendered 'unproblematic' through the discursive normalisation of the difficulties associated with the "dynamic sector" (DTI, 2004: 8) represented by SE, which, it was claimed, would 'naturally' require "some flexibility in categorisation" (*ibid*: 8).

In late 2004, the DTI published the first in a planned series of 'fact sheets', entitled 'An introduction to Community Interest Companies'. The document presented an overview of the "new type of company for those wishing to establish social enterprises" (DTI, 2004b: 2), and sought to both raise awareness of the new legal form, and to disseminate information relating to the specifics of the Community Interest Company (CIC).

Marketed to "those who wish to work within the relative freedom of the familiar limited company framework without either the private profit motive or charity status" (*ibid.*: 2), an interesting side-effect to the creation of the CIC was its ability to represent a resolution to the definitional dilemmas exposed by the SE mapping agenda.

The ambiguity and imprecision associated with attempting to identify SEs based on legal form was resolved through the creation of "a form of limited liability company […] limited by guarantee or shares" (SEUK, 2012: 12) conceived purposely and uniquely with SE activity in mind (DTI, 2005; Park and Wilding, 2012).

The CIC's 'community interest test' provided evidence that the organisation would "pursue purposes beneficial to the community and w[ould] not serve an unduly restricted group of beneficiaries" (DTI, 2004b: 6), thereby meeting the 'primarily social objectives' part of the DTI (2002) definition of SE, whilst the 'asset lock', designed "to ensure that the assets of the CIC (including any profits or other surpluses generated by its activities) [we]re used for the benefit of the

community" (BIS, 2010: 14), met the DTI (2002) requirement that "surpluses [be] principally reinvested for that [social] purpose in the business or in the community" (DTI, 2002: 6).

Thus, the creation of the CIC – approved by Parliament in 2004 (Defourny and Nyssens, 2008), and officially launched in 2005 (DTI, 2005) – served political ends at several levels by, for example, providing a means by which to "complement government services at the community level in areas such as childcare provision, social housing, community transport or leisure" (Galera and Borzaga, 2009: 223), further demonstrating the government's support and legitimisation of SE through its "use [of] legislation to support the development of social enterprise" (Nicholls and Pharoah, 2008: 43), providing an uncompromisingly business-oriented model for nascent SEs that would "not have the benefits of charitable status, even if their objects are entirely charitable in nature" (DTI, 2004b: 9), and presenting a means by which to apparently "reconcile the inherent tensions between having a business focus and providing social benefit" (Mason *et al*, 2007: 286).

2004 also saw the publication of a Social Enterprise London (SEL) document entitled 'The social enterprise starting point guide', within which the issue of the paucity of robust business knowledge within the SE sector re-emerged. "[A]imed at social entrepreneurs [defined as] anyone with an idea for making money and using it to benefit others in some way" (SEL, 2004: 1), it sought to "offer guidance on the sort of things you need to think about when starting out on your journey to set up a social enterprise" (*ibid.*: 1).

What emerged was less a 'how to' guide than a 'dummies' guide which proffered the most basic of common-sense information, for example, the 'financials' section declared (in a pink, highlighted font) that "there must be more money coming in than going out, otherwise even the most committed or well intentioned social enterprise will be unable to keep going, let alone make a profit" (*ibid.*: 13).

Whilst such a message was, without doubt, a key point to raise in terms of organisational sustainability, it nevertheless demonstrated an explicit acknowledgement of the dismal lack of even the most basic grasp of business

economics amongst the target audience, and suggested through its use of gendered font colour that the target audience was women.

The assumed lack of even the most rudimentary knowledge of financial matters by SEL amongst potential SEurs represented a repetition of the disjuncture between the political rhetoric of SE, which sought to create a seamless "plot that promise[d] improvement while radiating an aura of success" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 89), seen in the BoE (2003) document, and the reality faced by SE support and development organisations.

Indeed, the noted lack of business skills and experience in SEs appeared to mirror those experienced by mainstream start-up enterprises (HM Treasury, 1999), a fact noted by Bull (2006: 14) who asserted that "social enterprise businesses will not necessarily thrive naturally and need structures to nurture and support them". Further managerial knowledge gaps were also identified in relation to the complexities associated with the management of a double/triple bottom line (DTI, 2002; Moizier and Tracey, 2010), the tensions of effectively managing the use of mixed revenue streams (Dees and Battle Anderson, 2003; Weerawardena *et al*, 2010), and the human resource management challenges relating to the use of volunteer staff within the voluntary/third sector as a whole (HM Treasury, 2002; Machin and Ellis Paine, 2008).

What this situation showed was that the Labour government was invested in the development of a discourse of SE that presented as unproblematic, the "managerially defined rhetoric […] used to promote efficiency, business discipline and financial independence" (Parkinson and Howarth, 2008: 285), whilst simultaneously engaging in the development of "specific policy tools [to] promote [the] business practices" (Carmel and Harlock, 2008: 164) seen to be lacking within the sector.

In support of the need to "translate documentary rhetoric into practical reality" (Alcock, 2010: 9), the government deployed publically-funded 'capacity building' initiatives (Newis and Bansall, 2004; Peattie and Morley, 2008) including the 'Futurebuilders' fund (HM Treasury, 2002), which specifically sought to "build the [wider] voluntary sector's capacity to be involved in public service provision" (SITF, 2003: 11), and made a "commitment that support for social enterprise

should be written into each of the business plans of the forty-five Business Links that operate[d] throughout England" (DTI, 2002: 36).

6.3 The Social Entrepreneurship Monitor

In 2004, the first Social Entrepreneurship Monitor for the UK was published. Based on data derived from the UK component of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) dataset, the report sought to explore SE activity in the UK through the analysis of data relating to self-reported instances of both "nascent", and "established, owner managed" (Harding and Cowling, 2004: 12) SEurial activity.

As the first attempt to measure SEurial activity on a national basis in the UK, the study highlighted some interesting findings, the first of note was that at the time of data collection (2003), there appeared to be more people engaged in the "social entrepreneurial activity" (SEA) (*ibid.*: 5) than there was in mainstream entrepreneurial activity:

> "6.6% of the UK population are engaged in some form of activity that has community or social goals at its heart…[which] rate is slightly higher than the overall level of total entrepreneurial activity (TEA)" (*ibid.*: 14).

Admittedly, "[t]he SEA index [wa]s based on as broad a definition of social entrepreneurship as possible, derived from the GEM definition of entrepreneurship" (*ibid.*: 5), and based on positive responses to either of the following two questions: "Are you, alone or with others, currently trying to start any kind of social, voluntary or community service, activity or initiative?" or "Are you, alone or with others, currently managing any such social, voluntary or community service, activity or initiative?" (*ibid.*: 5).

Subsequent questions were used to identify SE activity conforming to the DTI (2002) definition, and to delineate socially-focussed activity occurring on a spectrum that covered organisations with "all public revenue sources, all private revenue sources, but no sales, some public and some sale revenue (mixed social enterprises), [and] all sales revenue (full social enterprises)" (Harding and Cowling, 2004: 7).

Organisations which claimed to derive at least some of their income from 'sales revenue' comprised 52.5% (*ibid.*: 24) of the part of the research cohort that also responded positively to the questions (listed above) relating to engagement with a 'social, voluntary or community service, activity or initiative'. However, whilst those organisations were subsequently identified as SEs, the definition of SE used in the study was not the 2002 DTI definition of SE, but rather came from a previous report by Harding (2004) entitled 'Social enterprise: the new economic engine', describing them as "businesses generating revenue from their activities that can be reinvested in their business or their community to meet their social goals" (Harding, 2004: 41).

Whilst the definition applied in the study was not markedly different from the DTI (2002) definition (which was also cited), it made no explicit mention of a lack of motive by owners to maximise profit for their own benefit, simply indicating that revenue '*can* be reinvested in their business or their community' (*emphasis* added) in support of social goals. By not precluding the personal profit motive, the potential number of organisations that could claim to have at least some level of 'social goals' that they supported through trading activity was made exponentially larger than even the DTI (2002) definition allowed, positioning the applied definition as less of an 'umbrella' than a 'catch-all' for any respondent who felt that their organisation produced social value.

The figure of slightly in excess of 50% of the total SEA activity that comprised the group identified as SEs, appeared to confirm the assertion made the previous year by Prime Minister Tony Blair that SEs represented "only a small part of our economy" (DTI, 2002: 5). However, in spite of the acknowledgement that the number of SEs identified through the questionnaire process - approximately 3% of the SEA - was "too small to provide reliable estimates of percentages" (Harding and Cowling, 2004: 24) of SEs in five out of the twelve areas surveyed, the report nevertheless claimed that "[t]he material on social organisations presents a picture of a buoyant market with substantial numbers of social enterprises as defined in the literature and policy documentation" (*ibid.*: 24).

The second interesting finding to emerge from the study related to an interesting pattern of revenue generation according to the age of the SEs identified. The report noted that "[t]he data presented here suggest that more established social organisations are more likely to be taking money from public sources than socially oriented start-ups" (*ibid.*: 24), which was interpreted by the authors as evidence of the fact that whilst established social organisations were still heavily reliant on unearned income, start-up SEs were increasingly being established specifically as income-generating businesses with social and/or environmental aims.

This finding was very much in line with governmental rhetoric on SE which, whilst acknowledging the existence of significant numbers of charitable organisations attempting to make the transition towards increased earned-income streams, nevertheless consistently sought to embed the rhetoric of the fundamental business foundations of SEs: "[s]ocial enterprises are, first and foremost, businesses" (DTI, 2002: 13; ECOTEC, 2003: 23; SEC, 2003: 4).

The Social Entrepreneurship Monitor, reporting the on-the-ground reality of self-reported 'SEurial activity' undertaken by individuals, and the associated formation of enterprises in support of such work, was able to differentiate between the transitioning 'social organisations' and the more contemporary form of entrepreneurial organising represented by start-up SEs. Thus, whilst

6.4 The 'grand narrative' of social entrepreneurship

The insistence upon, and the centrality of, claims of this sort as to the nature of SE by government and other sectoral stakeholders in the UK and abroad came to be known, within academic circles, as the 'grand narrative' (Dey and Steyaert, 2010). The types of claims made within the grand narrative centred on lauding the supposed ability of social enterprise to seamlessly create a powerful nexus for the delivery of (mostly) services based on best practice gleaned from both the private and charity/voluntary sectors, in support of the resolution of pressing social problems that had defied 'traditional' approaches delivered by either the state or private sectors: "the power of social enterprise [lies in] harnessing the skills and the energy of the entrepreneurial private sector at its best to address the social challenges" (Timms, 2002); "social enterprises are

delivering high quality, lower cost products and services [whilst] [a]t the same time, creat[ing] real opportunities for the people working in them and the communities that they serve" (DTI, 2002: 5); "[t]he social enterprise field can be proud of an ever-increasing number of examples where excellent public services are being delivered by the sector" (DTI, 2003: 3); "[s]ocial enterprises tackle a wide range of social and environmental issues…[and] have the power to transform our communities and enrich the lives of so many people" (DTI, 2004: 2).

As discussed, the government's vested political interest in highlighting certain aspects of SE whilst simultaneously downplaying others, emerged clearly in spite of the prevalence of conflicting evidence and claims made within government-sponsored reports on the SE sector, and as such the use of these types of "rhetorical devices…[acted as] lenses that highlight[ed] or obscure[d] perspective [in order] to increase persuasive power" (Ruebottom, 2011: 101).

The active construction of a grand narrative of SE therefore served to legitimate and justify policy decisions based on the creation of the idea(l) of "social enterprises as a panacea for a raft of public service delivery problems" (Marks *et al*, 2007: 13), which in turn paved the way for the government's "claim to be addressing a wide range of social problems using social enterprise as a policy tool" (Teasdale, 2012: 99).

The three 'tests' for SE proffered in the DTI (2004) mapping document discussed previously, failed to provide clear delineation for the SE sector, and because the DTI (2002) definition was so wide, it provided the potential for almost any type of organisation to lay claim to the creation, through trading, of 'social objectives' (DTI, 2002; HM Government, 2011), and therefore "social value" (Diochon and Anderson, 2009: 15), thus creating the risk of inclusion under the SE label of any business wanting to "stak[e] a claim to the emerging social enterprise agenda" (Miller and Millar, 2011: 3). Indeed the self-serving nature of the grand narrative of SE for those 'key paradigm-building actors (Nicholls, 2010) involved in its creation was elucidated by Nicholls (2006: 614) who noted that "the successful establishment of a new [SE] paradigm [would] provide status, legitimacy, and access to resources to its key actors".

The power dynamics inherent in the control of dominant discourses such as the grand narrative of SE have long been recognised, such that it has been claimed that rather than reflecting reality, they "form the object of which they speak" (Foucault 1972: 49). Therefore, dominant discourses are imbued with power and as such should not be "taken as fact, but viewed as formations of power…[which] delineate specific inclusions and enforce overt and covert exclusions" (Mann and Huffmann, 2005: 78).

When approached in this way, it becomes clear that the creation of a government-endorsed grand narrative of SE was politically motivated by the need to confer legitimacy on those aspects of SEurial activity deemed to hold political value i.e. those aligned with, or supportive of, specific governmental policy approaches, whilst denying legitimacy and rendering invisible aspects that were problematic, a point excellently made by Shaw (2010: 39):

> "governments and [other] agencies set out what is true and false, the means by which each is authorised, how truth is acquired and the status of those determining what counts as true; they are skilled at engineering truth through language. Such a regime of truth masks or even represses other truths".

The Labour government's commitment to the political and discursive positioning of SE as a means by which "to drive up productivity and competitiveness, showing new ways to deliver and reform public services" (DTI, 2002: 19) reflected its belief in "the potential, in particular, of social enterprise to contribute…[to the] public service reform agenda" (Hewett, 2002).

The involvement of SE in support of the 'public service reform agenda' sat neatly within the government's "neo-liberal [approach to the] replacement of government with the market" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 90), and was supported by the development and launch, in 2003, of the Future Builders Fund - a "new one-off investment fund to help voluntary and community organisations in their public service work" (HM Treasury, 2002: 3), as well as by the previously mentioned DTI (2003) 'Public procurement: a toolkit for social enterprises' document, which was designed to provide guidance to SEs on engaging in the tendering processes associated with public service provision.

The political expansion of the remit of SEs from the social and economic regeneration of disadvantaged communities to the contractual delivery of public services provided a further opportunity for the development of the 'grand narrative'. The proposed expansion of the scope of SEs' involvement in the delivery of social and economic policy outcomes acknowledged the "need to engage in active promotion [of SEs]" (DTI, 2002: 71), which was in turn designed to provide economic legitimacy to SEs in support of the contention of their presumed appropriateness for, and ability to, deliver public service contracts (HM Treasury, 2002b; DTI, 2003). However, these promotional activities, and the very significant level of investment in the promotion and development of the SE sector (ECOTEC, 2003; Seanor and Meaton, 2007), were undertaken in spite of the acknowledgment of the existence of "little hard evidence to demonstrate the impact and added value of social enterprise" (DTI, 2002: 8).

In spite of the lack of empirical evidence to support the policy agenda of encouraging more public service delivery by SEs, the grand narrative demanded that the rhetorical and discursive 'tone' associated with SEship, delivered through SEs, be "dominated by stories of good practice and heroic achievement" (Scott and Teasdale, 2012: 139) with the intention that "influential narratives of social enterprise [would] imply a single, natural and powerful new force that is inevitable, desirable and untroubled by the *messiness* of failure, recalcitrance, or resistance" (Seanor *et al*, 2011: 3).

The emergence of the 'grand narrative' can therefore be traced back to the hugely influential 1997 publication 'The rise of the social entrepreneur' written by Charles Leadbeater, and published by Demos, which although concerned with the work of five specific SEurs - rather than SE or SEship more generally - laid the foundations for the development of the 'grand narrative' of SE and SEship in the UK with claims that presented the featured SEurs in terms that directly reflected mainstream entrepreneurship discourses i.e. with the SEurs described in 'heroic' terms, as capable of producing 'miraculous' results from a paucity of resources, and able to bring the best business skills to developmental social work:

"[s]ocial entrepreneurs will be one of the most important sources of innovation"

"[s]ocial entrepreneurs identify under-utilised resources – people, buildings, equipment – and find ways of putting them to use to satisfy unmet social needs"

"[SEurs] innovate new welfare services and new ways of delivering existing services"

"[s]ocial entrepreneurs…deploy entrepreneurial skills for social ends" (Leadbeater, 1997 :2)

"[s]ocial entrepreneurs are driven, ambitious leaders, with great skills in communicating a mission and inspiring staff, users and partners"

"[s]ocial entrepreneurs create flat and flexible organisations, with a core of full-time paid staff, who work with few resources but a culture of creativity"

"[s]ocial entrepreneurs often find ways of combining approaches that are traditionally kept separate"

"[t]he work of social entrepreneurs creates value in several ways"

"[SEurs] operate as a kind of research and development wing of the welfare system, innovating new solutions to intractable social problems. They often deliver services far more efficiently than the public sector. Most importantly, they set in motion a virtuous circle of social capital accumulation" (*ibid.*: 3).

Having been chosen as an appropriate vehicle for the delivery of multiple policy interventions, the first SE policy document (DTI, 2002), presented SE in a similarly affirmative way, also lauding its ability to engage in Schumpterian creative destruction for the public benefit, and using these apparent qualitites to justify both the faith and investment in the sector. Examples of the 'grand narrative' emerged in both the pronouncements made in the Foreword by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair:

"social enterprises are delivering high quality, lower cost products and services"

"[SEs demonstrate] strong social purpose and energetic, entrepreneurial drive […combining a] strong public service ethos with business acumen"

"social enterprise offers radical new ways of operating for public benefit"

"[I want to] help social enterprises become better businesses, and ensure that their value becomes better understood"

"[I want to] make social enterprises bigger and stronger in our economy" (*ibid.*: 5),

as well as those made by Patricia Hewett, the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry:

"[s]ocial enterprises are dynamic, progressive businesses that we can all learn from"

"social enterprises provide a mechanism for bringing excluded groups into the labour market, raising skill levels and increasing the chance of future employability"

"social enterprise [should be] a key component in the process of modernising and reforming our public services"

"social enterprise [must not be] seen as a 'side show' to the 'real' economy but rather an integral and dynamic part of it" (*ibid.*: 6).

Indeed, the political positioning of SE as "a panacea for a raft of public service delivery problems" (Marks and Hunter, 2007: 13), was embraced enthusiastically by all three major political parties, with cross-party rhetoric on the subject sounding remarkably univocal in its praise and advocacy of SE across a number of years:

"Social enterprises are not just creating social good, but creating jobs and opportunity." (Tyler, 2006) quoting David Cameron, Conservative Leader of the Opposition, Conservative MP

"I am convinced that social enterprise has the power to change our country profoundly for the better in the years ahead." (Cabinet Office, 2006: Foreword by the Minister for the Third Sector) quoting Ed Miliband, Minister for the Third Sector, Labour MP

"As we see it, social enterprise has a colossal role to play in a government agenda that is dominated by social responsibility. It's central - not peripheral - to the social economy, to the public services and to our whole programme of government." (West, 2007) quoting Oliver Letwin, Conservative MP

"Social enterprises offer real potential for improving our health and social care services, whether they are innovative community-owned hospitals, groups of nurses running services from the bottom up, or businesses that train the unemployed to be skilled and committed carers" (eGov Monitor, 2007) quoting Patricia Hewett, Health Secretary, Labour MP

> "Scottish Green MSPs are therefore delighted to have worked with the Scottish Government to support the development of this [Third Sector Enterprise Fund], which will help strengthen and grow the brightest and best of Scotland's social enterprises." (Scottish Government, 2008) quoting Patrick Harvie, Green MSP

> "We want Scotland to lead in the development of an enterprising third sector, including social enterprises" (SSEC, 2009) quoting Jim Mather, Enterprise Minister, Scottish National Party MSP.

6.5 SE and the Big Society – policy development (2006-present)

The Big Society policy agenda represented the central feature of the Conservatives' 2010 election campaign (Kisby, 2010) pledges on welfare reform, "based on the chimera of paying for improved services through the holy grail of efficiency savings" (Smith, 2010: 828).

Such 'efficiency savings' were largely premised upon "[t]he hope that charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations c[ould] step in to replace a reduced public welfare provision, hard hit by the austerity needed to rebalance the public finances" (Alcock, 2010: 384), whilst attempting to counter the, not unreasonable, belief that:

> "charities [and SEs] are drafted in to provide services 'on the cheap'" (RBWM, 2011: 1).

The Conservatives' relationship with SE had been evident during the years of Labour's governmental tenure, when it operated as the main opposition party, and a close look at some of the shadow cabinet's speeches during that time reveals rhetoric similar in tone to that of the Labour ministers, whereby the SE sector was 'wooed' by the Conservatives and prepared for its possible role as a collaborator in the delivery of a new Conservative government policy agenda.

Leader of the Conservatives, David Cameron MP, made a speech to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in December 2006, in which he spoke of his desire to see SEs helping to "transform […] the communities we live in", describing his vision of a new 'breed' of SE – "'social enterprise 2.0' [which] means social action that is more innovative, dynamic, flexible and responsive" (Cameron, 2006b).

Like the Labour government, the Conservatives put forward a construction of SE as first and foremost businesses: "social enterprises – businesses, running on business principles, but with a social purpose" (*ibid.*), led by so-called "systems entrepreneurs", who were described as "people with experience of running effective modern organisations, able to work creatively with donors and government as well as with clients" (*ibid.*)

In describing his apparent passion for SE, Cameron declared that "[o]ur aim should be to make social enterprise as attractive and exciting a career prospect for young graduates as business or the professions is now" (*ibid.*), clearly demonstrating his conception of SEurs as educated, middle class individuals. Indeed his rhetoric around SE was equally as enthusiastic as the Labour government's at the same time; thus while Prime Minister, Tony Blair MP, was waxing lyrical about the:

> "social enterprises [that] have pioneered new ways of delivery, helping local authorities improve the quality of the services they provide to the public. By empowering staff, users and other stakeholders, they can do the real joining up on the ground that public bodies often struggle with" (Blair, 2006),

and the Labour Minister for the Third Sector, Ed Miliband MP, was describing Britain's "fantastic social entrepreneurs [working] at the cutting edge of doing businesses, involving a more diverse workforce […] contributing billions to GDP" (Miliband, 2006), David Cameron was describing the UK's "new passion for social enterprise" (Cameron, 2007b), and the anticipated "fantastic flowering of social enterprise, the like of which we cannot even imagine today" (Cameron, 2006).

However, on closer inspection, Conservative rhetoric around the proposed policy agendas relating to SE appeared to show conceptual inconsistencies. For example, whilst David Cameron spoke of the empowerment function of:

> "the Conservative mission: to roll forward the frontiers of society […through] more civic responsibility, empowering local government, community organisations and social enterprise" (Cameron, 2006),

which sought to see poor people recast "as the agents of their own escape from poverty", he also described the work of the Big Issue - a SE that provides

homeless individuals with "a hand up, not a hand out" (Big Issue, 2014) by providing them with a weekly magazine to sell, allowing them to keep the profits of all sales - as an organisation that "*rescues* so many people from homelessness" (Cameron, 2006b *emphasis added*).

Similarly, he described people in the "poorest postcodes" as "simply need[ing] the opportunities, and the encouragement, and the confidence to live up to the potential inside them" (Cameron, 2006), whilst elsewhere declaring that "social problems are often the consequence of the choices that people make" (Cameron, 2008), thus revealing the Victorian-esque demarcation between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor that underpinned contemporary Conservative understanding of poverty and its causes.

The moralistic and paternalistic underpinning of Conservative policy thinking, coupled with its apparent 'heroic', chivalric construction of middle class values was noted by Smith (2010: 830):

> "[t]he Big Society speaks to a Tory tradition of public duty and the social responsibility of the well off to the disadvantaged. It sits within the idea of welfare being provided by an organic civil society rather than the state, and the role of the Woman's Institute, the Roundtable and other voluntary organisations that 'do good'".

However, whilst Smith (2010) speculated on the centrality of women ('the role of the Women's Institute') to the Big Society agenda, such a conceptual link was not expressly made either in the political speeches of the time, nor in published policy documentation. Instead, the Big Society was presented in ostensibly gender-neutral terms, focussed largely on "the progressive aims of reducing poverty, fighting inequality, and increasing general well-being" (Cameron, 2009).

Rebranding SE as "capitalism with a conscience" (Cameron, 2009b), in the run-up to the 2010 general election, the Conservative rhetoric on SE became better defined within the Big Society agenda, with reference made to the creation of Social Enterprise Zones which, similar to Thatcher's (mainstream) Enterprise Zones of the 1980s (Sivaev, 2013), would provide environments within which "social enterprises c[ould] be properly enabled and all unnecessary obstacles to

their effectiveness removed" (Conservatives, 2007: 29). The establishment of a Social Investment Bank (Cameron, 2009) was also proposed as a means by which to "wholesale [patient] capital to a variety of community development financial Institutions" (Conservatives, 2008: 45) in support of the scaling-up of SEs (Conservatives, 2010a), as based upon the findings of the 2007 Commission on Unclaimed Assets' report (Cohen, 2007).

However, with public understanding of the concept of the Big Society reported to be poor (Kisby, 2010), "its profile within the [Conservative] party's electioneering was reduced over the course of the campaign" (Alcock, 2010: 380). Nevertheless, having managed in May 2010 to create a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats (LibDem), the Conservatives re-launched the Big Society policy agenda (Conservatives, 2010c) alongside a policy document entitled 'Big Society not Big Government' (Conservatives, 2010b) outlining their priorities based on three key policy areas, which encompassed six individual policies:

> "**Key policies – summary**
>
> **We will strengthen and support social enterprises to help deliver our public service reforms:**
> - We will create an independent Big Society Bank, funded from unclaimed bank assets, which will leverage private sector investment to provide hundreds of millions of pounds of new finance for neighbourhood groups, charities, social enterprises and other non-governmental bodies
> - One of the purposes of the Big Society Bank will be to provide funds to intermediary bodies with a track record of supporting and growing social enterprises
>
> **We will stimulate the creation and development of neighbourhood groups in every area:**
> - We will establish National Centres for Community Organising
> - Providing neighbourhood grants for the UK's poorest areas
>
> **We will encourage mass engagement in neighbourhood groups and social action projects by:**
> - Transforming the civil service into a 'civic service' by making regular community service a key element in staff appraisals
> - Launching an annual national 'Big Society Day' to celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups and encourage more people to take part in social action projects" (Conservatives, 2010b: 2).

The re-launch also coincided with the re-branding of the Labour-named Office of the Third Sector as the new Office for Civil Society (Alcock, 2010), alongside the appointments of both a Minister for Civil Society - Nick Hurd, MP (Cabinet Office, 2010), a government advisor for the Big Society - Nat Wei, a British-born SEeur of Hong Kong Chinese ancestry (Cabinet Office, 2010b), and the designation of four 'vanguard community projects' in Liverpool, Eden Valley in Cumbria, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and the London borough of Sutton (BBC, 2010).

These vanguard communities were to be provided with expert support, which would help facilitate the provision of "a range of activities, including a community buy-out of a pub, increasing volunteering at museums to keep them open and developing youth projects" (Kisby, 2010: 484), all financially supported by a grant to each community of up to £100,000 (Wiggins, 2011).

A raft of policy and supporting documents quickly followed including an updated Compact, which sought "to ensure that the Government and civil society organisations work effectively in partnership to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of communities and citizens in England" (HM Government, 2010: 6), an open letter from Francis Maud (Minister for the Cabinet Office) and Nick Hurd (Minister for Civil Society) to the VCSE reaffirming the government's commitment to work alongside the sector (Cabinet Office, 2010c), a document providing information for government departments and Local Authorities (LAs) on managing the proposed spending cuts to the VCSE (OCS, 2010), and a similar one directed at the VCSE itself (OCS, 2010b).

Other documents to emerge at the same time included a policy document outlining the anticipated role of the VCSE in the Big Society agenda entitled 'Building a stronger civil society: a strategy for voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises' (HM Government, 2010b), and a Private Member's Bill tabled by Chris White, Conservative MP for Warwick and Leamington, entitled the 'Public Services (Social Enterprise and Social Value) Bill', which called upon the government to "publish a document setting out a

strategy for the promotion by government departments of engagement in social enterprise in England (the 'national social enterprise strategy')" (HoC, 2010: 1).

In spite of the initial flurry of activity, the Big Society agenda soon began to fall apart, as in February 2011 Nat Wei reduced the number of days that he committed to his unpaid governmental advisory role from three days per week to two, citing his inability to undertake paid work, and to spend time with his young family as pivotal factors (Cohen, 2011). In the same month, the City of Liverpool, one of the four 'vanguard community projects' withdrew from the scheme claiming that government spending cuts had made it impossible to meaningfully continue (Mason, 2011), and in May 2011, less than a year after his appointment (and associated peerage bestowal), Nat Wei completely resigned from his Big Society advisory role (Curtis, 2011).

Finally, by the time the 'Public Services (Social Enterprise and Social Value) Bill' was enacted as the 'Public Services (Social Value) Act', all reference to SE had been removed, and the SE strategy that had formed such an integral part of its content disappeared (Upton, 2012):

> "[w]hile the initial proponents of the Bill may have sought to legislate for a big society, the outcome of the parliamentary debate was a government-led compromise which appeased almost all those favouring a market liberal approach to public service delivery" (Teasdale *et al*, 2012: 207).

In a small reprise, the Conservatives' long-awaiting Big Society Bank (now re-named Big Society Capital) was launched in July 2011:

> "Big Society Capital will be a financial institution that aims to increase investment in society. It will do this by supporting organisations that invest in the sector, helping them:
> • Provide a greater range of financial services to social sector organisations;
> • Raise more money for onward investment into the sector; and
> • Become more sustainable and resilient themselves
> Big Society Capital will also be a champion for social investment with policy makers, investors, stakeholders in the sector and the public at large" (Cabinet Office, 2011b).

However, the relevance and appropriateness to SEs of the product offerings of Big Society Capital was questionable, especially considering Prime Minister

David Cameron's own assertion that "not every charity, social enterprise or voluntary association is able or willing to go to scale […] Many – perhaps most – are effective precisely because they are small and local, and understand intimately the community they work in" (Cameron, 2006b).

The contention of SEs' value being linked to small, embedded, and locally-based service delivery was echoed in the academic literature. Roy *et al* (2013: 64) discussing the impacts of healthcare SEs in delivering social justice in the context of healthcare, suggested that:

> "the solutions are likely to be found at the micro rather than the macro level and rather than immediately leaping to scaling up activities, it might be more useful to think about the conditions in which small-scale social enterprises can thrive and proliferate, capitalising upon the personal relationships that are so vital to healthy communities".

Indeed, the government-commissioned BoE (2003: 18) report on financing for SEs noted that the "demand for external finance was more prevalent among social enterprises with a larger employee base (over 20 employees) and those with a higher trading income (above £1 million)", which bearing in mind the general small size of SEs (Cornelius *et al*, 2008; DTI, 2002), the documented fact that many SEs struggle simply to survive (let alone make significant profits) as a result of the demands of the double bottom line that they work to (Ko, 2012), and the problems associated with attempting to trade in economically deprived areas (Scott and Teasdale, 2012), it is unsurprising that the types of patient capital funding that might be attractive to small SEs often "yield[s] zero per cent or very low rates [of return], and at high risk of non-repayment" (Joy *et al*, 2011: 11).

Although the Big Society (by now often mockingly referred to as the 'BS') had not been officially scrapped, by 2012 it had effectively been "deemphasised" (le Marquand, 2011), and in spite of the protestation to the contrary by the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd (Hurd, 2014), its utter lack of efficacy in terms of the involvement of the VCSE sector was revealed in the damning indictments made in the 2013 Big Society Audit:

"**Opening up public services – the indicators**

Diversification – largely negative: Public service outsourcing is dominated by large, private sector companies

Voluntary sector funding – largely negative: Many cuts on state funding have already fallen on the voluntary sector and dramatic falls are estimated over the next four years, with many organisations working with vulnerable people, often in disadvantaged areas, under serious threat

More accountable and responsive public services – largely negative: High profile failings in key public services have recently been uncovered, particularly amongst large private sector contractors, and questions have been raised about standards of basic care in home care and health services

Strong partnerships – largely negative: The voluntary sector is increasingly working as a sub-contractor to large private sector organisations, and problems have developed

Accessibility of contracts to the voluntary sector – largely negative: Despite efforts to improve accessibility, and some lessons learnt from the Work Programme, there remains a systemic bias toward the private sector in contracting

Decentralisation and personal control – no change: Choice in public services has opened up under successive governments but is still limited and is working less well for disadvantaged groups

Civil society input in service design – largely negative: Despite government commitments to co-design, consultation of the sector has become truncated, and the policy and campaigning voice of the sector has been under attack" (Slocock, 2013: 7-8)

The slow, painful, and public demise of the Big Society agenda was also reflected in the spectacular failure of one of its six policy commitments, which related to the Conservatives' 2010 commitment to the recruitment and training of five thousand so-called 'community organisers':

"**We will establish National Centres for Community Organising.** We will fund the training of 5,000 independent community organisers over the lifetime of the next Parliament. This national army of community organisers will have the skills needed to raise funds to pay for their own salaries, help communities to establish and operate neighbourhood groups, and help neighbourhood groups to tackle difficult social challenges" (Conservatives, 2010b: 2).

In spite of the public commitment to recruit and train five thousand community organisers over the five years between 2010 and 2015, less than half the annual projected recruitment figure (n=394) were recruited and trained in the four years to 2014 (Community Organisers, 2014), by which time the Community Organisers webpage ominously stated "[u]nfortunately we do not have any Trainee positions open at this time. But please keep an eye on this page for any new opportunities that might come up" (Community Organisers, 2014b).

However, interestingly The Community Organisers initiative recruited almost twice the number of women as men (256 women, 138 men) between 2010 and 2014, and demonstrated a further gendered rate of subsequent attrition, with male Community Organisers resigning their posts at a significantly higher rate (5.8% (n=8) for men) than the women (5% (n=13) for women) (Community Organisers, 2014).

The Coalition government's construction of the Big Society agenda was presented in ostensibly gender-neutral terms, whilst being simultaneously discursively gendered to a masculine norm. However, the 'on the ground' reality meant that where the Big Society policies were actually enacted (as in the case of the Community Organisers initiative), women were being involved at almost twice the rate to that of men, a situation perfectly captured by McAdam and Treanor (2011: 6):

> "[i]n our analysis of the Big Society policy document, neither women nor gender were mentioned although this should not be surprising given that the language used gendered social entrepreneurship as masculine. The inherent tension often referenced in the literature between the social and the business objectives would appear to be reflected in gendered discourses where feminine language clearly maps onto the social but is overridden by the masculine enterprise discourse".

6.6 SE and gender: the development of gendered discourses by key paradigm-building actors 2002-2012

A similar type of gendering appeared within SE policy and associated documents developed and disseminated during the Labour governmental tenure which, whilst appearing to present SE and SEship as gender neutral

simultaneously utilised gendered language, alongside unacknowledged gendered assumptions, and often – for those documents aimed at a lay female audience – 'gendered' presentational formats e.g. the types of font colours used, and the colours used for the paper on which the documents were printed (with the colour pink featuring highly).

A close 'reading' of these documents reveals the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) ways in which, whilst purporting to be gender neutral, SE was increasingly targeted to a female audience of potential new SEurs over the course of the development of the SE landscape during the 2000s.

The first document of note to engage in openly gendered targeting of women as potential SEurs was the DTI (2003b) document 'A strategic framework for women's enterprise', which specifically described SE in terms of its being "a viable business development option for women" (*ibid.* 32). The framework sought to develop a particular focus on the "[p]rovision of specialist business advice and training for individuals and social enterprises setting up childcare businesses" (DTI, 2003b: 45), and whilst the focus on childcare provision by women for women was not explicated, a conceptual link between SE and childcare was established that reflected that previously established in the DTI (2002) policy document:

> "[w]hatever the size, origin or nature of a social enterprise, it will be pursuing one or
> more of the following activities: offering social or environmental goods and services
> (for example, recycling or childcare)" (DTI, 2002: 15).

What was eminently clear however, was that the provision of childcare by women-led SEs would simultaneously meet three stated Labour policy objectives, those being: the promotion of SE as a business model (Hewitt, 2002), the promised provision of 1.6 million 'affordable' childcare places (Labour, 2001), and the facilitation of women's (re)entry into the labour market (JRF, 2004; Walby and Olsen, 2002).

However, whilst the claim was made that "[c]ommunity based, social enterprise and co-operative childcare models offer some of the most innovative solutions to the challenge to create sustainable, high quality and affordable childcare provision for low income families" (DTI, 2002: 44), the fact remained that

commercial childcare provision was (and continues to be) perceived as little more than an extension of women's general unpaid domestic labour 'obligations' (SEC, 2003; Bourne, 2010), and as such was perceived to be 'low status' work (Egerton and Mullen, 2008).

The subtle and unacknowledged gendering of SE discourses continued unabated throughout the 2000s, becoming more overt in the latter part of the decade in documents published by the so-called 'key paradigm-building' actors (Nicholls, 2010: 611) within the sector, whose publications tended to be aimed at lay audiences of potential SEurs, and which as a result made unashamedly gendered claims such as:

"[s]ocial enterprises are a natural home for women entrepreneurs" (SEC, 2009: 7).

The linguistic association of the phrase 'social enterprise' with the words 'natural', 'home' and 'women' revealed the unacknowledged, yet highly gendered nature of the conceptualisation of SE and SEship by such key paradigm-building actors as the SEC, and spoke volumes about the demographic of the target audience of such publications. Furthermore, it revealed the recognition by policy-makers (and policy-influencers) of the types of individuals and groups most likely to engage with SE (read: women) as a result of its association with normative feminity (caring roles), extended into the labour market.

The use of (feminised) gendered language in support of (feminised) gendered claims was most evident in the promotional SE literature produced for the consumption of the general public by nominally 'independent' non-governmental SE organisations. The SEC, for example, whose remit was "to provide a unified voice for the sector when dealing with the government and other stakeholders" (Haugh and Kitson, 2007: 985), appeared instead to use its position of influence to provide a platform from which to promote the highly gendered (Labour) party line on SE and SEship.

Other examples of the use of gendered language in publications aimed at potential SEurs included another document published by SEC (2011) entitled 'Enjoy what you do: work in social enterprise' which, in a section entitled 'benefits of working in social enterprise', listed the positive aspects of

engagement with SE employing words and phrases clearly associated with a feminine gender norm:

> 'making a difference'; 'passionate people'; 'good things for the world'; 'loyal and happy'; 'desire to improve people's lives'; 'creating a fairer, more equal society'; 'aren't looking to become millionaires' (*ibid.*: 7).

Similarly, the (2012) UnLtd publication 'Golden opportunities: social entrepreneurs in an ageing society' – aimed at potential SEurs aged over 50 years – which asserted that "[s]ocial entrepreneurship offers a unique blend of benefits to help counter ageing issues" (UnLtd, 2012: 6), which 'issues' were listed in terms of (feminised) skills development opportunities linked to:

> "self confidence, communication and networking"; and "a passion and drive to see the needs of their communities recognised and addressed" (*ibid.*: 6).

The use of the phrase 'counter ageing issues' echoed the pathologization of ageing experienced by women (as opposed to men), as demonstrated by the marketing of 'anti-ageing' 'beauty' products to women, for example, Esteé Lauder's 'Advanced Night Repair' serum, which claims to "fight the look of ageing" (Esteé Lauder, 2015), and Olay's 'Total Effects' range, which is said to "help fight the seven signs of ageing" (Olay, 2015).

The document also highlighted four verbatim quotes (all by women), who expressed (stereo)typically 'feminine' views in the support of the apparently empirically evidenced contention that "social entrepreneurship provided an opportunity for self-fulfilment, personal growth and development, while also contributing to a better quality of life" (*ibid.*: 6):

> Betty (63) "For me it's my self-development. I've been learning all the time" (*ibid.*: 6);

> Judy (66) "I had a feeling of isolation definitely and that's less now" (*ibid.*: 6);

> Linda (55) "I struggled a bit, I couldn't believe that somebody would give me an award just to go off and do an idea that I had – I was amazed by it" (*ibid.*: 9);

> Lara (63) "We're the ones who know, we're experienced. If they throw away all the experience we have, the society will lose a lot" (*ibid.*: 11).

The quotes chosen for inclusion were clearly intended to carry a specific message to an audience of white, middle-class retired women – the names of the women quoted reflecting the target demographic – and as such reflected stereotypes relating to older (white, middle class) women. SE was then presented as a panacea to the problems apparently experienced by such women, as shown below:

Stereotype:	SE-facilitated 'solution':
Older women mentally stagnating	'I've been learning all the time'
Older women being alone/lonely	'[my] feeling of isolation [is] less now'
Older women considering themselves to be useless/worthless	'I couldn't believe that someone would give me an award'
Older women 'discovering' their value	'we're the ones who know, we're experienced'

By contrast, government-produced (or sponsored) SE documents, aimed at professional rather than lay audiences, tended to employ the masculinised language of economics and business management. For example, the Office of the Third Sector (2006a) publication 'Social enterprise plan: scaling new heights' described the benefits of SE in terms of its positive social and economic impacts at national level, rather than in terms of benefits to individuals:

> "It is estimated that at least 55,000 businesses with employees fitted the Government's definition of social enterprise. This represented about 5 per cent of all businesses with employees, with a combined turnover of about £27 billion, or 1.3 per cent of the total turnover for all businesses with employees. Their contribution to GDP was estimated to be £8.4 billion" (*ibid.* 11)

Similarly, the (2013) Cabinet Office publication entitled 'Social enterprise: market trends' provided an excellent example of the business management focus of successive government's conception of SE as "first and foremost a business" (DTI, 2002: 13), through the use of the section titles (and sub titles) chosen which included:

> "Business performance; business capability; access to finance; obstacles to success; business support; employment size; turnover; profit; plans for growth" (Cabinet Office, 2013: 1-2).

The two different approaches to audience engagement (professional versus lay audiences), was reflected in the level of masculinisation / feminisation exhibited within the documents. Thus, those documents whose target audience were potential (female) SEurs exhibited feminised, informal language, alongside verbatim quotes from practising women SEurs, and often, accompanying photographs of women.

On the other hand, those publications intended for professional (male) audiences contained masculinised, impersonal language, few photographs (but where they did appear, were often of white, middle-aged men), and statistical/technical information, the use of which was clearly intended to appeal to a mainly male audience, familiar with the terminology associated with business and economics.

One particular policy document – entitled 'Social enterprise: making it work for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Women' and published by the Government Equalities Office (GEO, 2008) – provided a very clear example of the conceptual feminisation of SE by policy-makers, in the form of the case studies chosen for show-casing.

Focussed specifically on the work of BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) women SEurs but intended for a professional audience – "[t]his report is aimed at policy-makers, business support agencies and organisations that support Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) women" (GEO, 2008: 1) – the four case studies featured work typically associated with women, with one SE providing cleaning services, two offering sewing/tailoring services, and one providing personal care services.

As noted by Marlow (2002: 88-89), such work is entirely representative of feminised businesses which "extend the traditional work of women, drawn from home-based tasks such as caring, catering and servicing the needs of others, into the economic sphere where it carries negative connotations". At least one of the women featured in a case study was forced into a situation of managing two jobs (in addition to her unpaid domestic labour), as a result of the fact that her SE did not generate sufficient income to offer her remunerated work:

> "Shamim has not taken a salary from the company and has to combine her development of CCS with full-time work. Most of her weekends and evenings are devoted to the company" (GEO, 2008: 3).

Whilst Shamim claimed to be 'passionate' about her work, and through her SE was able to provide paid employment for forty other BAME women who - for a variety of reasons - may otherwise have struggled to find paid work, the toll taken by undertaking a full time paid job, in addition to devoting 'most evenings and weekends' to her unpaid SE role did not appear to be particularly empowering.

Equally, the provision of the type of (devalued) low-wage domestic labour for her employees also appeared to offer little opportunity for empowerment, as the cleaning work would be undertaken alone, or with other women from the same ethnic background, providing no prospect of learning/conversing in English (one of the identified barriers to other paid work), and no occasion for learning new, more valuable (and valued) employment skills.

This evidence stood in stark contrast to the claims made within the document, which proudly stated:

> "[s]ocial enterprise can be a route to fulfilling employment, better incomes and greater independence. Significantly for BAME women, it can enhance the roles they play in their local communities" (GEO, 2008: i).

Therefore it could be seen that whilst the rhetoric extolled the apparent empowering nature of SE for (in this case, BAME) women, a close reading of the evidence provided instead showed that whilst SE offered the women employees the chance to work and earn a small income of their own (which could represent a small degree of economic empowerment), the work undertaken, and the lack of development opportunities that it offered effectively kept them locked into a cycle of poorly paid, menial, devalued, and gendered work.

Furthermore, the quite blatant gendering of the marketing materials used to raise awareness of SE and SEship amongst would-be SEurs, made it clear that such resources were deliberately targeted at a female (rather than male, or mixed gender) audience, which has clear implications for the gender balance of

emergent SEurs recruited to the sector. The selection of women as the target audience for awareness-raising (read: recruitment) drives by the SE support organisations revealed the obviously acknowledged conceptual association between women (more than men) and SEship, and the gender-based implications that such a gender-targeted drive would have for the ongoing development of the sector in response to the SE-specific policy commitments made by successive governments.

The tensions between rhetoric and reality also emerged as a result of the gendered recruitment drives employed, with questions arising regarding the governmental desire to encourage the growth-led development of the SE sector, bearing in mind women's tendency to prefer to run smaller, more stable and sustainable organisations, rather than growth-oriented ones, as well as the effects on the gender balance and gender equity of a sector wherein it was acknowledged that "women [we]re still under-represented on boards when considered as a proportion of the population or the proportion of women's employment in social enterprises" (Lyon and Humbert, 2013: 1).

Finally, in a reversal of the masculinisation of mainstream entreprenurship, the presentation of SEship as an essentially feminine pursuit had the potential to create gender-based barriers to men's engagement with it as a result of a perceived lack of 'fit' between themselves with, presumably, masculine gender identities, and the feminine presentation of SEship.

6.7 SE and feminised work: political cost-benefits at what personal cost?

The development of SE policy by the Labour government around public sector spin-outs (DoH, 2011; NHS, 2008) in the late 2000s provided yet more evidence of the dichotomous approach employed in the rhetoric used for promoting SE and its supposed benefits to professional audiences, and the way in which it was marketed to women as potential SEurs.

Whilst, as discussed previously, professional target audiences were presented with a 'version' of SE that employed the impersonal, masculinised, rationalist and individualist economic/business management terms deemed to appeal to such audiences based on SE's apparent ability to act in a efficiency-saving

capacity (Bland, 2010; Marks and Hunter, 2007; OTS, 2006c; Thompson, 2011), the sectoral location of many SEs meant that they would be very likely to be run by, and to employ, women.

An example of this gendered sectoral ghettoisation emerged in the SEUK (2013) 'State of social enterprise survey: the people's business' document, which reported that start-up SEs were:

"three times more likely than older social enterprises to be operating in healthcare (15% vs 5%), twice as likely to be operating in social care (16% vs 8%), and more likely to be operating in education (23% vs 14%)" (SEUK, 2013: 7).

Each of those sectors – healthcare, social care, and education – is strongly associated with female-dominated workforces (Gupta *et al*, 2009), and thus deemed to be 'feminised' (Costin, 2012). Again, as discussed previously, research on women's work (including self-employment) within feminised sectors has shown that whilst they exhibit low barriers to entry (Hallward-Driemeier, 2013), they are also poorly paid (Bourne, 2010), low-skilled (Marlow and McAdam, 2013), suffer from intense competition as a result of sectoral overcrowding (Marlow *et al*, 2008), and therefore offer poor growth prospects (Saridakis *et al*, 2014) to the businesses operating there. Furthermore, the growth in new SE activity in those (feminised) sectors indicated that the governmental policy drive to encourage the formation of SEs as vehicles for traditionally public service delivery, was working successfully and drawing women into the newly emergent, wider SE sector.

In addition to the emergence of SEs in feminised sectors, evidence also showed that SEs in the UK were much more likely than mainstream businesses to be located in the most deprived areas of the country (Cabinet Office, 2013; SEUK, 2012b; Teasdale, 2009), where it was acknowledged that "private markets function poorly" (Sunley and Pinch, 2012: 110). Such facts correlated directly with their rhetorical construction within policy as being responsive to market failure (Park and Wilding, 2011), and their attendant association with policy-driven social and economic regeneration efforts (DTI, 2002; OTS, 2006):

"[m]ost RDAs [Regional Development Agencies] have strategies to support social enterprises within their broader enterprise strategies and many are interested in the

role that social enterprises and social entrepreneurs play in community regeneration and servicing the needs of deprived regions" (Harding, 2006: 14).

Thus, whilst the clustering of SEs within feminised industries was clearly associated with policy-targeted "key growth sectors [such as] childcare, care, and the environment" (Smallbone *et al*, 2001: 49), and "health and wellbeing, healthcare, social care, and social exclusion" (Hall *et al*, 2012: 739), the fact remained that the provision of such services to impoverished communities within areas exhibiting evidence of market failure meant that such SEs were often doubly burdened in terms of their ability to generate profit – both by the poor conditions associated with the types of (feminised) work undertaken, but also by the obvious paucity of profit-making opportunities associated with deeply impoverished communities exhibiting market failure, wherein service-users were often unable to pay for services received (Levie and Hart, 2011; McBrearty, 2007).

The net result for SEs attempting to provide services under such conditions was that many were reliant on (often singular) public sector contracts for their survival, which left them financially vulnerable when such contracts represented their only source of earned income (Allinson *et al*, 2011; Spear and Bidet, 2005). Furthermore, the delivery of public service contracts was obtained through bidding on a compulsorily competitive basis (DTI, 2002; Thompson *et al*, 2000), meaning that the types of generally small, and locally-focussed (Bridgstock *et al*, 2010) SEs operating (or attempting to operate) in local communities were under constant pressure to cut costs in order to compete against large, national organisations (DTI, 2003; Marks *et al*, 2007; OTS, 2006c), where such organisations perceived there to be a potentially viable profit margin to be exploited.

Added to that, was the fact that as noted by Leadbeater (2007: 3), the provision of social care:

> "involves more than just labour; it depends on the quality of the relationship between the person caring and the person being cared for. The value of many cultural experiences cannot be captured by the price we pay to access them".

To summarise then, feminist-informed research into women's (mainstream) entrepreneurship in feminised industries has shown that such environments offer poor prospects for economic gain, organisational growth, or personal development of employees. As such:

> "femaleness gets inscribed onto jobs which involve little control or power, and these jobs are simultaneously labelled as 'unskilled' work requiring feminine traits" (Mirchandani, 1999: 231).

Through this process, a vicious cycle of institutionalised female subordination is created wherein "feminised businesses tend to reinforce the normative ideals of woman" (Ashe and Treanor, 2011: 191), which posit women's (in opposition to men's) 'natural' propensity for caring work within the labour market as well as in the domestic sphere (Saridakis *et al*, 2014), thereby supporting and reinforcing the gendered 'nature' of such work, and its attendant sex segregation.

The feminisation of an industry can therefore be clearly correlated with poor financial and social (power and social prestige) returns and, as noted by Leadbeater (2007) above, the dual burden of both physical labour and emotional work in the form of relationship and trust-building, and its subsequent maintenance.

The SEship literature clearly demonstrated that many SEs were located in both feminised industries, and socially and economically deprived locations, and whilst this situation was 'spun' in a positive way such that the claim was made that "SEs located in disadvantaged areas have a potential competitive advantage due to their degree of embeddedness in the community" (Peattie and Morley, 2008: 40), a very different picture was revealed when, for example, equity financiers were asked to assess SE organisations' ability to attract investment as going concerns, which resulted in them being deemed too risky to attract investment, as well as being unlikely to provide the required commercial returns on any investment made (BoE, 2003: 45).

Similar evidence of the lack of an empirically-supported correlation between SE activity and consistent financial returns was implied by (Short *et al*, 2009: 181), who specifically mentioned the paucity of published SE-based research in

academic journals specialising in finance, whilst Harding (2006: 12) made note of the regular documented failure of SEs to obtain even unsecured bank loans:

> "[m]any [SEs] have tried to gain external finance and failure rates are highest for unsecured bank loans and government grants. The biggest single reason for failure is the unsuitability of the business for that source of finance" (Harding, 2006: 12).

Regardless of the claims made in the political rhetoric of SE, the reality faced by many SEurs was that of difficult, demanding work, in undervalued and often uncommercial industries/sectors that were regarded negatively by the financial services industry, where public perception and understanding of the nature of the work undertaken was poor, and where – as evidenced by both Shamim's experience above – the 'price' to be paid for engaging in SEship was often having to undertake a paid employee role elsewhere in order to subsidise the unpaid SEurial role, which resulted in a reduction in both income and attendant quality of life, and an associated reduction in the availability of leisure time.

6.8 Conclusion

The promotional literature around SE produced by the (often at least partially government-funded) "paradigm-building actors" (Nicholls, 2006: 618) within the sector, and targeted to an audience of women potential SEurs, presented an image of SE that highlighted and promoted the highly gendered, value-adding aspects of its work such as its ability to help others, to meaningfully tackle social issues, and to provide opportunities for women of all ages and nationalities, premised upon a highly polarised and gendered view of both the division, and attraction of, work of a caring/nurturing/socially beneficial nature.

Furthermore, acting as a source of awareness-raising and promotional material in-line with the government's published commitment "promote and sustain social enterprise activity" (DTI, 2002: 7) with a particular focus on promoting its position "as a key component in the process of modernising and reforming our public services" (DTI, 2002: 6), the promotional literature effectively rendered invisible the tensions, and potential problems and contradictions inherent in the management and delivery of SE's double (and sometimes triple) bottom line (Mason *et al*, 2007; Weerawardena *et al*, 2010).

Thus the complexity, for example, of managing double bottom line (gendered) businesses operating for the benefit of (often gender-specific) client-bases without access to the resources required to pay for the services, was minimised through the use of positive 'spin', which presented risky and complex managerial situations as a potential opportunities:

> "[c]hildcare social enterprises have a real opportunity to grow when linked to initiatives in regeneration and addressing barriers within employment and training. Being included in these areas means that there is potentially more money and interest to encourage quality affordable childcare in the local area" (SEL, 2003: 11).

Such spin occurred alongside both the (minimised) acknowledgement of the financial risk of attempting to provide SE-based services in areas of social and economic deprivation:

> "[i]n order for the organisation to make money, they need to have an effective charging policy…one key piece of information is the fee parents and carers will actually be prepared to pay – this may not be the same level as it costs the organisation to produce the childcare" (SEL, 2003: 14),

whilst simultaneously asserting the governmental policy position on SE as being fundamentally entrepreneurial businesses seemingly effortlessly able to "combine a unique fusion of solid business practice normally associated with the private sector such as innovation, market responsiveness, efficiency and entrepreneurial focus with a social purpose" (*ibid.*: 2), and thereby demonstrating both profit-making, and constant innovation in relation to revenue generation:

> "[s]ocial enterprises are created to be grant independent and to create new ways of deriving income" (SEL, 2003: 14).

The desire by government and "a small number of practitioner organisations who were able to use language that fitted the New Labour agenda" (Teasdale, 2010: 8) to promote SE as a credible vehicle for the delivery of diverse policy agendas meant that their (unacknowledged) vested interest in the success of such initiatives resulted in information being disseminated that told only half of the story, thereby contributing to the wilful misrepresentation of a sector said to be "characterised by high failure rates, heavy reliance on public sector funding, and low-quality entrepreneurship" (DiDomenico *et al*, 2009: 894).

Indeed, it was the nature and extent of this positive 'spin' that gave rise to the emergence of the academic critique, discussed in the Literature Review chapter, which sought to challenge the "messianic script of harmonious social change" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 85) associated with the grand narrative of SEship. The critique also sought to counter the discursive univocity of the grand narrative, which it was further claimed "downplay[ed] the agency of practitioners in constructing the meaning of social enterprise" (Teasdale, 2012: 107).

As will be discussed in the following chapter, whilst largely embracing the component parts of the DTI (2002) definition of SE, the women SEurs in the study were also vocal in the assertion of the absolute centrality of ethical behaviour and morality in the work of their SEs, which represented an element that was entirely missing from the DTI (2002) definition, and indeed almost absent from the 'grand narrative' itself.

Chapter Seven: Findings - SE in practice: articulations of SE and SEship amongst SEurs

7.0 Introduction

The review of the development of the SE policy landscape since the mid-1990s presented in the previous chapter demonstrated that SE was envisioned, and subsequently politically positioned, in different ways over the course of the Labour governmental tenure according to the particular policy focus that it was hoped to address.

The shifting focus of the discourses around SE over the past two decades – from community development to the delivery of public services – alongside the evidence garnered and inferences made from the attendant government-sponsored publications, provided evidence in support of both the emergent critical academic literature pertaining to SE, and also to the critique of the so-called 'grand narrative' (Dey and Steyaert, 2010) of SEship.

The interview process with the women SEurs provided the means by which to gain deep insight into the ways in which they conceived of SE and SEship as enacted processes, rather than as the 'disembodied' concepts evident in the politically-driven grand narrative. As such, and in the absence of a widely-agreed upon definition of SE, the women's articulations provided a lens through which their lived experiences of SEship and SE could be understood, and the discourses upon which they drew in order to construct their understandings of such could be elucidated.

Whilst the majority of the content of the grand narrative focussed on mainstream discourses of entrepreneurship – creativity, innovation, profit making, financial autonomy – in support of the policy agendas proposed by first the Labour, and then the Coalition governments, the emergence of a central discourse of ethics and morality from the women SEurs stood in stark contrast. As such, the women SEurs conceived of themselves as social (rather than economic) change agents, who used trading activity in support of social justice.

The business component of the SEurs' work was therefore often presented as being simultaneously central, in the sense of its importance as a means of

providing ongoing organisational sustainability as well as of creating organisational legitimacy for outward-facing activities, and incidental with regard to the focus and importance that the women mostly placed on the social outcomes associated with their work.

In this way, business discourses were drawn upon to lend legitimacy to the women's SEs and their attendant income generating activities, whilst ethical discourses were used to demonstrate the fundamental differences between SE and mainstream enterprise activity, as the women conceived of them.

Finally, various other discourses - erroneously applied to many of the women's SEs by an ill-informed general public - were identified and refuted as a means by which to both 'position' the women's conceptions of SE within the wider socio-economic context, in addition to providing narrative resolution to the apparently widely-held (and experienced) public confusion and misconceptions of SE as a 'hybrid' organisational form.

7.1 Values/ethics as fundamental to 'real' SE practice

Initial discussions with the women SEurs revealed an overwhelming consensus that the key differentiating feature of SE compared to mainstream enterprise was the centrality of ethical behaviour, which was most often reflected in the SE's social or environmental mission.

As a result, the majority of the women SEurs constructed their vision of SE as, first and foremost, a means by which to pursue social and/or environmental justice supported by revenue-generating activities. Such activities were themselves differentiated from mainstream business practice by the presence of an integrally values-based organisational culture, enacted in all aspects of the SEs' organisational behaviour:

> "[e]thical behaviour should be fundamental to it [SE], central, integral. It shouldn't come from anything else. The bottom line for me is my absolute belief in equality: it's a very moral, very strong sense of justice, and a feeling that things have to be made to be fairer for people" Nisha

Nisha expressed a very clear connection between her deep-felt desire for social justice, and the enactment of SE. For her, the delivery of socially-minded

activities was not sufficient to justify the term 'social enterprise', which she considered to be fundamentally associated with a specific, moral managerial mind-set, and organisational identity.

Very similar views were also expressed by Claudette, who insisted on the need for 'a strong value' in order for an organisation to be considered a 'proper' SE:

> "for me, if we're going to be proper social enterprises, then there has to be a strong value behind anything that's done, and we devalue the term social enterprise if we don't buy into that" Claudette

For the women SEurs SE was felt to be fundamentally founded upon ethical organisational behaviour, reflective of the value-sets of the founding SEur. This central tenet was echoed across all the different sectors in which the women SEurs operated their SEs, and encompassed the wide variety of organisational types, and legal forms found within the research cohort. Regardless of whether the SE was delivering a small-scale service to a local community or manufacturing a product for domestic and international consumption, whether its owner/managers were in receipt of an income from the SE or not, or whether the SE was a start-up or a more established entity, organisationally ethical behaviour was considered to be a fundamental hallmark of 'genuine' SE practice:

> "a social enterprise is different from a mainstream enterprise in that it has its social commitment at the heart of the business, that is enshrined within the business - you have to have a moral compass to what you're doing" Alexandra

The concept of SEs formally and openly committing to the enactment their social objectives emerged as a theme of central importance to the women SEurs, with many of them describing the ways in which morality and ethical behaviour formed the core of their business models. Margot asserted that:

> "for me, social enterprise is an organisation that trades, is mission-driven, and that mission is social or environmental, and it is the DNA of the business; it's why you're doing it" Margot,

whilst Lynette described the values-driven organisational culture that her SE was built upon:

> "morality is very present in our values – so we have a set of values that we [staff] all get behind, and we all believe in as an organisation. It is part of our culture; it's in our DNA to be an ethical organisation" Lynette

The fact that the women described ethics as being located 'at the heart', and within the 'DNA' of their businesses provided insight into how intrinsically entwined the notions of SE and ethical behaviour were to the women SEur's conceptions of SE and enacted SEurial behaviour. The implications that attended such metaphorical constructions were that businesses without morality at their heart were 'heartless', and that the presence of ethics within a SE's 'DNA' afforded it a level of intrinsic or pseudo-biological uniqueness that identified it as a separate 'species' to mainstream enterprise.

Indeed the ongoing survival of the women's SEs as morally robust organisations was reflected in their stated desire to employ only people whose values and morals reflected their own, and by association, those of the SE itself. Anne and Claudette both described the thought processes behind their SE's recruitment policies, which were founded upon locating and recruiting only those people who possessed both the skills to perform a given role, and a world-view that would make them a good 'fit' for the values-driven organisational culture within the SE - a recruitment policy common to ethical businesses (nef, 2005).

For Anne, the key to a successful employment and attendant working relationship was fundamentally tied to a candidate's assimilation of her SE's organisational values:

> "If we interviewed someone for a job, we would want to engage with somebody who had the same vision as us - it would be important that we felt that they had a similar value system" Anne,

and in a similar vein, the frustration with recruitment that Claudette experienced was not so much related to a lack of available talent, but rather a paucity of the necessary value-sets that she required as a pre-requisite to employment in her SE:

> "I can find people with the right skill sets, but actually finding people whose values are aligned – that's the challenge" Claudette

The women SEurs unequivocally conceived of SE as a fundamentally moral space within which social value could be created through the sale of goods or services in the marketplace. Interestingly, whilst the wider third sector has long been associated with values-driven behaviours (Blake *et al*, 2006; GLA, 2007; HM Treasury, 2005b, 2007; OTS, 2006c; Westall, 2001), as have SEurs more generally (Galera and Borzaga, 2009; Delta/IFF, 2010; Roper and Cheney, 2005), the values-driven aspect of SE practice as "a core part and determinant of the processes by which activities are done, or decided on […] is receiving very little attention, is weakly articulated [and] evidenced" (Westall, 2009: 3).

Such a situation is somewhat surprising, bearing in mind the fact that, as discussed above, successive governments have positioned SE (and the wider third sector) as central to both the ongoing reformation of public service delivery (DTI, 2003; HM Treasury, 2005b; HoC, 2008), and to social and economic regeneration (Cabinet Office, 2007b; HM Treasury, 2007). However, in so doing, they conceived of SE as a fundamentally economic phenomenon through which social outcomes could be achieved (DTI, 2002, 2003c; OTS, 2006a), which ignored the fact that "what matters for economic activity is the motivations that drive economic behaviour" Santos (2009: 20).

Thus it would be logical to assume that the documented connections between the values-driven behaviours of SEurs and the SEs that they (often) establish would have represented a key research area within SE and SEship, but instead they research a glaring research gap in the nascent literature.

A small number of the women appeared to be ill-at-ease discussing values and morality in relation to their SEs. Lynette who, as noted above, later asserted that "morality is very present in our values", initially appeared reluctant to acknowledge ethics and morality as forming the foundation of the organisational culture within her SE, therefore deliberately distancing her SE from discourses of ethical/moral motivations by implying that the ethical nature and behaviour of her organisation was a natural, rather than purposeful outcome:

> "I guess it's sort of subliminal – it's not something we talk about, and in the work that we do with young people, we're not 'values driven', we never judge a young person" Lynette

She appeared to correlate the phrase 'values-driven' with the notion of value judgement, and as such wanted to distance herself and her SE from it. Similarly, Rosemary appeared to believe that an overt assertion of ethics or morality risked delegitimising her SE, so chose to fore-front normative, and therefore legitimising, business discourses instead:

> "I don't think [ethics] does really mark us out as different - you know, we're about creating opportunities for people to learn and to train with us and to get [resources] but we run it in a very business-like way. We try to buy in local products, we try to support other social enterprises, but I think most businesses would operate in those ways" Rosemary

Rosemary's statement clearly implied her feeling that stereotypes associated with 'ethically-driven' activity would serve to diminish the professional image of her SE and its work, whilst discourses associated with business would provide legitimacy and gravitas. However, her description of the mission of her SE demonstrated the presence of strong beliefs associated with social justice, personal development, and equality of opportunity. Further discussion led her to explain the organisational ethics of her SE beyond her initial offering of 'buy[ing] in local products', describing instead the positive, nurturing organisational culture that she had developed:

> "it's just a natural thing within the organisation – it's about enabling, empowering and supporting people. It's an ethos that runs through the organisation, as does the entrepreneurial way of thinking" Rosemary

Whilst attempting to play-down the values-driven nature of her SE's organisational culture as 'a natural thing', Rosemary appeared to take pride in the fact that that 'ethos' ran right through her organisation. However, as before, she presented the social and ethical aspects of her SE firmly alongside the business discourse-informed aspects of her work, as represented by her assertion of the presence of an 'entrepreneurial way of thinking'.

Like Lynette, she appeared to feel that an open acknowledgement of consciously ethical behaviour by her SE might represent a stereotype threat –

defined as "the expectation that one will be judged or perceived on the basis of social identity group membership rather than actual performance and potential" (Block *et al*, 2011: 570) – to the legitimacy of her SE, the specific nature of which she did not elucidate.

7.1.1 Stereotype threat 1: religion

The most likely social identity group to be associated with the nexus of nominally 'charitable' social works and the presence of morality/ethics-driven behaviours within a Western, white European context is that of white, middle-class Christianity, the manifestation of which (as enacted faith) is centred on a sense of "moral obligation and social duty to those less privileged" (Taylor, 2005: 127).

Given the finding by Roy *et al* (2013: 60) that "many ordinary people are suspicious of social enterprise because they haven't seen one at work in their community before", it is not unreasonable to suppose that initial community-based suspicions could emerge on the basis of simple ignorance and lack of knowledge/understanding of SE, and that these might be fuelled by the imposition of erroneous stereotypes relating to assumptions of the privileged paternalism associated with Christianity and Christian charitable works.

Like most of Western Europe, the UK is contemporaneously a largely secular society (Bruce, 2001; McLean and Peterson, 2011) where, at the individual level, the ongoing decline in Church attendance is generally perceived to be a "'normal' and 'progressive'… quasi-normative consequence of being a 'modern' and 'enlightened' European" (Casanova, 2006: 2). As a result, religious affiliations or associations with religious organisations have a tendency to be perceived as retrogressive and old-fashioned, to the point where:

> "faith-based welfare is strongly criticised in media, academic, and policy circles as a regressive step for social policy, which strikes a blow to the very heart of the welfare state and to the important gains it has achieved in making British society more egalitarian, free, just, and tolerant" (Jawad *et al*, 2009: 2).

Alongside the cultural associations outlined above between religion and outmoded conservatism, intolerance, and inequality, exist related stereotypes aptly articulated in a comment-piece published by the Guardian newspaper in

2011: "[t]he term 'faith-based' conjures up, for many, the idea of bible-bashing do-gooders, or enthusiastic and well-meaning, but essentially impotent amateurs" (King, 2011).

In this way, the cultural association of values- and morality-driven behaviours with religiosity, and the social identity group association of religion with 'well-meaning, but essentially impotent amateurs' can be seen to provide a reasonable and understandable rationale for Lynette and Rosemary's reticence in their discussions of morally-based and values-driven motivations in relation to both themselves and their SEs. Furthermore, it provides a plausible explanation for both Rosemary's deliberate strategy of fore-fronting business discourses, as well as for Lynette's insistence on her organisation's non-judgemental approach to their clients, as they sought to counter the cultural stereotypes of amateurism and judgementalism associated with Christian/faith-based ('values-driven/ethical') organisations.

Interestingly, the encouragement of social service delivery by (particularly Christian) faith-based organisations (FBO) within the context of the Conservative-led Big Society policy agenda (Chapman, 2012; Fentener *et al*, 2008; Kettell, 2012; Lambie-Mumford and Jarvis, 2012) demonstrated the particular applicability of the associations outlined above within the current political context in the UK. The documentation of the fact of the public's perception of associations between the provision by large, faith-based charities of government-contracted social services, and the "co-opt[ion] and corrupt[ion of such organisations] into de facto arm[s] of government" (Jones and Keogh, 2008: 339), provides further support for the contention of a cognitive link in Rosemary and Lynette's minds between ethical/values driven behaviours, religiosity, and the sort of public mistrust that they would understandably wish to avoid.

7.1.2 Stereotype threat 2: charity/voluntary work

The subject of being perceived to be 'amateurish' as theorised by King (2011) in relation to faith organisations, or of the similar association between SE and "the flabbiness and amateurishness casually attributed to the [wider] third sector" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 89) was an issue raised by several of the women

SEurs. This particular issue had been previously highlighted by the Social Enterprise Coalition (now Social Enterprise UK), in a publication in 2011 in which it was stated that:

> "everywhere social enterprise is so poorly understood that it is conflated with the charitable or voluntary sector […] But social enterprises are not charities. They are businesses" (SEC, 2011: 4).

Claudette, Audrey and Anne, all discussed the frustrations that they experienced regarding the erroneous public assumption of SE being a form of charity, which had led to them being challenged, or even berated, for attempting to extract profit from their SEs' marketplace activities, or for drawing the salary of a paid employee:

> "I get tense sometimes when people say "So you pay yourselves in social enterprise?!" Well yeah, because it's a business – we're in that space" Claudette

Claudette spoke of feeling forced to justify the payment of her own and her staff's wages when in conversation with people outside the SE sector – customers, clients, investors, other stakeholders, and the general public – as a result of their mistaken understanding of SE, and its association (in their minds) with charity and voluntary work.

Audrey was similarly frustrated by her ongoing struggle to educate people as to the nature of SE, and found it baffling that their level of incomprehension could translate so easily into judgementalism:

> "People get really upset with us when we say that we want to make money" Audrey

Likewise, Anne felt indignant that her (and others') role as a SEur should be so fundamentally undervalued and misunderstood that people's erroneous beliefs about SE should lead them to 'justifiably' assume that SE should be undertaken for free, or for very little:

> "What really upsets me is that people hear the term 'social enterprise' and they assume that you should work for nothing, or for peanuts, but you should be able to pay yourself a similar amount to what you would earn in a similar role elsewhere" Anne

Clearly, the public perception of the work undertaken by Claudette, Audrey, and Anne's SEs by people outside of their organisations was heavily framed by discourses of voluntary and charitable work which understandings, as discussed previously, were themselves influenced by the historic emergence of the provision of charitable services by wealthy (white) philanthropists, of independent financial means.

Further possible sources of undesirable associations for the women SEurs emerged in relation to the perceptions of women's involvement in voluntary work; for example, there exists "an enduring stereotype of the volunteer as a middle-class 'lady' juggling church jumble sales with fundraising lunches" (Taylor, 2005: 119), which negative, and reductive stereotyping the women SEurs would almost certainly wish to avoid for reasons of both personal and organisational legitimacy.

Such stereotypical public understandings of charitable work are reflected in the continued poor understanding of charities and charity management, with members of the general public demonstrating confusion as to which (if any) roles within charities are remunerated (nfp Synergy, 2014), and a majority expressing a belief that trustees (amongst others) should not be paid for their work (Ipsos MORI, 2012). Added to that is the lack of public understanding of SE as a business model, and the inherently confusing diversity of the SE sector itself, which encompasses a spectrum of organisational forms that includes trading charities, self-funding CICs and private limited companies, organisations deriving income from publically-funded social service provision, and other trading organisations in receipt of grant funding.

Given such ongoing, high levels of public confusion in relation to both charities, and SEs as 'hybrid' organisations, it is perhaps unsurprising that people coming into contact with Anne, Audrey, and Claudette's SEs should express shock and dismay at discovering that their organisations desired to make a profit from their work, and that they could, and would, legitimately pay themselves and their staff salaries.

The catch-22 situation arose when the erroneous assumption of the free (voluntary, unremunerated), or not-for-profit provision of services was

unexpectedly challenged by the women, and the organisational behaviour of their SEs was subsequently perceived to be 'dishonest' or 'unethical' as a result. Thus, the legitimacy threat described and experienced by the women SEurs can be seen to derive directly from the interface of a lack of public understanding of SE as a hybrid (social and economic) revenue-generating model, and the erroneous projection of (misunderstood) charitable discourses upon SEs and their employees.

People's understanding and evaluation of organisations is greatly influenced by the ways in which their own 'understandings' (assumptions) of an organisation, which reflect wider societal discourses, are borne-out in the behaviours of the organisations (and their employees) themselves. This point was demonstrated by Haveman and Rao (1997: 1613) who, in their exploration of the development of organisational identity alongside institutionalised norms and expectations, suggested that the:

> "legitimacy of organizational forms requires congruence between the institution embodied by a particular organizational form and the normative, cognitive, and regulatory character of a wider society".

When the 'normative, cognitive, and regulatory character of a wider society' misinterprets an organisational form and subsequently applies erroneous expectations to it, organisational legitimacy is threatened - as discovered and reported by many of the women SEurs. Similarly, in their work on the organisational perceptions and attendant commitment of staff to 'hybrid-identity' organisations (co-operative models), Foreman and Whetton (2002: 626) concluded that where perceived mismatches exist between the expectations of organisational identity, and the actual manifestation of identity through organisational practices, organisational legitimacy wouldl be compromised:

> "identity gaps have significant effects on members' assessments of organizational commitment and organizational form-level legitimacy".

7.1.3 Stereotype threat 3: radical politics ('alternative' lifestyles/anti-capitalism)

Other comparably disruptive misunderstandings of the SE sector were also reported. Alexandra, for example, explained how she and her SE had been

subjected to, and judged by, other inappropriately applied and erroneous stereotypes relating to the perception of SE as representing a space for radical or 'alternative' politics:

> "[s]o often, social enterprises are pigeon-holed…so it's about dispelling the myth that it's only sort of 'greenies' and 'lovies' running social enterprises" Alexandra

The problems that Alexandra encountered managing her SE's business legitimacy arose from uninformed and flawed perceptions of SE, which led to assumptions of amateurism. These pre-conceived and projected assumptions provoked judgements about both her own level of personal professionalism, and her SEs ability to produce professional (rather than amateurish) work. These preconceptions were further compounded by poor public understanding of the (relatively new) legal form that her SE had adopted:

> "we're a long way from people taking CICs fully seriously - there are issues with people not thinking that they are actually genuine businesses" Alexandra

For Alexandra then, the general lack of professionalism associated with the SE sector as a part of the wider third sector, caused her to feel that her SE was "lumped in with organisations whose models really wouldn't work if they weren't being propped up by funding", which she perceived to cause her own SE a loss of legitimacy by association.

Several others of the women SEurs described the legitimacy struggles that they faced relating to a different, but equally erroneous assumption about the nature of SE – that of its perceived association with 'anti-capitalism':

> "I've had a lot of conversations where people have accused me of being anti-capitalist, but I kind of feel like we work exactly within the capitalist system but just tweak it slightly – you know, take the best bits really" Jasmine

For Jasmine, the experience of having an 'anti-capitalist' identity externally imposed upon both her, and by association her SE, was frustrating and caused her to feel the need to explain and justify her SE and its moral work ethic. This situation was clearly made more frustrating by the fact that she felt that the SE approach to business actually represented a 'best practice' approach to the sale of goods and services in the marketplace.

Jessica, whose SE was positioned in the environmental/sustainability sector, experienced similar judgements, but having previously run (non-SE) businesses in the sector had pre-empted the kinds of stereotypes likely to be associated with her SE's work, and set-out to challenge such assumptions from point of start-up:

> "I figured that someone like me needed to approach sustainability in a pragmatic, practical kind of way instead of 'beating you over the head with a broomstick', or doing the whole 'anti-capitalist' thing that really puts off big business. So that's the way I've gone about this place – I have rented a huge 20,000sq/ft premises, and it's a very business-like place, it's not a hippyfied, fluffy thing" Jessica

Like Alexandra, Jessica did not want her SE's organisational legitimacy to be undermined by association with 'greenies' or 'hippies', and like Jasmine she actively rejected the 'anti-capitalist' label. However, the association of SE with anti-capitalism amongst an already poorly-informed general public was not assisted by assertions such as that made by Leadbeater (2007: 2) in his 'think-piece' for the Cabinet Office that:

> "[s]ocial enterprises deliberately adopt an uncomfortable position: they are in the market and yet *against it* at the same time" (*emphasis* added).

However, Jessica's assertion of the 'business-like' nature of her organisation, echoed Rosemary's words, and provided another demonstration of the way in which the women SEurs sought to negotiate their personal and organisational identities through the adoption and rejection of certain discourses and attendant stereotypes.

Figure 7.1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the various discursive pressures described by the women SEurs as being brought to bear on themselves and their SEs, which represent the legitimacy threats that they and their organisations faced. Alongside the discursive legitimacy threats, the women SEurs also experienced associated stereotypes, which represented the stereotype threats that the women additionally sought to manage when constructing their personal SEurial and SE organisational identities.
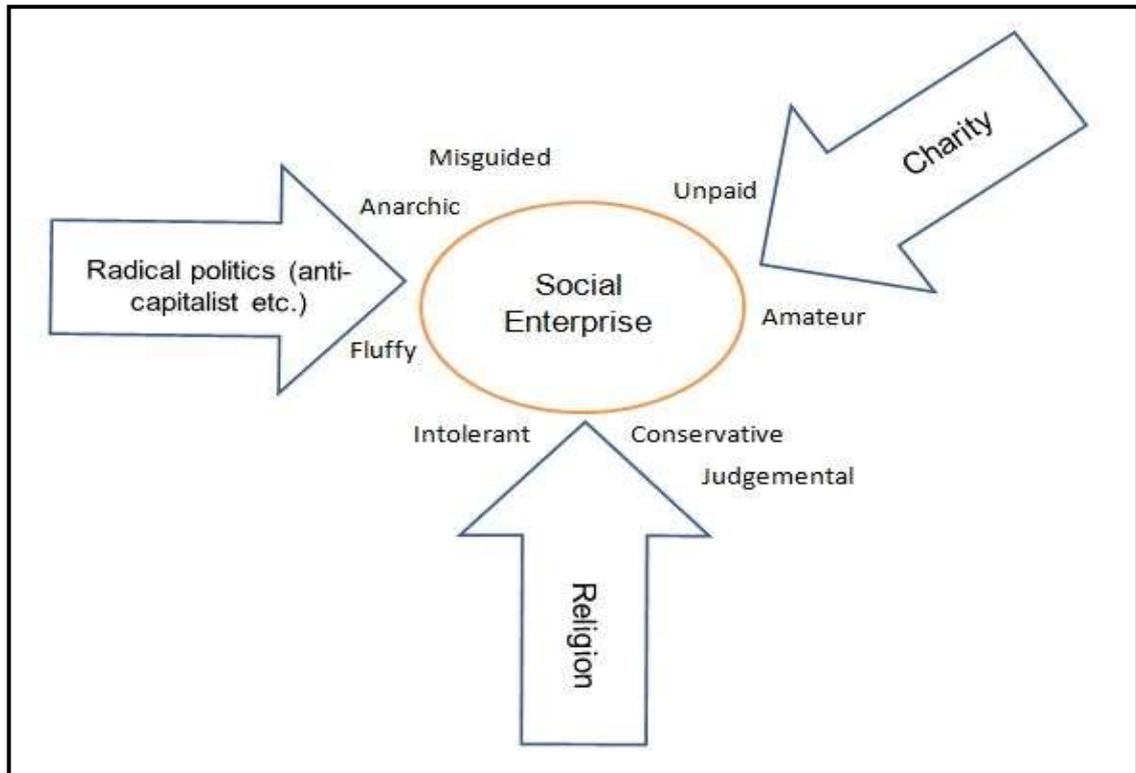
Figure 7.1: Discursive pressures and attendant stereotypes identified as representing legitimacy threats to the women SEurs and their SEs

The discussions with the women SEurs relating to their conceptions of the place of values/ethics and morality within SE gave unexpected rise to the revelation of the types of organisational legitimacy threats, and associated stereotype threats, experienced by the women and their SEs in the course of their day-to-day activities. These in turn, revealed a range of probable sources for those legitimacy threats, and exposed the cultural associations and expectations that provoked the attendant negative stereotypes.

The diversity of the SE sector, its conceptual location within the wider third sector, and its association in the public mind with the charity, religiosity, and radical politics, served to further confuse an already poorly understood phenomenon. The effect upon the women SEurs of these issues was the perceived need to define, defend, and justify SE as an organisational model, and to actively manage the problems associated with the development and maintenance of outward-facing personal (SEurial) and organisational identities and legitimacy.

As evidenced in Figure 7.1, the stereotype threats identified by the women SEurs provided a framework for understanding and defining SE; the discursive threats, and associated stereotype threats, represented what the women SEurs believed SE *not to be* i.e. SE is *not charity*, SE is *not religious*, SE is *not politically radical* etc. Such conceptions did not mean that the women believed that SEs could not also be charities, or run by religious organisations, or to embody radical approaches and politics, but rather that they believed that SE was not *defined* by those issues.

The attendant stereotype threats represented widely-held cultural beliefs about the discursive domains with which they were associated e.g. religious people are intolerant, conservative, and judgemental, but that conversely they undertake paternalistic social work in order to demonstrate their piety. Again, these stereotypes did not necessarily represent hard-and-fast truths about the nature of religious people/religions, charities/charitable work etc., but the cognitive association with a specific discursive domain serves to subconsciously trigger cultural stereotypes in people's minds (Lun *et al*, 2009).

Thus, the identification, and rejection by the women, of negative stereotypes relating to specific discursive domains, provides insight into what they believe SE to *be*, by evidencing which particular stereotypes they took exception to i.e. which ones they believed stood in direct opposition to the 'true' nature of SE, and which therefore represented what SE *was not*.

What emerged then, was the women SEurs' clear desire to be seen as consummate professionals within their chosen fields, deserving of proper remuneration, and working *within* the bounds of mainstream society whilst, according to the former Prime Minister Tony Blair MP, nevertheless offering "radical new ways of operating for public benefit" (DTI, 2002: 5).

7.1.4 Stereotype threat 4: 'Thatcherite' entrepreneurship (profit maximisation, moral bankruptcy, greed)

Further discussion with the interviewees revealed a source of perceived legitimacy threat that emerged from with the SE sector itself, and coalesced around the behaviours of (mainly) new entrants to the sector, whom the women

SEurs perceived to be 'false' SEs, whose behaviours were felt to be in conflict with 'real' SE values.

The central issue of contention was the aggressive profit maximising behaviours of these SEs, which were felt to have cynically co-opted the term 'social enterprise' for the purpose of gaining competitive advantage:

> "there are some other 'social enterprises' that I don't think should be called social enterprises because they are kind of soiling the whole concept of social enterprise, they are very focussed on money and I think they are using the concept for their own benefits. I mean I'm not saying that social enterprise shouldn't make money or shouldn't be well off or anything, but they show social enterprise in a light that is not really doing us any favours" Lucille

Lucille, like many others, felt that certain individuals were establishing SEs in order to gain access to funding streams and contracts that they would not have been able to access without a SE structure. As a result, there was a palpable sense amongst the women SEurs that the hard-fought-for, and constantly defended, legitimacy of their 'real' SEs was under attack from organisations purporting to be SEs, but demonstrating none (or at least only some) of the values-driven behaviours that they associated with genuine SEs.

Like Lucille, Sinéad expressed very similar concerns:

> "There are wolves in sheep's clothing - money-making schemes where being a 'social enterprise' is very convenient, and you can use it as a means to get in on the kind of contracts you want. It's just hopping on the bandwagon, and the spirit is not right" Sinéad

For her, the connections between an aggressive attitude towards profit maximisation, the lack of demonstrably moral behaviours, and the accessibility of certain new governmental/local authority contracts were clear, and related to the 'wolves in sheep's clothing' approach that she felt had been adopted by mainstream entrepreneurs attempting to the exploit the new opportunities associated with the provision of state-funded services by SEs.

Caroline also raised the same issue, although her bone of contention related to the development of a professional industry based on writing successful tenders. As a result of the emergence of this new service-based industry, and the

success with which professional consultant bid-writers met, she felt organisations were increasingly 'ring-fencing' money that was intended to fund the provision of services by SEs, whilst simultaneously presenting themselves as SEs as a means of gaining access to such funds:

> "I'm aware that people are jumping on the bandwagon now and people are very good at writing tenders, and they reap [benefits] and everything, and they claim they're a social enterprise when actually they deface the whole thing" Caroline

The women were vociferous in decrying the fact that individuals had chosen to exploit the concept of SE for their own benefit and (economic) advantage, and were adamant in their assertion that the aggressive pursuit of profit, even alongside the creation of social value, was both unacceptable and in contravention of the true 'spirit' of SE.

Interestingly, this was an issue highlighted by Social Enterprise UK (SEUK), the UK's self-proclaimed "national membership body promoting social enterprise and its stakeholders" (SEUK, 2013b: 1), in a paper published in April 2012 in which it was noted that:

> "there has been a lot of discussion (and sometimes confusion) about what social enterprise is, and whether the social enterprise label could be 'hijacked' by businesses that aren't social enterprises, but are keen to pretend they are" (SEUK, 2012: 1).

The sense of the 'hijacking' of the term social enterprise was also mentioned by Claudette, who expressed real exasperation at the fact that organisations could call themselves SEs (and be understood as such by a largely uninformed public) in spite of not actually being 'real' SEs:

> "I don't want a private business that might give a tiny percentage of their profits to a charitable foundation to be able to say 'therefore I am a social enterprise', or because they work with some socially excluded group, or are paid large sums of money by the Government to do that, that it therefore makes them a social enterprise" Claudette

Lucille, Sinéad, Caroline, and Claudette were all able to identify and articulate the types of organisations that they considered to be SEs in name only. Like many of the other women, they felt that the profit maximising behaviour,

unpremised upon a specifically values-driven foundation caused reputational damage to SE as a concept. They also expressed the belief that the identified organisations were callously exploiting an opportunity in order to gain competitive advantage by branding themselves as SEs, when in fact they were mainstream businesses co-opting the term social enterprise for their own benefit.

Sinéad's use of the metaphoric expression 'wolves in sheep's clothing' provided insight into the danger that she felt such organisations represented, as well as the duplicity and dishonesty that they embodied. Similarly, Lucille spoke of such organisations as 'soiling the whole concept of social enterprise', reflecting her interpretation of the corruption and moral pollution being wrought upon SE by such interlopers, and Caroline declared that such organisations 'deface the whole thing' implying both the wanton destruction that she felt could be wrought upon genuine SEs within the sector, in addition to the metaphorically constructed notion of 'de-facing' the sector i.e. removing its (unique) face, and thus rendering it anonymous and unrecognisable.

The stereotype and legitimacy threat identified by the women in relation to the incursion of 'counterfeit' SEs, incorporated some aspects of the negative discourses relating to 'Thatcherite' entrepreneurship epitomised by the entrepreneur "who, while glamorous, was also a figure of avarice, opportunism, and corruption, a figure who might be envied but not admired or loved" (Grenier, 2009: 179). Such behaviours provided a disagreeable counter-point to the centrality of values-driven behaviours within the women SEurs' conception of SE, and was reflected in their obvious desire to distance themselves from the sorts of immoral, and dishonest behaviours often associated with 'Thatcherite entrepreneurship' that they believed the interlopers were displaying.

As such, there emerged a strong sense that such errant behaviours should be 'policed' in some (undefined) manner, and that organisations operating in such ways should both be both prevented from calling themselves SEs, as well as being prevented from operating within the SE sector, a sentiment echoed in a report on austerity and the Big Society agenda published by the New Economic Foundation (2010: 24) in which they stated that "[s]maller, value-driven

organisations will have to be protected from incursions by profit-driven enterprises and large corporations".

The women SEurs therefore appeared to conceive of the 'counterfeit' SEs as effectively misrepresenting themselves, and thus misleading an already confused general public as to their 'true' nature. The implication of a 'policing' role did not appear to correlate with a desire for any official sanctioning or endorsement of SE - for example, there was little support amongst the research cohort for the use of the SE Mark - nor did the women seem to want to set limits on the diversity of a sector that they acknowledged "operate[s] along a spectrum of activity, merging at one end with the voluntary and community sector and at the other with ethical and socially responsible businesses" (IFF, 2005: 42).

What the participating women SEurs appeared to desire was a top-down, policy commitment to the protection of the term 'social enterprise', in much the same way that certain food and drink names are protected. The women clearly felt very protective of the SE sector, and its status as a "philosophical departure from the past that will underpin a new way of doing business" (Ridley-Duff, 2007: 389), and seemed to believe that the lack of values-driven behaviour by the 'interlopers' meant that they performed opportunity *exploitation* whereby they identified SE as offering a means by which to *exploit* opportunities (with exploitation being the operative word), and thereby to gain commercial competitive advantage.

Interestingly, during the course of the interview process (July 2012), a US-based software and content management company (salesforce.com) attempted to trademark the term 'social enterprise' within the US, EU (including the UK), and Jamaica (Hurley, 2012). The SE sector responded quickly and vocally, with SEUK organising the 'Not in Our Name' campaign, the objectives of which were:

> 1. To ensure that Salesforce's attempts to trademark use of the term 'social enterprise' in the UK and EU were not successful;

2. To persuade Salesforce to desist from applying for further trademarks and putting 'TM' next to the words social enterprise in its external communications as it has no trademark or trademark pending – this is misleading; and

3. To raise awareness of REAL social enterprise – what it means, what the movement is trying to achieve, and to get more people supporting it. We mean to ensure it is a less attractive target for anyone who wishes to legally appropriate our name for private commercial gain in the future, by defending it robustly (SEUK, 2012b).

The definition that salesforce.com applied to their version of social enterprise related to the intentional use by an enterprise of "social media to engage with customers and deliver an experience that builds brand loyalty" (Smith, 2011). However, the backlash against salesforce.com by the 'REAL social enterprise' sector was significant, and resulted in the eventual withdrawal of the trademark application in September 2012 (Field, 2012).

The incident represented a public playing-out of the very issue that the women SEurs had raised - of an organisation specifically attempting to co-opt the term SE for its own purposes, in service of its own agenda, and by so doing creating a legitimacy threat to genuine SEs:

"[t]he potential damage to the sector was plain to see for all those involved: an infinitely wealthy tech giant hijacking a term that was already hazy in the public's understanding" (ClearlySo, 2012).

The response to the crisis from the SE sector (specifically SEUK) represented a curious reflection of women SEurs' reactions to their experiences of sector incursion, with the exception that the SE sector was eventually moved to take action, which the women (individually) did not. As a result, a robust, and eventually successful, defence was raised against the interloper (salesforce.com), but no further action was taken to properly define or delineate SE to prevent a recurrence of the event in the future.

Mirroring the women SEurs' stories, the incursion into the SE sector by salesforce.com was marked by the enactment of behaviours that ran contrary to what was deemed to the true 'spirit' of SE by others occupying the sector. Identification of the interloper was thus made on the basis of errant

organisational behavioural features, which the wider SE sector rejected as unrepresentative of genuine SE.

In this way, like the women SEurs, the wider SE sector and specifically SEUK who led the campaign against salesforce.com, sought to 'define' and 'police' SE through the identification and public rejection of behavioural elements that represented what it was *not*, rather than by attempting to define what SE actually *was*.

This unwillingness to define and delineate the actual nature of SE was strikingly evidenced by the fact that whilst asserting its intention to "raise awareness of REAL social enterprise - what it means, what the movement is trying to achieve, and to get more people supporting it", SEUK failed to provide either a definition, or even an explanation, of those issues.

The seemingly empty rhetoric employed by SEUK was also demonstrated in the previously discussed 2012 publication in which they highlighted their concerns with regard to the possible 'hijacking' of the term SE by "businesses that aren't social enterprises" (SEUK, 2012: 1). Bearing in mind that as an organisation SEUK marketed themselves as "*the* national body for social enterprise" (SEUK, 2013: 68 *emphasis added*), they firmly asserted that their paper:

> "doesn't aim to provide a strict definition, but instead sets out what Social Enterprise UK believes are the critical factors that make an organisation a social enterprise, and how businesses, public bodies and consumers will know one when they see one" (SEUK, 2012: 1).

It is perhaps unsurprising then that the participating women SEurs tended to mostly define SE by what it was *not*, when it is considered that the body that claimed to speak for the SE sector nationally was equally as unable (and/or unwilling) to define it any more clearly than by a list of 'critical factors' that would sufficiently inform people to 'know one when they see one'.

7.2 SE in action: the operationalisation of SE as a values-driven concept

As the women revealed more details about the manifestation of values-driven behaviours in their SEs, it became clear that whilst 'values-driven' formed the ethical core of the women SEurs' conceptions of the differentiating features of

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SE from mainstream enterprise, the ways in which their values were translated into actions within their SEs was also seen to be defining.

It appeared that the women used the presence of values-driven behaviours as 'justification' of the profit-seeking side of their work, re-imagining it as a form of 'ethical capitalism', premised upon a notion of 'ethical profit maximisation', which sought to place human and/or environmental welfare at the centre of the SE business model.

7.2.1 Staff treatment and working conditions as enactment of 'ethical profit maximisation'

The issue of the care of staff (and volunteers/interns) emerged as a huge component of the women's sense of the ethical nature of their organisations. For many of the women, the development of staff skills and competencies was a fundamental part of their business strategy, often resulting in excellent levels of staff retention. The use of volunteer staff was prevalent in many of the women's SEs, and within that category of staff, the central issues to emerge were the payment of expenses, and the provision of meaningful, valuable, non-exploitative work.

For Lucille the decision, based upon her desire to not exploit her volunteers, to prioritise the payment of her volunteer staff resulted in her being able to secure the on-going commitment of two talented individuals who brought tangible value and skills to her SE:

> "we secured a grant to pay our volunteer travelling expenses, because we have really committed volunteers and we wanted to show that we are not only kind of taking peoples' energy and time, we are also rewarding them even though we don't have much money. So the money we have, we spend on people, and yeah I think it was a good move actually because we secured two really, really committed volunteers that way" Lucille

During the course of her discussion on volunteer staff, she also mentioned that similar organisations to hers operating in the local area, did not to pay their volunteer staff, which led her to describe her own choice as "a step forward" (i.e. an improvement on the conditions offered elsewhere), which she felt had

had the (unintentional) additional benefit of contributing to the development of "a good reputation" for her organisation within the local community.

Jennifer's SE, whose volunteer staff were drawn from the adults with learning disabilities community that her SE served, focussed her attention on the quality of the work on offer. For her, and her SE, the key to the ethical use of volunteers was the opportunities that the volunteering provided for them to gain confidence and trust in themselves, and to learn new skills and competencies through being given meaningful work:

> "Giving [our volunteers] a sense of purpose and proper volunteering opportunities, not just saying "can you come and sweep up for us?", but can you come and help me set-up for the [event]: these are the jobs that need doing, you need to come with me to the bank to get the £700 cash but you're not to tell anyone that that's what we're going for because we might get mugged. That kind of sense of responsibility and a real role, and real opportunities to help us make a difference" Jennifer

Like Lucille, for Jennifer and her SE, the investment of time, effort, and trust in her volunteers had resulted in securing a level of commitment and loyalty that she believed reflected the sense of 'belonging' that her volunteers felt:

> "People with learning disabilities often have files and files full of 'achievements' that mean nothing, so we aim to help people to reach their potential: for them to grow in confidence, to be part of something, and to have experiences that are meaningful, that are not tokenistic. Our management committee, which is made up of people with learning disabilities, have an amazing willing to help and they are some of the most committed members that were there from the start" Jennifer

In contrast to Lucille's, Jennifer's volunteers were unpaid, however they nevertheless experienced their efforts as being both of value to the on-going success of the SE, and as being valued by the paid SE staff. Thus, in spite of the differences between the two organisations and their volunteer staff, the same connection was made between the extraction of value from the volunteers, and the simultaneous demonstration of the value that the organisations each placed upon the efforts of those volunteers.

Nisha described a unique, and initially counter-intuitive, approach to dealing with her volunteer staff. Her SE required the regular use of professional people

in the capacity of mentors, and because many of her mentors were drawn from multi-national companies, she used the opportunity of providing them with mentoring experience to extract additional value by charging them to fulfil the volunteer role:

> "we've already started doing some of our own income generation, which is that we charge the mentors from the corporate sector mentors for the privilege! Those types of mentor have training and development budgets, so we very much pitch the mentoring as a professional development opportunity – we give them training, they take part in action learning sets, there's a network opportunity, and so on and so forth. So we sell those at a grand per mentor, and it's something we can keep doing, and even do that a little bit more actually as our reputation grows" Nisha

In spite of the fact that Nisha charged her mentors to work with her SE, she nevertheless valued their contribution very highly, and had successfully managed to create a training and development package that offered them (paid for) reciprocal value in terms of their own professional development.

Being very clear about her target market, understanding the opportunities that engaging such individuals could bring to her SE, and creating a product that produced simultaneous value for her SE and for her mentors, allowed Nisha to effectively double the value that she could extract from her mentoring volunteers, all without being in any way exploitative.

The creation of a mutually beneficial cycle of value-adding between the SE and its volunteers, and the recognition of the value brought by volunteer staff to SEs also emerged in discussions relating to the use of interns. The major difference between the two groups (volunteers versus interns), was the clear acknowledgement by the SEurs that unlike other volunteering opportunities, internships represented stepping-stones to paid employment, and as such should only ever be treated as short-term commitments.

Nevertheless, the centrality of non-exploitative relationships between the interns and the SE, and the value exchange that could be offered by the SE in return for the skills of the interns, was clear:

> "We have a few interns each year, and we tend to ask them to commit a minimum of time to the organisation, and they provide great support for our organisation, and I think they get a lot out of it in terms of professional development - we have a

> training and development budget for them, and they also take part in team training"
> Lynette

For Lynette, the 'great support for [her] organisation' offered by the interns during the course of their placements was cause enough for her to channel significant financial and temporal resources towards ensuring that the outcome of the placement for interns was not simply the development of skills, but also the development of professional capacity through individual and team-based training provision.

Although Audrey's SE was not sufficiently established to offer her interns even a minimum wage, she nevertheless did her utmost to ensure a non-exploitative relationship, and to create transferable experiential value for interns by ensuring that the work that they undertook was both challenging and stimulating, and also clearly time-limited:

> "We usually have three or four interns, but because we cannot pay our interns, we are very, very concerned that we give them a good experience when they're here. We only ask for fifteen days [commitment] because we think more than that is not fair – up to fifteen days is ok, more than fifteen days and I start to worry, because we should be paying them. We need all these talented people to help us grow, so we are always trying to balance out their contribution to us, with our contribution to them, and ensure that they are not exploited" Audrey

The imposition of a time limit on the internship placement appeared to be common practice, and allowed the SE to plan specific work projects for interns, based on both organisational need and intern specialism, in such a way that both parties were able to extract maximum benefit, and achieve maximum value in a mutually beneficial, time-limited exchange.

Discussions of the treatment of permanent staff revealed an equally ethical and empowering approach. All the SEs that employed more than just the founder members as staff sought to provide money for staff development opportunities, and focussed attention on regular appraisal in order to quickly identify skills gaps/deficits, and to match training to both individual and organisational need:

> "we're big into developing the staff here: we do regular, yearly, appraisals in which their training needs are identified – what they think they need, or their line manager thinks they need – and we link that into personal development, so all of the staff

here have undergone some sort of training, and they'll let us know if there's a relevant courses coming up, and then we also do interim 'supervision' about every six weeks to two months" Rosemary

The approach to staff retention and development adopted within Rosemary's SE reflected the dual needs of both the organisation and the individual, by combining a traditional annual staff appraisal system, with individual, personal development training opportunities for staff, alongside regular managerial supervision sessions. By so doing, Rosemary had been able to achieve a level of staff loyalty that meant that she had "staff that have been with me quite a long time, up to ten years", and yet the ongoing expansion of her SE alongside the regular recruitment of new staff meant that her SE remained "quite vibrant…[and] a nice experience for younger volunteers and trainees".

The extensive provision of developmental and training opportunities for staff in Lynette's SE was also underpinned by regular managerial supervision in the form of six-monthly appraisals, and the significant financial associated costs were off-set by the creative use of networks to provide pro-bono training, underpinned by a way of viewing staff development as an organisationally value-creating exercise in itself, in the form of loyal, revitalised, motivated, enthusiastic, and innovative staff:

> "each person has a personal training budget, and we have team training budgets, and then we also have a lot of training opportunities that we don't pay for, so we tap into my network of pro bono support, and are able to train the teams in that way. And the way we do the training is very much based on our six monthly appraisals – we understand what people want in terms of their professional development, we also look at the overall organisational needs in terms of capacity-building and up-skilling, and we try and match the two. And we also invest in sending people off on innovation camps, on educational camps, so that they have some time away from the office, and come back with something new" Lynette.

7.2.2 Transparent, equitable remuneration of staff as enacted 'ethical profit maximisation'

In addition to the focus on ongoing staff development, many of the women described their commitment to, and concern for, staff wellbeing in terms of pay - prioritising of payment of staff in difficult situations, limiting the differential of

remuneration between workers and managers, and the use of freelance workers.

Thus, the first issue to emerge from the interview data relating to the ways in which the women SEurs claimed to enact values-driven ethical profit maximisation related to their attitudes to, and processes for, dealing with payment of staff.

Several of the women SEurs described how they made a point of always prioritising the payment of their staff before themselves. By so doing, they sought to demonstrate their commitment to their staff, as well as the seriousness with which they viewed their role as employers (and financial providers):

> "our staff member is paid partly by the [funder], and partly by the business, and if there is any money left then I get a wage, and if not, I'll just wait until the business is kind of more healthy" Lucille

Lucille described the way in which she creatively managed the availability of funding for her single paid member of staff, expressing fortitude at the (regular) prospect of not being able to draw a wage for herself. Claudette spoke of an equally creative method of ensuring that her staff got paid in the event of a contract-related cash-flow problem, which involved her SE taking on the cost of a 'working capital loan'.

> "for [one contract] we get paid every Friday, but if the last day of the month - when we normally pay our staff - is a Wednesday, then we would have to say 'Look I'm sorry, we're going to have to pay you 70% on Wednesday, and the other 30% when we actually get the money in on Friday'…so [to prevent that] we've gone to a social lender and taken out a £50K working capital loan" Claudette

The ability to be self-sacrificing (in various ways), and to seek-out workable, and creative solutions to the issue of staff wage payment was typical amongst those women SEurs who employed paid staff. The common thread that wove thoughout all of their narratives, was the direct sense of responsibility that they felt towards their staff, and by association to their families.

As employers, the moral responsibility and duty of care that the women felt towards their employees emerged very clearly and strongly, and was founded

upon an ethos of both honest and open communication with their staff, and an unwavering commitment to immediate and decisive action in case of problems, that served to minimise the negative impacts caused to staff members by organisational issues.

Demonstrating a similarly person-centred, and values-driven thought process, four of the women SEurs raised the issue of the unethical nature of huge wage differentials between different types of employees in mainstream businesses, choosing to apply a much more open, transparent, and fair model of pay in their own organisations:

> "I pay both of my Directors the same as I get. So that's what they earn and the differential between what I earn and our lowest paid member of staff is about £15k" Claudette

Claudette considered each member of her staff to fulfil a vital and integral role within her SE, and as such felt that they each, individually contributed to the ongoing success of her organisation. She thus sought to pay everyone fairly for the differing, but equally essential contribution that they made, and worked hard to create and maintain the motivation and engagement of her staff.

Her success in that area was born-out by the various local and national awards that her "brilliant team" had won for their work, which industry-based recognition had brought kudos to her SE, and helped to reinforce both the pride that her staff found in their work, and the sense of belonging (and attendant loyalty) that they experienced within the SE.

Anne, whose organisation was a LA spin-out, described the establishment of her SE in terms of an opportunity to create a flat, rather than hierarchical, organisation in which all staff members would be paid the same:

> "[w]e all agreed what we would pay each other, and we agreed that we would all draw the same salary because that seemed appropriate" Anne

In spite of the fact that she had managed the team of staff that formed the new spun-out SE for more than a decade, and continued to assume a similarly managerial role in the new organisation, she nevertheless felt that equal pay for all members of staff was the most fair and equitable way in which to lay the

foundations of the new SE. She justified her decision on the basis that each member of staff was working to their strengths, and deploying their skill-sets in the best way to ensure maximum benefit for both clients and the SE.

The last aspect of wage differentials raised, related to the personal experience of some of the women in their former employments. Alexandra spoke of her own experience of seeing her bosses (owner/managers) extracting disproportionate amounts of money from their company, whilst simultaneously underpaying (and thus devaluing) their staff:

> "I have had bosses who have taken £300,000 each out of the business and paying their more junior staff fourteen grand, and I think that's unethical - you know, to openly pay low and reward yourselves high - that's a 'no-no'. So we [Directors] have pegged our salary at industry average, not the lowest, not the highest, but we've done that because we're an experienced senior team, and we pay our sub-contractors a fair wage – we pay them 60% of cost, which is our same salary pay"
> Alexandra

By contrast, Jasmine's experience working for a co-operative on a work placement as part of her degree course, had provided her with the inspiration to emulate what she considered to be ethical behaviour and 'best practice' in staff pay in her own SE:

> "I did my placement in a co-operative and they had an ethical pay policy whereby I [as an unqualified staff member] only got paid two and a half times less than the Directors, so we've taken that ethical approach for our own social enterprise"
> Jasmine

Thus, for Alexandra, Claudette, and Jasmine there existed a direct connection between parity in staff pay, and the ethical management of a SE. The decision to pay staff fairly and transparently represented an integral part of what they deemed to be the ethical behaviour expected of SEs, and served as tangible proof of SE's rejection of the moral bankruptcy of profit maximisation at any cost, and the unbridled greed that led to huge wage differentials within organisations.

Interestingly, Alexandra went on to explain how finding a way, through her SE, to reject and redress the deeply unethical behaviours that she had routinely witnessed in her previous employment, had effectively saved her career:

> "I really was considering leaving the industry because it felt so wrong, whereas this appears to be a way of doing what I want to do without compromising on my own values" Alexandra

In this way, it became clear that the women SEurs' moral beliefs and that ways in which they were able to positively enact them through their SEs, provided them with the means by which to reclaim and reframe the injustices that they had witnessed in relation to their previous employments and experiences, and to demonstrate the practicality of a person-centred, values-driven approach to the nexus of the social and economic activities of business.

7.2.3 Fair pricing as enacted 'ethical profit maximisation'

The issue of fair, yet competitive, pricing emerged as the second aspect of the non-exploitative, ethical profit maximisation efforts of the women SEurs. For Margot, whose SE manufactured high-end goods from reclaimed and upcycled waste products, the balance to be struck was in finding a price that demonstrated the added value that her SE brought to waste materials by re-processing them, which simultaneously made her products aspirational yet reasonably affordable. By so doing, she was enabled to position her SE within a highly competitive market that could provide the growth potential that she desired in order to effect the reduction of the specific waste problems that she had identified:

> "we didn't want to sell £3000 [goods] - it didn't sit comfortably with us, and also selling really expensive [goods] means you are probably looking at selling a few thousand units per year, and then that doesn't solve the waste problem either, so we have to kind of be at a price point that is aspirational but affordable" Margot

A similar theme was reported by Alexandra, whose approach to pricing was based on achieving a fair price for both her clients and her SE. By so doing, she additionally sought to provide evidence to her clients of ethical business practices in action:

> "we've taken a view as part of our ethos of the business on charging a fair price, so we're not the cheapest - we don't believe in the bargain bucket thing - but nor are we anywhere near close to the kind of fees that the big operations charge. But actually our pricing is driven more by our ethics, we believe in a fair price and we

think that the pricing that we put is fair, and again, we're very transparent"
Alexandra

Likewise Jasmine, who had spoken previously of being accused of being 'anti-capitalist', explained her pricing policy in terms of fairness to both client and staff, highlighting the fact that the price charged would be competitive, not exploitative, that the work would be undertaken to the highest standards of which they, as an organisation, were capable, and that all staff working on the project would be appropriately remunerated, and not exploited:

> "It's not about saying "oh no, definitely don't pay us for this because we'll just do this from the love of our hearts" - that's not an appropriate way to run a business. But it is about going "ok, pay us fairly for what we're doing and we will do the best job that we can, and we will be ethical – if we have to get other people in, it will be on a fair basis"" Jasmine

The women SEurs' ethical profit maximisation, as evidenced by the organisational behaviours and ethos of their SEs that they described, demonstrated their desire to provide 'living proof' of the ways in which profit-making could be pursued without the exploitation of people or planet. As such, it could be understood as representing an active and enacted rejection of the negative and destructive elements of mainstream (big) business discourses and attendant stereotypes alongside those previously discussed. Figure 7.2 on the following page provides a pictorial representation of the legitimacy threats experienced by the women:
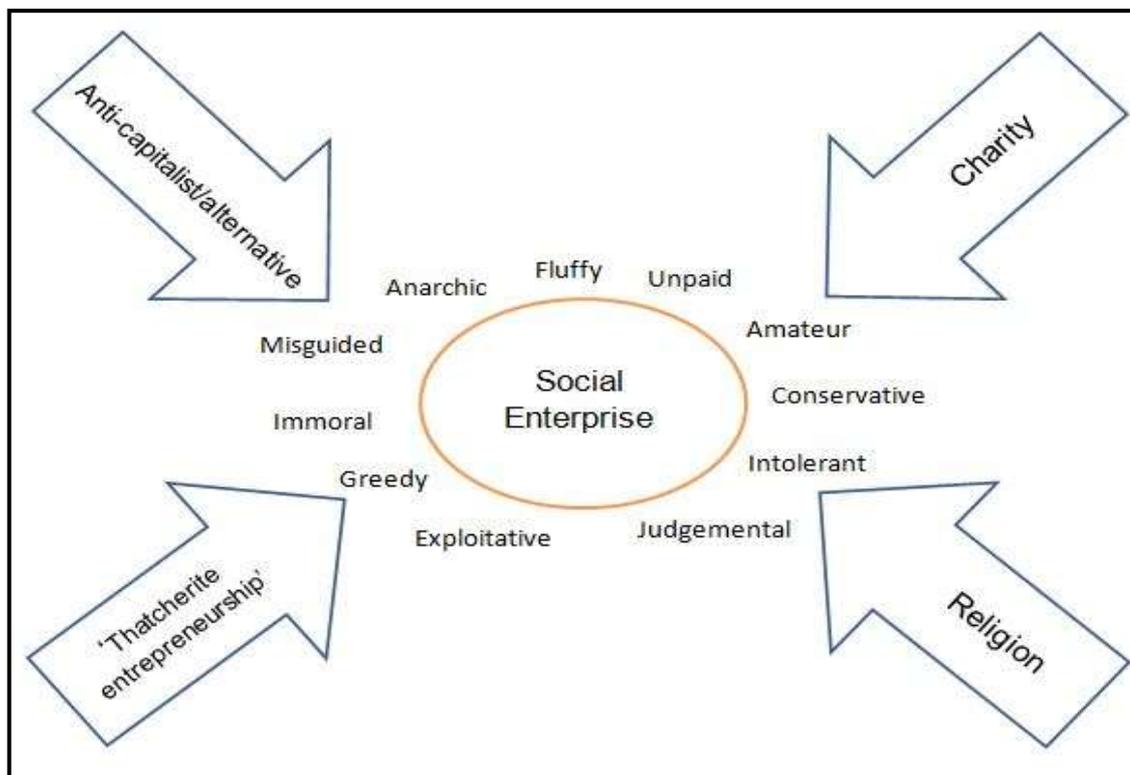
Figure 7.2: The legitimacy threats associated with discourses and attendant stereotypes of radical politics, charity, religion, and 'Thatcherite entrepreneurship'

A second theme emerged alongside the issue of fair, non-exploitative pricing, which coalesced around the widely-felt sense that outsiders to the SE sector believed SE to be 'cheap':

> "the Government's outsourcing [of public services] agenda is underpinned by the belief that social enterprise can deliver the same work, on the cheap" Caroline

The sense of helpless frustration and resignation to the government/politicians' view of SE as being the 'cheap' version of mainstream enterprise (with the added benefit of a double/triple bottom line) was a palpable and regular theme:

> "Simply put, I think that politicians see social enterprise as cheap" Audrey

A side-effect described by several of the women SEurs of SE being maligned as the 'poor relation' to mainstream business, were the problems created for organisational legitimacy by the attendant associations that such a conceptualisation inevitably invoked e.g. SE being of lesser quality than 'real' enterprise:

> "we do have a challenge and a stigma about people not believing that we are real businesses or real business people" Holly

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Lucille echoed a similar concern about the perceived legitimacy of SE, and made the connection between the dominant discourses of mainstream enterprise – profit maximisation, high turnover, high levels of profit etc. – and the conceptual mismatch of SE:

> "I don't think [SE] is valued at all, we're not seen as proper people because we don't make big money, because we don't talk big money, so we're not as important [as mainstream SMEs]" Lucille

Thus, not only did the women feel that SE was being undermined by its conceptualisation as 'cheap', there also emerged a distinct feeling that the increasingly negative way in which SE was being approached was a direct result of the policy decisions of the Coalition government around their so-called 'austerity measures', and the failure of the Big Society agenda:

> "with the change to the Coalition Government, not only have social enterprises been uttered in the same breath as, you know, philanthropy, which if you think about it conceptually doesn't fit, it's also been put together with the idea of volunteering - so things being provided on the cheap" Chrissie

The impact of the situation on day-to-day organisational operations within a competitive marketplace was summed up by Alexandra, who described the frustration of attempting to create credible and workable bids for publically-funded project work, whilst attempting to deal with the unrealistic expectations of Local Authorities (LAs) whose commissioners retained the same high expectations in terms of work quality, and hours of work undertaken, in spite of massive budget cuts:

> "we operate a very lean management and very lean costs, and we reflect that in our costs and the response to that is interesting - from the local government side we've frequently been too expensive, although to be honest we've looked at the costs of things when we've been told that, and thought "someone's either lying or they really are going to get an awful job!" I mean, projects that used to be worth forty-five thousand are now about ten" Alexandra.

What these themes and sub-themes appeared to indicate was that the various discourses with which SE was (usually wrongly) associated by SE sector outsiders, often provoked erroneous stereotypes, that the women SEurs sought

to deflect and/or manage in ways that reflected their own fundamentally ethical conceptions of SE.

However, as a result of the cognitive activation of these stereotypes, the women and their SEs were (pre)-judged, and sometimes found wanting, being judged according to the internal logic of the erroneous assumptions, rather than on the collective and cumulative basis of the observed quality of the goods/services produced and sold, the ethics and values displayed by and within the SEs, and the ways in which the women and their SEs created the social/environmental value associated with their double/triple bottom lines.

As such, the problems for the women SEurs occurred when the stereotypes imposed upon them and their SEs, clashed with the values-driven characteristics and behaviours of SE that the women sought to enact and highlight through their work. Examples of these included the 'amateur' and 'free' stereotypes associated with religiously motivated and charitable social interventions, which stood in contrast to both the women's portrayal of themselves as capable professionals worthy of the (fair) price that they attached to the sale of their SEs' goods/or services, and to the ruthless profit maximisation, and personal wealth generation stereotypes associated with mainstream (big) business discourses.

The organisational legitimacy and threats posed by such discourse-driven stereotypes, and the values-driven characteristics that the women SEurs sought to defend are outlined in Figure 7.3 on the following page:
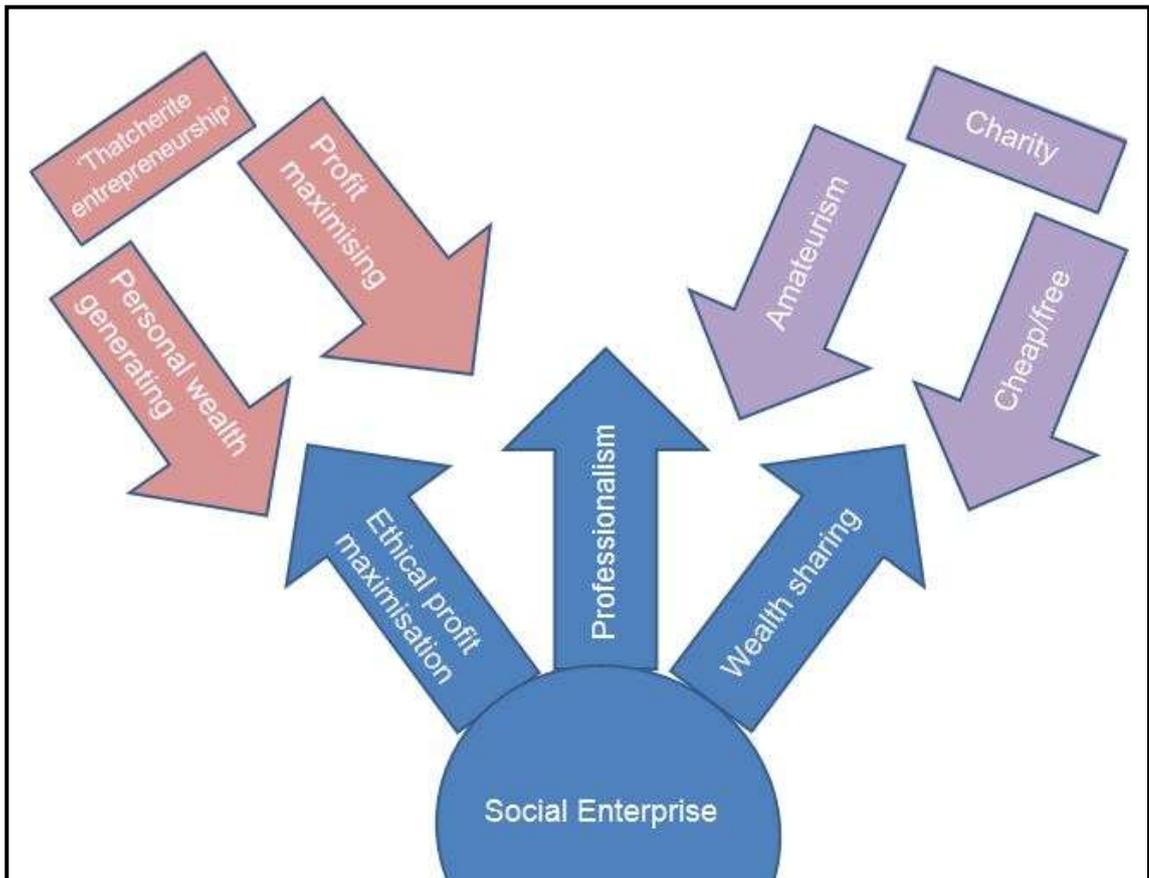
Figure 7.3: Organisational identity threats posed by stereotypes associated with charity and business discursive domains, and the values-driven characteristics of SE

In the face of erroneous assumptions about SE by the general public, the women SEurs felt obliged to spend time and effort defending and justifying their misunderstood, and maligned 'hybrid' working methods:

> "when I go into [prospective client meetings] now, I am ready to justify social enterprise as much as I am there to sell our services, especially if someone's perhaps put us in a box that might be a disadvantage" Alexandra

Alexandra was well aware of the potential damage that a misunderstanding of her SE business model could do to the process of securing new business, and having already experienced the misconceptions projected onto her SE by ill-informed potential clients, she had made the decision to include an explanation of her SE's working methods into her sales pitch as a means of pre-empting, and thereby managing, erroneous assumptions, and simultaneously educating her clients.

Jessica described similar incidents, which caused her to experience frustration at having to explain and justify what, to her, were logical and ethical business practices as if they represented something slightly untoward or suspicious:

> "because of politics, because of big business, because of people's selfishness, you actually end up going down routes that does not make it easy for you. You always have to justify why you're doing it for the right reasons, which is daft" Jessica

Lucille, however, described a much more troubling, confrontational, and aggressive reaction to the receipt by her SE of a small grant from her local council:

> "because we were getting money from [the local] council some people were really nasty about that, so we had to go to the on the radio to explain ourselves and to kind of defend ourselves a bit about what we were doing. We were blamed for wasting tax payer money and all sorts of things, yeah, it was nasty" Lucille.

For Lucille then, the local population's belief in the 'undeservingness' of her SE's cause combined with the increased social intolerance known to emerge in times of economic crisis, which reflected the "deeper social and economic anxieties caused by the withdrawal of state services and the logic of neo-liberal capitalism" (Dominelli, 2014: 1), and led to a back-lash effect when the local populace became aware that her SE had received a publically-funded grant in support of its work.

The aggressive and vocal nature of the criticisms levelled against her and her SE by opponents to the endowment of the grant, coupled with the fact that as a small, locally-based SE employing local people Lucille (and by association, her staff) were subjected to personally-directed public criticism, meant that she felt that she had no choice but to attempt to mollify the dissenters by engaging in a broadcast question and answer session. Nevertheless, whilst Lucille sought to reduce the threat both to herself, as the SE owner, and to the local legitimacy of her SE, she simultaneously felt "backed into a corner" (Lucille) and deeply upset at having had to engage in what she considered to be a needless defence of the activities that her SE had undertaken, with the support of the local community, for several years.

What the situation appeared to demonstrate was the fact that whilst public opinion had deemed her SE's work to be deserving of public financial support previously, the reduction in the availability of public funding, and the attendant re-evaluation of 'deserving' and 'un/less deserving' causes had created a situation within which the dissenters' voices were given a platform (and therefore a level of power and influence) that resulted in an, albeit temporary, shift in public perception of the worthiness of the work that her SE undertook.

7.3 Conclusion

The women SEurs' understandings of SE and SEship were unanimously underpinned by a view of SEship that had moral values at its core the presence of which, the women believed marked it out as being fundamentally different to mainstream entrepreneurship. This feature of SEship, enacted by the women through their SEs, and identified by them as being 'at the heart' of SE, and 'in its DNA' was notable for its absence from the dominant discourses of SE and SEship created by the 'key paradigm-building actors' associated with the sector.

Indeed, the apparent unproblematic ease with which the 'grand narrative' of SEship implied that SE could produce its combined financial and social/environmental outputs gave lie to the reality of the women SEurs' experiences, which provided multiple examples of economic hardship, time-poverty, and general misunderstanding, and in some cases mistrust, of SE by the general public.

The poor public understanding of SE was shown to lead to the erroneous application of stereotypes associated with a variety of discursive domains to the SEs organisations, and by association to women SEurs themselves, which served to undermine the outward-facing legitimacy of their SEs and themselves as professional women.

As a result of these (mis)understandings of SE and SEship by the general public, the women described experiencing an ongoing 'battle' to assert the legitimacy of their organisations as professional, ethical profit-maximising, and wealth-sharing businesses in the face of assumptions of the amateurism and free service delivery associated with charity/voluntary work, and the personal

wealth accumulation and ruthless profit maximisation associations of the 'Thatcherite' entrepreneurship of the 1980s.

In attempting to delineate and describe SE, the women drew on the legitimating discourses of business that encompassed the majority of the elements that they felt reflected the type and quality of work undertaken through their SEs as outlined above, whilst simultaneously strongly asserting the 'differences' between their SEs and mainstream businesses premised upon their values-driven mind-sets (and attendant behaviours), their lack of focus on personal wealth accumulation, and their view of themselves as social change agents.

The following chapter expands upon these themes by exploring the ways in which the women reported practicing SEship as a values-driven activity, through the creation of organisational cultures within their SEs that mirrored the women's personal values, and the ways in which they brought the concept of 'ethical profit maximisation' to play in their work.

Chapter Eight: Findings - SEurial identity, gender, and enacted SE (SEship)

8.0 Introduction

Building upon both the first and second results chapters, this chapter explores the links between the gendering and feminisation of SE (discussed in the chapter entitled 'Political construction of SE: discursive and rhetorical conceptualisations of the 'idea(l)' of SE'), the development of a SEurial identity, with specific reference to the values-driven 'core' of SE elucidated by the women SEurs (discussed in the chapter entitled 'SE in practice: articulations of SE and SEship amongst SEurs'), and the ways in which gender manifested within the women's SEurial activities.

As such the life experiences of the women SEurs, and the impact(s) that such experiences had on the development of their SEurial identity (as a necessary pre-condition to engagement with SE) were explored, and where the women disclosed gendered experiences as relevant to their SEurial activities, their influences – both negative and positive – were evaluated. Additionally, the women's discussions of their visions of SEurial success, and how these reflected gendered attitudes and norms were explored and compared to the emergent gender/feminisation data from the 'Political construction of SE: discursive and rhetorical conceptualisations of the 'idea(l)' of SE' chapter.

The interview process undertaken with the women SEur study participants provided insight into, and evidence of, some of the multiplicity of ways in which gender impacted upon their working lives both prior, and subsequent, to engaging with SEship. What also (unexpectedly) emerged were the ways in which gender-based abuse, experienced in the workplace, served to 'shape' some of the women's attitudes to the importance of the creation of safe workplace environments, which were reflected in the organisational cultures of the SEs that they subsequently founded.

Information relating to the experiences of gender and the gendering of SE/SEship was not sought directly, which allowed the women to identify and disclose those (gendered) aspects of their life story narratives that they deemed

important to the development of their SEurial identities, and to relate them in a natural, unprompted fashion.

Where such issues did emerge, follow-up questions were asked to provide both clarification of the women's interpretations of the personal effects of these gendered experiences, and to ensure both a proper understanding of the context in which such issues occurred, and the wider ramifications and implications for the women's practice of SE.

8.1 The narrative construction of SEurial identity: life experience as a motivator for SEship

The reported experiences of many of the interviewees revealed the huge importance of life experiences – particularly experiences in the formative years – on influencing women's sense of connection to others, and their subsequent decisions to pursue careers in SE:

> "the fact that my SE is all about sustainable development – that's totally related to my life experience. It's focussed on women, based on the fact that I realised that the people I was working with were predominantly women, so I closed the loop, because I feel very comfortable working with women. And I come from a background of people who have been active campaigners, and involved in politics or unions in one way or another, and earlier at school I was politicised very early, and I realised that everything was connected – nature, people, environment – so at a very early stage I was eager to know more about these things, and to do something about it" Caroline.

Whilst many of the women cited the direct influence of family members and the familial context on their eventual decision to establish SEs, others described forming working partnerships based on shared value-sets developed through observation of poor working practices:

> "setting up the social enterprise was 100% life experience I think. I mean, the partners in the business all have their individual motivations and reasons, but where we come together is that we all fundamentally believe that business should be more sharing, more ethical, and that being an employer is about wealth generation for everyone, not just a few individuals" Alexandra.

For Lucille, whose SE was established and run in conjunction with her with her husband, the same values that drew them together as a couple, and informed their marital life experiences – of travel, cross-cultural communication, living and working abroad – led them to establish their SE:

> "my SE is very much because of those life experiences really, it's everything actually, more or less. Yeah, it's our values and our experience in life that made us think it was important to set up our [SE]" Lucille,

whilst for Suzanne, a sensitive and empathetic nature - developed as a child - led her to identify and understand inequality in her own community context, and to feel a sense of personal responsibility to use her skills and abilities to try to provide opportunities to those whose lives had not been as privileged as her own:

> "it's completely [about my life experiences]! 100%! Yeah, it's everything! I think I've always felt other people's pain. Where I went to school was one of the toughest comprehensives in [the area] and we all started off the first year feeling equal really, and then very, very quickly it became apparent that some were more equal than others, and by the time we got to our third year, some of them had dropped out completely, and there was no wonder when you knew their backgrounds and stuff. You know, they didn't have a chance, and that was the thing that really stuck with me - how some people are just born without a chance and the injustice of it all" Suzanne.

The parallels between the women's descriptions of their experiential journeys to SE were startling, almost invariably describing early exposure to social injustice, alongside an ever-increasing sense of outrage at prevalent social inequalities, and a realisation that inaction was tantamount to collusion with the system that created and perpetuated such injustices.

The idea that similar experiences and values had led different women to make similar life decisions, and to seek to create similar organisations for similar underlying purposes, provided a plausible explanation for the sense that the women SEurs appeared to have of the SE sector as being populated by 'kindred spirits'. This in turn gave explanatory power to the notion that such 'kindred' spirits might well delineate SE (and 'faux' SE) in similarly coherent manners in spite of the lack of widely agreed-upon definitional criteria for SE.

The final issue to emerge as a coherent theme was the unanimous and rigorously upheld belief that SE could not legitimately be undertaken for personal financial gain. Like most of the other themes, this revealed itself in discussions of both the types of behaviours engaged in by 'faux' SEs, and those enacted by 'genuine' SEs, as a direct result of values-driven behavioural foundations, and reflected the DTI (2002: 7) assertion that SEs' "surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners".

Alexandra described an experience that she had prior to establishing her own SE, in which she was approached by a former colleague who had set up a SE and who wanted her to work for him:

> "there was another social enterprise whose founder wanted me to come on board, but his ambition was to set up, run the business for five to seven years, make enough money to buy a yacht, then sell it. It just felt so wrong and to my mind it wasn't a social enterprise in its ethic" Alexandra

For her, the personal ambitions of the founder stood at odds to her own conception of what constituted a 'real' SE, and in spite of the fact that she considered it to be a "hugely inspirational model, [producing] great work", she declined to contribute her labour to an organisation whose ethics were not in line with her own.

SE then, could be seen to represent a means by which Alexandra was enabled to actively engage in resisting and rejecting those aspects of mainstream business behaviour that she found unpalatable, whilst simultaneously enacting what she considered to be morally robust organisational behaviour. This point appeared to be confirmed when she described the disgust that she experienced at being consistently exposed to reported news stories of people exploiting their positions of power and influence for their own, sometimes illegal, gain:

> "I know it sounds a bit of a cynical view, but we have seen so many instances of disproportionate wealth share, of disproportionate focus on making-money for a few at the expense of the employees, or their families, or the economy, and we're in a mess. I mean, you know what? You [Directors] really didn't need to all walk

home with £27million, and make twenty thousand people redundant. It just isn't necessary, and that huge wealth generation that is the driver for so many businesses and entrepreneurs, I just don't agree with" Alexandra

Margot brought a slightly different view to the issue of personal profit through SE, coloured by her passion for waste management which formed the core of her SE's activity. She had started by identifying an as-yet unresolved waste problem, and had then used her entrepreneurial skills to find a workable solution upon which to build a sustainable business model that reflected her personal ethics:

> "money was never the driver for me, and I actually think it is easier to be passionate in a social enterprise than it is in a traditional business. I want to keep waste out of the ground, I want people to value the resources we have, I want to change people's relationship with the environment, and my best way of doing that is through business" Margot.

For Margot then, SE represented a means by which to combine her primary passions of changing people's perception of 'waste', and society's management of it, with her entrepreneurial skills in order to achieve social change, and earn a living. The concept of using the identification of a problem as a starting point for the subsequent development of a business formulated around its solution, demonstrated the link between Margot's environmental ethics, and the application of her acquired business acumen in a seamless and symbiotic relationship:

> "that was the start of the business – this beautiful material that I fell in love with that first day was going to landfill and I was just kind of incensed by that, that within the system we have got, nothing had been discovered, and we knew we had to build a sustainable working model out of it, because it's not like I have a big warehouse in the sky that I can just put this stuff into and look at and dream about, you have to actually transform it into something else" Margot

In Margot's case, her environmental ethical convictions allowed her to identify an opportunity to create a SE whose purpose was to upcycle former waste products into saleable goods, and like Alexandra, the purpose of her business was to facilitate social/environmental change rather than to become personally wealthy.

Claudette described similar values-driven opinions underpinning her position on personal wealth accumulation through SE. For her, the lack of desire to become rich was informed by her religious beliefs, and motivated her to engage with SE was the means it provided by which to creatively explore sustainable solutions to social problems:

> "I suppose my own personal values have brought me to SE – I am a Christian, I have my own value set, I'm not driven by money anyway, and the excitement of finding a new way to address a social issue just absolutely floats my boat! It's so exciting!" Claudette

Anne, whose SE was spun-out from a public sector organisation, described the freedom that SE offered her and her colleagues to intuitively, and rapidly respond to client need, which flexibility reflected her sense of social justice:

> "What does motivate me is the ability to make my own decisions and not be the result of someone else's decisions - the nature of the hierarchy means that you don't always get to do what you would like to do, or what you feel intuitively is the best thing to do, and I think we can use our intuition - you know, our sense of fairness and all of those things, here. It's really nice to have the confidence and experience and to put it to good use" Anne

Like the other women, Anne too felt that SE should not represent a means by which to gain financially, but rather as a way in which to achieve the 'gain' of combining 'decency' and 'goodness' to the delivery of a much-needed service, whilst simultaneously earning a liveable wage:

> "Social enterprise is a good middle ground for people to earn a decent salary, earn a decent living, provide a good service, but for those who aren't wanting to drive Rolls Royce, and have ten houses around the world" Anne

Using SE as a means by which to align personal ethics and politics with meaningful employment, was also echoed by Rosemary who provided a (gendered) interpretation of the connections between the presence of large numbers of women in the SE sector, the social focus of SE, and the lack of a personal profit motivation:

> "I think that [SE] is an industry that women tend to gravitate to because quite a lot of us are not motivated by money - it's that idea that what you do actually matters,

and is making a difference to people's lives in a meaningful way that draws us in"
Rosemary

Rosemary's explanation provided insight into her understandings of the motivations of the women SEurs for their involvement in SE, based upon her personal relationship with SE, and (presumably) her experiences with other women in the sector. In fact, she was one of two women who articulated a perceived connection between profit maximisation and masculinity in specifically gendered terms, the other being Nisha who explained her relationship with SE as a business model, in the following way:

"I'm not interested in making loads of money, so for me, my comfort at being in business is because it's about nurturing others – it's still very female, it's very much a social venture, it's not about becoming rich" Nisha

The other women who discussed their apparent indifference to personal wealth creation alongside their commitment to the human involvement inherent in much of their SEs' work, tended to focus on the human interaction and empowerment process involved:

"I suppose I never wanted to make lots of money. The social passion side of it is what motivates me" Rebecca

Fiona described her pleasure at discovering a way of conducting business that was not simply focussed on creating wealth for owners and shareholders, but which made the connection between people and profit:

"I think social enterprise is so attractive to me it's because it brings such a human dimension to it - to enterprise, and to business - and that's what I like about it"
Fiona,

and Lucille described a relationship with SE that construed it as providing a vehicle through which to enact her personal politics:

"I want to be in touch with people, I want to be real, I want to be doing things that matter to me, I suppose. With social enterprise I can fulfil my ideals" Lucille.

Using SE to undertake business (trading) activities in a morally sound manner (ethical profit maximisation), that kept them and their SEs 'in touch with people', provided evidence of some of the aspects of the mainstream (big) business

discourses from which the women SEurs wished to distance themselves e.g. lack of human connection (to staff, customers, and communities), and single-minded profit maximisation at any cost to people and planet. Furthermore, it demonstrated the centrality of personal politics and life experience to the development of a SEurial identity as a precursor to the establishment of an SE organisation.

8.2 Dedication to SE ('real' SEurial identity), personal privations, and the enacted commitment to 'ethical profit maximisation'

The associations between a lack of monetary focus, and the presence of ethical behaviours emerged strongly in other stories that the women SEurs told about their understandings and experiences of SEship, wherein they often described the financial (and associated lifestyle) privations that they had willingly endured in order to establish their SEs.

Ongoing remuneration issues (not being able to draw a living wage from their SEs) were treated lightly and with humour, with the women demonstrating resilience to their situations, and unswerving commitment to the establishment of their SEs:

> "[when we started up] we lived ridiculously cheaply - we rented a room in a friend's house and we were able to live - the two of us - on about £6,000 a year. We were on our own [we had no dependents], we ate very simply, we didn't go to the pub, we didn't go to movies, in terms of sport and fitness I went running all the time and [my partner] cycled everywhere so you know, once you own a bike or a pair of trainers, that sort of thing is free" Margot

For Margot, enacting 'real' SE values extended into her personal life, as she sought to minimise her outgoings in order to ensure the continued viability of her SE business idea. She and her business partner (also her life partner) were apparently willing to renegotiate their entire lives – where they lived, how they lived etc. – so that their savings could be channelled into researching and building a workable business model on which to base their SEurial ideals.

The willingness to moderate a former lifestyle in pursuit of a SEurial goal was a common theme amongst the women SEurs, who often expressed both pride and contentment in their newfound abilities to live well on slender means:

> "[a]s long as I'm earning enough money to eat, and I know that I need say, a grand a month, so if I can earn a grand a month, I'm happy, I've got more than enough money" Suzanne

For several of the women, particularly those at start-up stage, the establishment of a second, self-employed business alongside the SE provided additional income with which to supplement/support the nascent SE and the SEur herself. Specific examples of these situations, and the impacts that they had upon the women's lives were mentioned by both Nisha and Suzanne.

Nisha spoke of having to 'juggle' the demands made on her by undertaking paid work in addition to her SEurial work:

> "I set up on very little money – just five grand in grants – and juggled paid freelance work for the first year" Nisha,

and Suzanne similarly described her decision to work in the capacity of a self-employed consultant in order to fund her day-to-day living costs whilst she established her SE on a solid foundation in the hope of eventually being able to draw a wage from it:

> "I've got a consultancy as well where I am a sole trader that was just supposed to be a fall-back to support me while I was setting up, but that's kept a roof over my head. The plan is to eventually get a living wage out of the social enterprise" Suzanne

Very few of the women were able to rely on accumulated savings from previous employments to financially sustain them while they established their SEs, and all the women reported a fall in their level of income (actual and disposable) when embarking upon the path to SE establishment.

However, the move from (often) well remunerated mainstream employment to poorly paid (or unpaid) work in their own SE did not emerge as a source of regret for the women, who remained stoical about their ongoing, relative poverty. Chrissie, for example, described her inability to draw a wage during the first year of trading, but spoke with pride of her SE's ability to provide a (minimal) wage during the second:

> "in the first year we didn't make enough money to pay ourselves and in the second year we did make enough money to pay ourselves but I think we paid ourselves about £400 a month" Chrissie

Joanna also expressed (self-deprecating) pride at the ability of her SE to provide her with an income, in spite of the small amount per month that that represented:

> "I've just started paying myself [after 18 months trading] - £470 a month over the last 6 months! Yay!" Joanna.

Audrey, who had previously mentioned the fact that people tended to express shock and dismay when told that she sought to make a profit through her SE, had also been unable to draw a living wage but also chose to make light of her difficult situation:

> "We do pay ourselves, but it's a very small amount - a seasonally infrequent event!" Audrey

The feeling of pride expressed by the women in relation to their ability to resiliently adapt to, and creatively manage, their much-reduced income levels, was remarkable. Indeed there emerged a strong sense that the women believed their straightened circumstances to represent a 'badge of honour' and an authentication of their status as owner/managers of 'real' SEs, which theory was borne-out in the women's assertions of their belief that the 'doing good' aspect of their work was at least as much, if not more, of a reward as the financial aspect.

Fiona, for example, described the correlation in her mind between her pride in her work as an SEur, and the positive social impact achieved by her SE:

> "I want to earn a decent living by doing good really" Fiona.

Alexandra spoke of the moral peace that the joint effects of working to a double bottom line through SE, and earning a good (morally sound) wage brought her:

> "my motto is 'earn well, sleep well', and I do" Alexandra,

and Emma expressed her deep satisfaction at having a positive impact on people's lives through her work, which appeared to off-set the fact of her relatively poor level of income:

> "knowing that you're making a difference to real people's lives [is what matters]; I don't know how you capture that, bottle it, because that is the main motivator. It's not the money, god it's not the money!" Emma.

Indeed, the ways in which the values-driven SEurial way of thinking and behaving had widely infiltrated, and been embraced within, many of the women SEurs' lives was perfectly captured by Sue, who described the morality attendant upon SE as a 'way of life':

> "social enterprise is a good way for people to live their lives" Sue.

8.2.1 SEurial identity 1: education of 'outsiders' as enacted SE practice

On the back of the discussions relating to the various misconceptions around SE, many of the women SEurs described their active involvement in activities focussed upon the education of people outside the SE sector on the merits of SE. For these women, there appeared to be a consideration that such activities represented a 'moral duty' to be undertaken by 'real' SEurs in support of the cause of SE, the typical 'pay-off' for which was the provision of a free platform from which to raise awareness/market of their own SEs.

Rosemary eloquently described the dual function of this type of voluntary work:

> "I was speaking at an event this week about what we've done at this community centre, you know, raising the profile of social enterprise, and also raising the profile about our social enterprise too" Rosemary,

while Margot spoke of the high demand for public speaking engagements that she experienced as a SEur:

> "I get asked to do a lot of public speaking on doing what you love and doing good, and doing well, doing saving the planet and turning a profit. All these kinds of these events and these kinds of things" Margot.

For Emma, the desire to promote a better public understanding of SE meant that she was willing to attend public speaking engagements around the country:

> "I try to raise awareness of social enterprise, so whenever I can I speak at events - nationally, regionally, or whatever" Emma,

and Alexandra expressed her belief that being a SEur came with a moral obligation to raise awareness and understanding of the sector, as a matter of course:

> "I think in order to run a social enterprise you have to be prepared and accept that you are championing the sector, and that you have to commit both time and energy to building, supporting, and championing the sector" Alexandra.

The women engaged in these public speaking activities expressed a sense that the SE sector needed to take control of the situation regarding the lack of understanding of SE amongst the general public, and to take responsibility for 'marketing' SE effectively. Whilst there existed an acknowledgement that the diversity of the SE sector represented a significant hurdle to be overcome in terms of communicating the nature and benefits of SE to an external audience, it was nevertheless agreed that such difficulties should not represent a barrier to the promotion of the SE message:

> "it's up to us to actually promote the message that there's lots of different ways of doing [SE], so we need good advocates in the social enterprise field" Holly.

In a similar vein, Sínead described her belief that the diversity of the SE sector was an 'internal' issue i.e. one that should be resolved within the SE community, and that the value-adding defining features of SE were what should be communicated to external audiences:

> "we always try to promote more understanding about social enterprise and the varieties within the sector - we don't really want [people outside the sector] to know all the fragmentation [around definitions] - but at least to understand what the difference is, that there's a social aspect, to hear it from the horse's mouth" Sínead.

The large number of women who spoke of undertaking unpaid speaking engagements relating to the promotion of SE as a business model, demonstrated the (informal) solidarity within the SE community experienced by the women. However, the emergent collective sense of commitment to the SE 'cause' through the enactment and promotion of SE to external audiences, appeared to be largely unrelated to individual connections and relationships

between the women SEurs, a point borne-out by the fact that the majority of the women reported not belonging to any formal SE networks, or membership organisations.

8.2.2 SEurial identity 2: SEurs as political activists/boundary-breakers

The sense of a loose-knit community of people, individually enacting 'political' behaviours through values-driven trading in order to effect social change, was perfectly captured by Margot who, in her discussion about the coalition government's Big Society policy agenda, declared that:

> "[the Big Society] is being driven by the social entrepreneurs that are out there on the ground - it's the ground swell, it's not a top down thing" Margot.

Suzanne described her vision of the cumulative effects of the efforts of individual SEs to create social change from the bottom up, which implied the presence of an unofficial 'movement' for social change being enacted through SE:

> "people will see that actually we've got something to offer and that whatever they [individuals SEs] are doing, however small it is, action has a huge impact nationally, because together it's important" Suzanne.

Sue appeared to similarly believe in the collective power of the SE sector to effect social change, but bemoaned its inability to speak the 'language' of power i.e. business management and economics:

> "it's part of the kind of revolution that's going on, that actually things are coming up from grass roots - we've got to present facts and figures in business-speak which is hard, but we have to prove our credibility" Sue.

The sense of SEurs as individual ground-breakers, revolutionaries, and activists, forming part of a larger social 'presence' was also echoed in other of the women's interviews. For women like Rosemary, the issue revolved around the frustration that she felt at the stifling of SE impact resulting from poorly directed and used public funding:

> "[I just think that they could cut out a layer if they understood social enterprise better; there are activists on the ground doing stuff that would, with a bit more

money, do even more, and they [the government] are giving the money to Local Authorities who are spending it on consultations!" Rosemary.

For others, the issue of being an activist manifested in a sense of freedom afforded to the SEur by acting on her own instincts, outside of the 'establishment':

"I was much more motivated when I was doing something totally gorilla, that didn't have funding, that hadn't been approved by anyone" Nisha,

and for others still, the act of creating a cycle of sustainable social change through SE represented a highly political act, and provided an unsurpassable opportunity to challenge the status quo. Lucille, for example, described her belief that the social output of SE should take precedence over its money-making activities, due to its inherent ability to create the opportunity for fundamental social change:

"I've got a feeling that if the social aspect is more important than the business aspect, then you are more likely to make good things happen and yeah, to make history if you want" Lucille.

Claudette felt that the SE sector was at the forefront of 'massive cultural change' that was being hampered by a fundamental lack of public understanding of the value of SE and its double/triple bottom line:

"This is about massive cultural change, so it's a whole shift of the system. And I think it's absolutely fundamentally important because it's what will set us out from the crowd. Why would you go to a social enterprise if it's not going to deliver you something that's different?" Claudette.

The belief in the 'rightness' of SE's double/triple bottom line as a socially and economically sustainable business model, appeared to underpin the women's entire attitude towards SEship and the ways in which it 'should' be enacted at the individual level. The apparently collective assertion of the responsibility of SEurs to be 'best practice' role models, to educate outsiders to the SE sector, and to willingly endure social and economic privations in pursuit of an SEurial career, reflected both their conceptualisations of SE (as similar to the component parts of the DTI (2002) definition), and the stereotype-based

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legitimacy threats discussed in the chapter 'SE in practice: articulations of SE and SEship amongst SEurs'.

The sense of pride with which many of the women spoke of the personal privations associated with the establishment of their SEs, the educative role that they felt was necessary to take on, and the sense that the women felt of being 'ground-level' activists and change-agents for the greater good who could 'lead by example', appeared to almost suggest the fervour of religious converts.

Thus, the concept of personal privations as a means of outwardly demonstrating commitment to a (pseudo-religious) cause, alongside the active and willing engagement in 'evangelising' activities in order to 'convert' the general public to SEship, and the women's belief in their ability to achieve change from the bottom-up by 'living' SE (as reflected in Sue's previously mentioned comment "social enterprise is a good way for people to live their lives"), mirrored the types of behaviours often associated with deep religious conviction, and perhaps offered an alternative explanation for the stereotype threat explicated by the women in relation to their SEurial activities in the previous chapter.

The following section elucidates the experiences of two of the women SEur participants, who disclosed details of extreme instances of gender-based sexual abuse and harassment that they had been subjected to during their careers prior to engaging with SE, and the effects that these experiences had on their subsequent SEurial activities.

For ethical reasons, information of this nature was not deliberately sought, and in order to fully protect the women respondent's anonymity new pseudonyms have been allocated to them for use in this specific section of the study. This decision was made in order to ensure that these very personal disclosures could not be 'matched up' to the more general data presented in the previous chapters in relation to the women's SEs, and their experiences of SEship.

8.3 Visions of success: a reflection of the women SEurs' personal values

For the women whose SEs engaged with socially and economically disadvantaged clients, there emerged a very strong link between their personal values and morals, the interventions that they sought to offer through their SEs, and the ways in which they envisioned success (both for their clients, and personally). Four of the women participants elucidated these connections very clearly, and their experiences and comments are provided as examples of the connections that the women made between their life experiences, their values, and their SEs.

The first part of the theme centred on the women's descriptions of the development of their own values systems, within the context of their families, often being inspired by the positive role modelling provided by parents (specifically mothers), or other family members. Jennifer, whose SE worked with adults with learning disabilities, described growing up in a family in which dignity, self- and other respect, and positive action were all highly valued:

> "respect, mucking in, and watching out for people – people are people, so being un-judgemental, those kinds of values. My memories of school holidays are of going into school with my [teacher] Mum and watering the plants with loads of adults with learning disabilities, and they were looking after us, and so I think that kind of underpinned what I did [in my SE]" Jennifer.

As a result of being positively exposed to adults with learning disabilities as a child, Jennifer was drawn to the disabilities sector to found her career, and subsequently her SE, seeing positive value in the lives of some of the most marginalised members of society. The application of the values and principles learned within the context of her family to her work facilitated the development and provision of life-enhancing activities and opportunities for her SE's community of interest, and whilst Jennifer expressed pride in her SE's recent development of 'social accounts', she nevertheless constructed her vision of SEurial success as premised upon the commitment to being an organisation known locally for:

> "sticking to our values and practicing what we preach" Jennifer.

Such a positive commitment can be seen to extend Jennifer's own personal and SEurial identity into that of her SE, whereby the values associated with her own morality and moral integrity became the organising values of the SE, and from there a vision of success for her personally, and for her SE.

Nisha, who grew up as a child of an immigrant mother in an impoverished metropolitan area, also held her mother up as an example of inspiration. From her mother's indomitable spirit in the face of great adversity, she learned that women can succeed against the odds that aspirations and hard work are key requirements for success, and that growing up in economically and socially disadvantaged situation need not prevent achievement and success:

> "my Mum was very inspirational and very hard-working and carved a career out for herself in education, and definitely didn't give us the sense that, you know, if you're from a different socio-economic background then you must be stopped in any way" Nisha.

After having worked in the arts and media industry for several years, her experiences and values led her to establish an SE that works with other young, Asian women, located in the same economically and socially deprived area that she too grew up in. For Nisha, the success of her SE was largely premised upon the successful development of self-esteem and self-confidence amongst her clients, such that 'agency' and 'ability to help themselves' (Walker *et al*, 2012: 144) – the very skills and competencies that her mother was able to instil in her - were released:

> "[w]hat I absolutely value is a lot of the stuff that is often described as 'soft' outcomes. Is confidence a soft outcome? That's not soft, that's so hard! That's brilliant! That's what you basically need to succeed in life. That's like one of the critical things you can have. So I think that there are quite narrow measures of success when it comes to social enterprise" Nisha.

Jessica described her childhood experiences growing up within a tight-knit, loving family, in a situation of rural poverty:

> "I was brought up on a farm, and we lived in poverty - not nasty poverty, but poverty where Mum and Dad grew our food, and made out clothes. We lived sustainability, without me realising what it was and Mum and Dad never, ever

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made me feel as though I couldn't do stuff. And I left school at fifteen with no qualifications whatsoever, but never felt as though that was disabling - I had competence, and self-esteem, and a family that brought me up with values of respecting people, and not just taking" Jessica.

Like Nisha, Jessica was inspired by her parents' positive attitudes in the face of adversity, and their unquestioning support of, and belief in her, and like Jennifer, she grew up in an environment that encouraged self- and other respect. Having forged two highly successful careers in heavily male-dominated sectors, Jessica established her own SE providing mentoring and networking services, a waste reuse facility, community activities, and business development and support, which seemed to echo the very best features of her own family upbringing:

> "people [here] gain self-respect, I mean forget bloody jobs, people have self-respect, right? So around me is a culture of self-respect, empowerment, creativity, fun, happiness, friendship, and also resilience in dealing with things that aren't fluffy and happy and lovely. You know - strength of collaborative support for each other" Jessica.

For Jessica then, the creation of a nurturing, supportive environment was directly correlated to the emergence of attributes such as 'empowerment, creativity, fun, happiness [and] friendship' as well as 'self-respect' and 'resilience', and the sense that with support and encouragement people could achieve great (by their own standards) things was reflected in the example that she gave of the type of success story that she felt had value:

> "what matters isn't how many thousands of pounds I've helped people with or how many events I have run, or how many people I've mentored, it's the blog post from the girl, who a week ago told me that she couldn't do anything worthwhile, and who is now telling the world that she's really proud of herself because she came to me and got kicked up the arse!" Jessica.

Claudette's description of her upbringing was not as detailed as some of the younger Seurs, who did not have families of their own, but she nevertheless highlighted the creativity evident in her family, the positive effect that a 'stable' family had on her, and the sense of empathy that she developed in spite of her middle class upbringing:

"I had a stable family background - my father was a research and development director in electronics, so he was basically creative about designing new electronic products, [and] we were a blue-sky thinking family, I think – I went to University, I've always done fine out of everything, so I suppose I never had to experience what life's like if you don't have that" Claudette.

The empathy that Claudette developed within her family environment, coupled with self-professed, firm Christian beliefs, led her to establish a SE that sought to develop the social and economic capacity of deprived communities, as well as engaging prisoners and ex-offenders in volunteering and work initiatives. Claudette, like Jessica and Nisha, sought to drive forward an agenda within which clients were supported in the development of the basic psychological and emotional competencies that she felt were so vital to gradual accrual of identity capital:

"[w]e work very hard – the self-belief/emotional resilience stuff we've worked on over the years has been very much in me wanting to find ways to help people get their own tool kit if you like, in terms of starting to gain that self-belief and the ability to bounce back when things don't go as right as you'd like them to be" Claudette.

Based upon her desire to empower her clients by furnishing them with 'their own tool kit' of competencies and skills, Claudette's vision of success for her clients (and by association for her, and her SE) was premised upon:

"an underlying principle to help people gain control of their own lives as opposed to life being in control of them" Claudette.

8.4 SEurial identity 3: role modelling

As shown in the examples above, the interview data provided a clear picture of the women's association between their personal experiences of developing their own core competencies of self-esteem, self-belief, and resilience within their childhood family environments, the effects of the role modelling behaviours of parents and wider family members who demonstrated the successful application of those skills to life (career and family) settings, and their own desire to facilitate the development of the same competencies in their clients; a finding already noted in the SE literature:

> "many social entrepreneurs have indicated that their decisions to launch their social-mission ventures were influenced by past childhood experiences where they were positively influenced by the high ethical standards of important adults in their lives" (Swanson and Zhang, 2012: 175; Bornstein & Davis, 2010)

As a result, the women sought to create nurturing environments within their SEs that replicated the stable, positive familial environments in which their own core competencies were developed, and to replicate the positive role-modelling of those competencies enacted by their parents in the hope that their clients would similarly be enabled to acquire and apply those competencies (and attendant values) to positive effect in their lives.

The positive effects upon clients of creating the 'right' environment within an SE emerged from others of the SEurs also. For example, Suzanne explained her SEurial experiences in the following way: "if you create the right set of conditions, it just helps it multiply – like mushrooms", whilst Jennifer described the sense of community that had formed within her SE - amongst both staff and clients - in family terms:

> "we're all part of a community really, I think we're like a little family" Jennifer,

and Emma highlighted the mothering skills that she had developed through having both children and step-children as providing the necessary resources to build trusting relationships with her staff and clients:

> "I am a Mum, and I have two daughters and a step-daughter. So I'm good with young people, and there's an element of that in there – you know, parenting and being a mate - and there's a lot of affection between us" Emma.

The women SEurs then, appeared to conceive of a strong connection between their own developmental experiences (of competencies, skills, and attendant values) within their families, the successes that they perceived within their own lives as a result of enacting, and building upon, those competencies and values, and their personal desire and ability to successfully nurture the same in their clients. These connections are pictorially shown in Figure 8.1 on the following page:

Success — Development by clients of core competencies and skills, alongside self-directed, self-defined positive actions

Replication — Recreation of nurturing 'family-type' environments within SEs, and positive role-modelling for clients

Action — Establishment of values-driven SEs to address social/environmental problems

Enactment — Further development and enactment of competencies in work/personal lives 'proves' necessity and value of competencies

Experience — Personal competencies developed in the home/family and role-modelled by parents/wider family

Figure 8.1: Women SEurs' conceptual links between family-based experiences, the development of core competencies and values, and visions of SEurial success

For those women whose SEs had effectively been established as 'mainstream' businesses, whose social output was founded upon an enshrined commitment to the divestment of 50% of their profits to charitable causes, and/or campaigning for systemic (rather than individualised/localised) social/environmental change, the vision of success was much more objective and therefore more easily quantifiable.

Examples of the types of 'measures of success' mentioned by these women SEurs included the value of donations to charitable causes in a given time period, the amount of waste products saved from landfill, and the level of turnover versus profit created by the companies.

These SEs could therefore be seen to be far more similar to mainstream businesses in terms of their visions of success (and attendant measureable

outcomes), and yet in deciding to establish SEs rather than mainstream businesses, these women SEurs, like those involved with social and economic inclusion work, stressed the importance both of their personal experiences, their values, and their working environment.

All of these types of women SEurs had come from industry, rather than from third sector/public sector organisations, and had attained business management skills through managerial roles within their prior careers. As such, the women appeared to be inclined towards those discourses of SE favoured by successive governments which, as discussed in the literature review, forefront the business nature of SE. Margot and Alexandra both elucidated these connections clearly, and their comments are provided below as examples of the issues that typically emerged from within this group of women SEurs.

Margot, who had enjoyed an international career in business, and whose SE saved waste products from landfill and 'up-cycled' them into high-end goods for the luxury retail market, discussed her experiential journey to SE in the following way:

> "it's more that I developed an ideology over that time - I developed a way of thinking that business is very powerful, it's very quick-moving, it's very permissive in the sense that if you make any money whatsoever, you can do whatever you want. You don't have to apply for grants, you don't have to get anyone's approval, you just go for it, and I loved that. I felt that what do I really want to do is to keep waste out of the ground, I want people to value the resources that we have, I want to change people's relationship with the environment and my best way of doing that is through business" Margot.

For her, business (and the profit derived from it) represented a more immediate and 'powerful' way of enacting politicised behaviours and thereby achieving behavioural change. Whilst she acknowledged the very business-like nature of the SE that she had developed, she nevertheless also felt that it embodied a fundamentally different ethos to mainstream businesses, as evidenced in her triple bottom line:

> "the difference between us and a mainstream business is that we have three measures of success - turnover and profitability, the kilograms of waste saved from landfill and the amount of donations [to charity] that we make" Margot.

Margot's aim then, was to bring the processes, the mindset, and the entrepreneurial vision that she had developed in her former career to bear on a (SE) business that had environmental change at its heart. In pursuing that aim, she described the necessity of creating a team environment, populated by people with similar values and aspirations, in pursuit of behavioural change:

> "if we can build the right team and get that done then people's perception of waste will change irrevocably because it will be aspirational to be involved with, and peoples vision of social enterprise will change irrevocably too" Margot.

In a very similar manner, Alexandra, who had transposed the creative industry-based work that she had undertaken in her former career into her SE, and combined it with a formalised commitment to divest 50% of her SE's profits to charitable work, described how she sought to change the 'face' of mainstream business by leading by example:

> "we are a business with a social conscience, so we weren't set up with a primarily social function like a number of social enterprises, we are a business but we have a very strong social ethic and our mission is that we aim to do high quality work, and combine that with a social return. So we really want to realign being a normal, good, solid business that also has a genuine return to society, which in our case, is that we share 50% of our profits with social causes" Alexandra.

Like Margot, Alexandra brought the managerial experience gained in her previous roles to the establishment of an SE as a means by which to renegotiate the negative aspects of her former career, and to demonstrate (and normalise) the power of business used for social good. In so doing, she expressed very similar sentiments to Margot in describing how her business-like SE differed from a mainstream SE undertaking the same sort of work:

> "so how do we differ to anyone starting and running a business? I would say it is the commitment to the social contribution or your social intent. You have to be utterly committed to it, you can't waver. That is the difference to any business versus social enterprise – you've got to be committed to the social element" Alexandra.

Again, in terms of success measurement, Alexandra and Margot were of a mind, both expressing the need to deliver a quality product to ensure reasonable levels of turnover versus profit, but also focussing strongly on the social aspect of their work:

> "I do feel personally rewarded by knowing we are financially supporting more than just ourselves. You know, we are wealth-spreading and it's exciting to think that this [first] year, we will give about £8,000-£9,000 [to charitable work]. Most individuals couldn't personally give that amount of money from their salary or household income, so to be able to do that, with all the other benefits is mindboggling. And yet I personally don't get why more people don't do it - it's just like you can earn and give, and provide employment, why not do it that way?" Alexandra.

Alexandra clearly derived great pride in being able to manage a small, start-up business in such a way that it was able, in its first year of trading, to divest over £8,000 to charitable causes as well as paying its staff a competitive wage. Like Margot, Alexandra felt that her SE represented 'best practice' in business, providing a quality product, decent wages and conditions for staff, as well a social benefit to her SE's community of choice.

In terms of the development of an environment conducive to SE, and year-on-year increases to the level of profit share, Alexandra told the story of how she and her business partner had come to establish their firm:

> "my business partner - she's a woman in her fifties - we approached each other to say would we like to work together, and coincidently, both of us said "it has to be a social enterprise because we don't believe in how the industry is at the moment". So that was a real coming together" Alexandra.

Unlike the women whose SEs were focussed on human development interventions, the more mainstream-type SEs described the development of a positive environment for the enactment of SE in terms of attracting like-minded people to the organisational team, rather than as creating a 'family-like' environment. Because the social outputs were (mostly) financial and therefore quantifiable, the 'environmental' focus lay more heavily on attracting people with similar values (and business skills) in order to develop and expand the business operation, and thereby achieve the financially-based social outputs, rather than

on creating an environment within which the human element could blossom and thrive.

8.5 Gender-based sexual harassment: reclaiming power and reframing workplace abuse

Rebecca, who had pursued two separate, and very financially lucrative careers in extremely male-dominated sectors (competitive motor racing, and building) prior to establishing her SE, related stories of the types of overt sexism that she had experienced in both the motor racing world, and the construction sector.

At the time of her first career – motor racing – Rebecca was one of only a handful of women competitive drivers in the world, and whilst acknowledged to be extremely talented in her field of work, was nevertheless subject to many incidences of sexist behaviour. Such experiences came in various forms including incidences of sexual harassment, physical intimidation, and the deliberately undermining behaviours outlined below.

The first incident that Rebecca spoke about, involved having her sexuality publically called into question, as a result of the masculinised work that she undertook, and the success that she achieved:

> "I had all these other problems, you know, they called me a lesbian…"

The issue of gender in the workplace, and particularly of the imposition of prescriptive gender norms onto women has been well documented, with women being viewed as the problematic, actively gendered 'other' to the unacknowledged male norm (Lewis, 2006). This issue is particularly pernicious within male-dominated industries, where women are often subject to extreme versions of the types of 'everyday' sexism that they routinely face (Fielden *et al*, 2000).

Research into heavily male-dominated industries has shown that such environments to regularly exhibit sexist (to women) features which manifest in behaviours such as prejudice, hostility, and prescriptive and negative gender stereotyping (Powell *et al*, 2009). These sorts of behaviours have been theorised as being manifestations of so-called 'sex-role spill-over' which term

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describes "the carryover into the workplace of gender-based expectations for behaviour that are irrelevant or inappropriate to work" (Gutek and Morasch, 1982: 55).

Underpinning such conceptualisations of the 'gender-appropriateness' of certain work roles are biologically essentialist understandings of women and men, supported by implicit gender stereotypes, which provoke backlash behaviours against non-conforming individuals (usually women) (Rudman and Glick, 2001). Furthermore, the enactment of backlash behaviours has itself been found to be associated with increased self-esteem and psychological well-being for those 'policing' gender-appropriate behaviours (Rudman and Fairchild, 2004: 157).

Thus, Rebecca's subjection to such direct personal harassment – wherein her sexuality was called into question, and offered up for public comment – can be understood in terms of the threat to masculine power that she represented as a competent, talented driver in a male-controlled and male-dominated industry. As a result of perceiving her success in her work as both a personal and group threat – as *men*, and as *male* drivers – the harassing men around her sought undermine her legitimacy by associating her 'gender-deviant' behaviour with a culturally denigrated form of gender-deviant sexuality (lesbianism).

However, the threat that Rebecca posed was an enacted threat (represented by her actual skill at driving), which elicited a shocking and terrifying backlash effect:

> "I was really seriously injured because people didn't want me to be ahead of them;
> so they literally would rather have killed me on a race track than have me win"
> Rebecca.

This level of backlash against non gender-conforming women has been documented in the form of "behaviour of a much more serious nature involving threats, demands, or actual bodily contact" (Fielden *et al*, 2000: 118) which, in spite of its rarity does little to mitigate against the horror of such acts for individual women attempting to forge (non-traditional) careers for themselves.

Within the male-dominated world of motor sports (Pflugfelder, 2009), women's presence has largely been reduced to the sum of their (bikini-clad) sexual parts

through "the explicit chauvinism epitomised by the ever-present scantily clad and highly sexualised 'pit-girls'" (Parker, 2003: 3), whose bodies are "commodified and de-humanised as they perform circuits of the course posing for pictures while being ogled by fans in a frenzy of masculine fantasies" (*ibid*.: 5).

Where women drivers do exist (and succeed) within the industry, they have been shown to face routine gender-based discrimination based upon, amongst other things, the gendering of their bodies (Pflugfelder, 2009), and the enduring stereotype that not only are men 'better' drivers than women, but that women are actually *bad* drivers (Skinner *et al*, 2015). Indeed, Pflugfelder (2009: 414) described a situation in that occurred in 2008, in which an African-American female racing driver sued the national motorsports body NASCAR on the grounds of the gender-based and racial harassment that she had been subjected to, "[the female driver] alleged that her co-workers used racial slurs, referenced the Klu Klux Klan, exposed themselves, and questioned her sexuality, among other abuses".

Both the issue of the questioning of the a woman driver's sexuality, and the threat to masculinity experienced by male racing drivers in the presence of a successful female competitive driver were issues experienced, and highlighted by Rebecca. Likewise, the issues of the gendering of women's bodies within motor racing raised by Pflugfelder (2009), and the presentation of women's dehumanised bodies for male consumption (Parker, 2003), also comprised part of Rebecca's experiences of sexism, sexual harassment, and gender-based discrimination, who expressed her disgust at the way in which women's sexuality was co-opted and made available for male consumption within the industry, when she spoke about her decision to leave:

> "if I could have stuck a helmet on, and gone and done it [race driving], and no-one would have cared if I had boobs or not, then I would have loved it. But they did, and I didn't want to lay across a bonnet with a g-string on" Rebecca.

As an isolated woman racing driver, Rebecca not only had to deal with the sexual harassment and intimidation meted out to her by male colleagues who felt threatened by her presence (and success), but she also had to negotiate

ways in which to be a (women) racing driver in an institutional space wherein the only other visible women were routinely presented as sex-objects (Parker, 2003).

As noted by Dunn (2007: 474) in his study of women army officers "in situations that lack congeniality, women feel obliged to adopt the embedded masculine approach", in other words the adoption of a 'one of the lads' approach within which a "biological female […] acts as a social man" (Acker, 1990: 139).

However, such a path is not an easy one for a woman to tread, particularly in contexts wherein associations with "'femininity' typically evoke negative reactions" (Holmes and Schnurr, 2006: 32). As such, being a 'biological female' (woman) and enacting the 'social man' requires women to "comport their bodies in a manner that minimizes their sexuality while, simultaneously, avoid[ing] the dangers of hyper-masculinisation" (Nadesan and Tretheway, 2000: 228).

However, this must be achieved alongside a simultaneous negotiation of the threat posed to both hegemonic masculinity, and hegemonic masculine power by succeeding, as a woman, on male-defined terms in a typically 'male' role (Cohen, 2010; Heilman, 2012). The absurdity of the demands of such an approach upon women is clear, and such 'survival' strategies nevertheless fail to mitigate the documented fact that "women who enter male preserves are the most likely to be harassed…because men fear losing their privileged place in the labour force" (Wilson and Thompson, 2001: 64).

Rebecca's next career was in the building industry, where she formed a company to build (and retro-fit) eco houses. Unfortunately, her experiences in another highly male-dominated industry were little better than they had been in car racing. When describing the types of sexist behaviours that she encountered in the building trade from male contractors, Rebecca expressed her experiences as being:

> "every possible worst thing in the 21st century that a woman should not be going through. Everything - from just downright ignorance as in "what does she know, she's a woman", to obstruction - you know, "let's play games so that she actually looks stupid in front of the client" Rebecca.

For the same reasons as those she experienced as a successful woman racing driver, Rebecca's role as a construction company owner was seen as incompatible with her gender identity as a woman, and as such, was perceived as a threat by many of the men whom she employed.

Rebecca also described problems that she had with contractual clients, who often attempted to find ways not to have to pay her the contractually agreed sum for the work undertaken. Indeed, the toll taken by the continuously abusive behaviours to which she was subjected by both sub-contractors and clients prompted her to wind-up her business:

> "after thirty-three [projects], I was just bloody sick of it. The last client that I built a house for literally did everything they could not to pay their bill, and I'd had enough of it" Rebecca.

However, in spite of the fact that the appalling, aggressive, and overtly sexist behaviours that Rebecca experienced had been the (partial) cause for the premature end of her two successful and rewarding careers, she remained stoical and pragmatic about the issues, as well as mindful of the toll on women's mental health of trying to fight a system that denies the existence of a problem:

> "As a woman you just have to accept that if you keep fighting it's just going to be unbearable, so you just have to look at it as a level of ignorance, [because] you can knock yourself down terribly by being angry about it" Rebecca.

What Rebecca's experiences showed was that as a woman working in very male-dominated contexts, she was perceived as a threat, and targeted as such. However, in spite of her negative, and sometimes physically harmful, experiences she retained her indomitable sense of self-belief and creativity, and took the values (of self- and other respect, team working, and knowledge sharing) she had learned in her formative years, and honed through her experiences as an adult in the workplace, to the creation of her SE.

Through the creation of an organisation that embodied the type of respectful, nurturing environment that had previously been aggressively denied to her, Rebecca managed, in her own words, to find "my own community around me".

What emerged from Rebecca's discussion of the gendered and abusive experiences that she endured in her careers prior to establishing her SE, was that rather than breaking her spirit, they provided a vehicle through which she was empowered to consolidate her personal values based on an active rejection of every aspect of the negative behaviours to which she had been subjected.

In that way, she was able to reclaim her power, to reframe her experiences in terms of life lessons learned, and to reject a victim identity. Indeed, the life and work that she had subsequently created for herself, was expressed in truly joyous terms:

> "I do what I do, and I really love it, and I won't stop doing it […] I mean I wouldn't swap my life for anything else, and how many people can honestly say that? Not being smug, but just genuinely; I would rather have nothing but the happiness I've got, and my friends, and know that I'm going to go to my grave feeling that it's been worthwhile" Rebecca.

Jacinta also described experiencing sexual harassment in her career prior to establishing her own SE. She described two occasions, separated by a number of years, when she had been sexually assaulted within a work context.

The first incident occurred when she had just joined her first employer after having graduated from University:

> "I was at a client party when the then Head of [major music label] groped me, you know, openly, and my Boss was looking at me at the time as if to say "don't you dare object". I just stood there and thought "what am I doing?" and, you know, I chose to walk off and avoid him for the rest of the day, but that was my first encounter of it, and I just thought "wow", because I was expected to just take that as part of the client service, you know!" Jacinta.

Clearly, the incident that Jacinta described was not an isolated event, but merely represented her 'first encounter of it'. Frighteningly however, her (male) Boss was witness to the assault, and openly colluded with the client by failing to intervene and protect his very junior, inexperienced, female colleague. Whilst sexual harassment in the workplace has been acknowledged to be "one of the most damaging and ubiquitous barriers to career success and satisfaction for

women" (Willness *et al*, 2007: 127), the fact that men (and attendant masculine hegemony) continue to dominate the upper echelons of organisational hierarchies has led feminist scholars demonstrate the link between (male) power and control in institutions (McDonald, 2012; Shaw, 2010), and the prevalence of sexual violence against women within the workplace:

> "[s]exual harassment tends to be prevalent in organisations where there are increased power differentials between men and women, and power is an extremely important issue to focus on when discussing situational and organisational factors" (Hunt *et al*, 2010: 659).

In offering an explanation/rationalisation for the way in which the incident unfolded, Jacinta commented that:

> "it's such a client-oriented industry, you are in a service industry, and when it [sexual assault] happens client-to-agency side, you know, agencies are terrified of saying something" Jacinta.

Even as a very young woman (graduate) employee, the clear message handed down to Jacinta about the way in which her industry worked was that: women's bodies were commodities that employers would apparently willingly 'offer up' to clients in exchange for new (or continuing) contracts, that the silence of young female staff would be coercively obtained through the exploitation of organisational hierarchies of power (threat of sacking), and that male sexual violence against women within a work context would be normalised, and hidden under a veil of silence and collusion amongst senior staff on both sides (Wilson and Thompson, 2001).

The prevalence of sexual harassment against women (and sometimes men) within the workplace has been widely documented (Aggarwal and Gupta, 2000; Chamberlain *et al*, 2008; Gruber, 1998; MacKinnon, 1979; Richman *et al*, 1999), and is theorised as incorporating behaviours that the victim experiences as "unwanted or unwelcome, and which has the purpose or effect of being intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive" (McDonald, 2012: 2).

Furthermore, the enactment of sexual harassment has been clearly correlated with abuses of power (Berdahl, 2007; McLaughlin *et al*, 2012; Uggen and

Blackstone, 2004), which in a work context reflect the types of experiences that Jacinta described. Indeed, McDonald (2012: 4) noted that the power abuses linked to sexual harassment in the workplace often:

> "reflect sexual coercion [which can] include offers of rewards such as bonuses, pay increases, options of extra work and promotion; and those related to sexual threats include withdrawal of financial or other entitlements, reductions in work hours, dismissal or other threats of life being made difficult".

In this way, the failure of Jacinta's manager to intervene and advocate for her when she experienced a sexual assault that he witnessed, can be read as collusion, coupled with an implicit coercive 'threat' to the safety of her ongoing employment. When it is accepted that "perpetrators only break the rules and harass where they think they can get away with it" (Wilson and Thompson, 2001: 76), the failure of Jacinta's boss to act also represented an implicit acceptance of the tolerance of such behaviour towards junior, female staff.

The second incident that Jacinta mentioned related to a female senior colleague who also failed to advocate for her female junior staff when they reported being sexually assaulted in the workplace:

> "she wasn't really championing the women in the business, I mean to the point where actually they [she and the other Board members] recruited an MD who was highly inappropriate with several female staff. I mean really, really inappropriate – he crossed a line several times, with several different staff including me, and we all reported it separately, the separate incidents to our female boss, who did nothing" Jacinta.

Like the previous incident, a senior member of the management team failed both to enact appropriate protective measures for the women staff, and to take disciplinary action against a member of staff whom she knew to be committing regular sexual assaults. The conspiracy of silence and inaction, along with the fore-fronting of the needs of the business above and beyond the safety of the female, junior staff demonstrated an alternative, and deeply worrying, manifestation of the 'embedded masculine approach' discussed previously, which was eloquently captured by Jacinta:

> "I think she didn't act on it because she didn't want to ruffle any feathers" Jacinta.

The examples of harassment provided by both Jacinta and Rebecca demonstrated an astonishing level of the abuse of power – in Rebecca's case of male hegemonic power within two, separate male-dominated industries, and in Jacinta's case, of the abuse of both hierarchical male power (Uggen and Blackstone, 2004), and the coercive exploitation of hierarchical organisational power (McDonald, 201) in support of silent compliance.

Both women's experiences offered snapshots of the extreme abuse of power enacted by men against women within the workplace. Rebecca's experiences with her sub-contracted builders served to appallingly undermine her professional identity, and her experiences with clients attempting to avoid paying her, demonstrated the contempt with which she was treated as a women in construction. The harassment that she experienced when working as a professional racer, put her physical safety, and indeed her life, at risk as well as serving to undermine her personal identity through the aspersions cast on her through the use of clearly homophobic slurs.

Jacinta's experiences, though different in nature, were equally horrifying with her professional identity in the workplace being subsumed by the gratuitous commodification of her body for the sexual exploitation and gratification of both clients and senior staff members. Women senior staff members' collusion was secured through the same mechanism described previously, by which women attempt to achieve professional legitimacy in male-dominated arenas by behaving as 'social men', and the silence of the victimised women was coercively obtain under threat of sacking.

Whilst the stories told by these two women were not deliberately elicited by the interview design process, their extreme nature provided great insight into the phenomenon (Patton, 2002) of gendered experiences of sexual and other physical harassment within the workplace, and victims' responses to it, as noted by Perrini *et al* (2010: 518):

> "[i]t is in extreme cases that the dynamics being examined become more visible than they might be in other contexts".

As such, the behaviours that Jacinta and Rebecca were subjected to provided evidence of the experiential influence upon the subsequent foundation of the women's values-driven SEs; rejecting both the behaviours, and the mind-set of the people for whom such actions were not only conceivable but also permissible, Jacinta and Rebecca's organisations were created to reflect the safety, respect, and sense of solidarity and care that they had been denied in their previous employments.

Thus, whilst both horrifying and shocking, the women's experiences provided them with practical examples of the types of organisations that they refused to be associated with, as well as the type of people, and attendant (lack of) moral values, that they would wish to avoid. By having personal experience of the worst types of abuses of power within the workplace, contextualised within the most morally bankrupt of organisations, the women developed a template of the behaviours and mind-sets that they absolutely rejected, and thereby created models for the organisational development of their SEs that would make such behaviours culturally unthinkable, let alone admissible.

8.6 Gendered experiences as SEurs

Whilst the disclosures mentioned above related to gendered experiences prior to engagement with SE which impacted upon the eventual design and delivery of the women's subsequent SEurial activities, two other women mentioned gendered experiences that impacted - either directly or indirectly - onto their day-to-day experiences of SEship. The emergent themes are discussed here:

8.6.1 SEship and motherhood: women's work?

The first example related to the management of the combined roles of self-employed SEur, and mother, and centred on the childcare arrangements of one women SEur whose child was two years old. Immediately prior to the question of work-life conflict that provoked the gendered disclosure, Jackie had been discussing the equitable (or not) nature of SE for women, concluding that the SE sector needed to actively manage the issue, or risk replicating the inequalities seen in mainstream business:

"we [the SE sector] need to be very careful because if we don't put more in place in terms of childcare or things like that – things that are equitable for both genders…that's why I care about women in social enterprise" Jackie.

Jackie had been very keen to highlight the fact that any remedies to gender-based inequality i.e. provision of childcare etc. should be available to, and accessible by, both women and men ('equitable to both genders'). However, she appeared unaware of the widely documented fact that family-friendly policy provision in the UK attracts consistently poor levels of take-up by fathers (Gregory and Milner, 2011; TUC, 2013), in spite of men's continuing reported desire to spend more time with their children, and less time at work (BIS, 2013; Ellison *et al*, 2009), suggesting that the gendered division of childcare labour – particularly as far as men/fathers are concerned - cannot be meaningfully addressed through policy intervention alone (Crompton *et al*, 2005; Thomas and Hildingsson, 2009).

Jackie went on to describe her and her partner's arrangements for the care of their child, which she described as being "shared". However, she then described how her child was cared for by a childminder while she worked, and how she took daily responsibility for collecting, and caring for her child when her work day had ended.

When asked about the 'shared' nature of her and her partner's childcare arrangements – specifically who would collect the child should he become unwell during a working day and need to go home from the childminder – she explained:

"I work a lot from home, and I literally live 15 metres away from the childminder" Jackie.

What was striking was the way in which Jackie clearly believed in the equitable share of the parenting roles, whilst she and her husband simultaneously engaged in traditionally gendered roles as parents – father as 'breadwinner', mother (plus female childminder) as main carers. The fact that the childminder employed to care for Jackie's child was so close to her place of work (home), indicated that Jackie had taken responsibility for sourcing childcare herself and,

assuming that she would undertake the majority of the unpaid childcare, had located a childminder close-by thus enabling her to spend more time with her child after work, and to minimise work-related disruptions such as travel time to and from the home of her paid carer.

Indeed, when pressed further on her partner's actual involvement in the day-to-day care of their child, she offered the following:

> "if I have a trip abroad and then he [the father] changes his roster [to collect the child]" Jackie.

Her belief in the equity of the childcare arrangements within her family unit reflected far more strongly, her *beliefs* about gender equality than it did the *facts* of the actual arrangements around her child. This situation reflected the findings of Davis (2010), who concluded that women tended to express satisfaction in the parity of the division of unpaid domestic labour whilst simultaneously undertaking the bulk of such work themselves. This finding was also echoed the work of Campbell-Barr and Garnham, (2010: 38), who noted that:

> "although many parents do not think along 'traditional' gender divides, the arrangements they have in place for work and childcare are often constrained along traditional lines".

When discussing her experience of work-life conflict in relation to her SE and her motherhood, Jackie explained that the situation was:

> "self-inflicted because I had my baby late, and I just didn't want to put [the child] from 8am-6pm with someone else. So I've got to resolve that issue myself; I just wanted to see [the child] grow as well, you know, I didn't want to go to work and not enjoy [the child's] company or be there for [the child], so that's the price to pay" Jackie.

Several contradictions emerged from the way in which Jackie presented the situation that she faced as a clearly engaged and devoted mother, as a partner in a heterosexual relationship with the father of her child, and as a self-employed worker (SEur). Jackie constructed the work-life conflict that she experienced as 'self-inflicted' as a result of delaying parenthood until her late

30s, whilst not applying the same criterion to her male partner. In this way, she revealed the unacknowledged gendered nature of her construction of parenthood, as being largely a woman's (mother's) responsibility.

This construction was reinforced by her assertion that she did not want to 'put the child from 8am-6pm with someone else', thereby implying that it was her role (rather than the child's father's) to spend (at least some) time caring for their child during normal working hours. The proximity of her chosen childminder to her place of work/home facilitated her ability to spend time with her child, also implying that she worked flexibly (in a way that her partner clearly did not) in order to accommodate her work/motherhood roles.

Jackie appeared to dismiss the demands made of her of her dual role as both worker and mother as 'the price to pay' without acknowledging that it was she (rather than her partner) who was taking on the responsibility for 'paying' that price. The veracity of the situation described by Jackie was confirmed by Moen and Yu (2000) who found that it was women, not men, who were expected to balance the demands of work and family.

8.6.2 Home-based SEship

The second spontaneously proffered gendered issue to emerge from the interviews related to one of the women's perception of not being taken seriously as a business*woman* i.e. the legitimacy of her SEurial identity being undermined as a result of her gender identity.

Marissa described a feeling of being perceived to be a bit of a 'joke' in her role as a SEur, which contrasted sharply with her professional identity as a highly qualified healthcare professional with over a decade of clinical experience. She expressed her sense of frustration at the elusive nature of the problem that meant that it was hard to pin down, and ascribe to specific actions or behaviours:

> "it is difficult to pinpoint, you know, to give you evidence of it. It is a feeling I have, of not being taken seriously…" Marissa.

As the discussion developed, Marissa offered the following example of the sort of behaviour that she experienced as undermining her legitimacy as a business owner, and her identity as a SEur:

> "I will give you a very good example: my husband, because I am working at home, seems to believe that it is not a [real] job, you know what I mean? And also his colleagues will say things like "oh, you have it really easy working from home, you don't have to go to work in the rain…" It's probably more from friends and family than from out there, because out there they don't see me in my home environment, and they see me as a clinician" Marissa.

Marissa clearly felt a lack of support and encouragement from her friends and family, who were unable to see past her (home-based) identity as a wife/partner, to her professional identity as a highly qualified healthcare worker, and the owner/manager of a small (social) enterprise.

The lack of credibility afforded to women entrepreneurs whose businesses are run from the home has been well-documented (Mirchandani, 1999; Marlow and McAdam, 2013), and applies stereotypes associated with both woman/private domain/carer and man/public domain/worker for its frame of reference. As such, regardless of whether such a strategy is pursued as a means of accommodating caring responsibilities or not, home-based women entrepreneurs' dual identities as workers, based in the private domain are seen as problematic, and the normative cultural stereotype of woman/private domain/carer becomes the lens through which their enterprises are judged:

> "[h]ome-based ventures experience difficulties in gaining legitimacy […and] are frequently seen as leisure activities" (Welter, 2011: 171).

Both of the examples discussed above, represented traditional manifestations of the types of gender-based barriers experienced by women in the workforce, based on culturally accepted gender stereotypes. For Jackie, the stereotype of women being responsible for the majority of the care (and attendant tasks) associated with child-rearing meant that in spite of her passionate political beliefs around gender equality, she was nevertheless the parent whose working life had to accommodate her and her husband's child.

Similarly, for Marissa the problem centred on culturally pervasive social constructions of (middle class) women within the domestic environment, as having significant leisure time as a result of not 'having' to work, and thus only engaging in work for 'fun', as a result of being financially provided-for by a bread-winning husband. As a result, her SE business was not given the kudos that it deserved, and she was not afforded the same status as a professional worker (and business owner) that, for example, her husband was given. In this way, both her personal and organisational legitimacy was put under threat by the triple burden of her gender identity, her SE being home-based, and the cultural stereotypes associated with the wives of middle class, professionally employed men.

8.7 Conclusion

The correlations between the women SEurs' values, their desire to both provoke and enact social change, and the ways in which their visions and assessments of success were linked to their core mission, demonstrated that in spite of differences of approach to SE, employment background, and client-base, the women nevertheless had much in common, and many shared very similar visions for a better future.

Chapter Nine: Discussion

9.0 Introduction

The chapter is divided into four discrete sections, three of which relate to the results chapters, and the last of which discusses the emergent findings in relation to the key literature discussed in this thesis – specifically Ahl (2006) from the critical feminist entrepreneurship stream, Dey and Steyaert (2010) from the critical SE/SEship stream, and Levie and Hart (2011) from the non-critical SE/Seship stream of literature.

The first part section of the chapter provides a discussion of: the implications of the policy-driven SE landscape, the problematic nature of the DTI (2002) definition of SE, the ways in which SEship was presented in differently gendered ways to different audiences, and the implications of these issues for women SEurs specifically, and would-be SEurs more generally.

The second part of the chapter discusses the ways in which the women SEurs' conceptualisations of SE and SEship reflected the DTI (2002) definition, and the ways in which they conceived of it differently, before presenting a discussion of the ways in which the definition failed to assist the SEurs in their work, and the legitimacy threats that were created as a result of the assumptions of an ill-informed public.

The third part of this chapter discusses the ways in which SEurial identity formation was fundamentally influenced by personal, lived experiences, and how these factors affected the ways in which the women SEurs both developed and managed their SEs, and how they negotiated their professional legitimacy within the gendered terrain of their (largely) 'feminine' work.

The fourth and final section of the chapter presents a discussion of the emergent themes, and their inter-connections in relation to the three key texts outlined above. This section also discusses the findings in relation to the wider literature review, paying specific attention to the relevance of the findings to the feminist entrepreneurship, mainstream, and SE/SEship streams of literature,

and considers the knowledge gaps identified within those streams as a result of this study.

9.1 The changing face of SEship and SE: impacts on SE practice

The control of dominant discourses has long been acknowledged to be directly correlated with the delineation of conceptual domains (Lazar, 2007; Nicholls, 2010), and as a result, with the bestowal (or denial) of legitimacy within such domains (Mann and Huffman, 205; Shaw, 2010). As such, the control of dominant discourses has significant political implications (Carmel and Harlock, 2008; Chell, 2007), as they both create and regulate (Dick and Hyde, 2006) the "object of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972: 49).

Thus, the review of policy and other documents associated with SEship and SE in the UK provided in Chapter 6, demonstrated the ways in which the government and other 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) discursive and rhetorical conceptualisations, which reflected changes in policy focus over time, were shaped primarily in support of the (policy) needs of government, rather than of the practical needs of practitioners.

9.1.1 The discursive and rhetorical construction of SE and SEship as an idea(l)

The New Labour government (1997-2010) was "widely seen as having the most advanced social enterprise policy focus in the world" (Teasdale *et al*, 2011: 59), which was driven both by a need to make cuts to public spending, both in terms of governmental grant support offered to Third Sector organisations, as well as in the cost of the delivery of social services.

The government's response to the funding crisis was to seek to professionalise the voluntary and community (Third) sector through the encouragement of "entrepreneurial zeal" (Blair, 1998: 4), with the aim of increasing the sector's capacity both to generate its own income (and thus reduce the grant funding burden), as well as to become a vehicle for the delivery of public services (Home Office, 1998b). There followed a period of almost a decade during which the government invested heavily in the development of infrastructure within the

sector, the substantial cost of which required justification to the tax-paying (voting) public (Teasdale *et al*, 2013).

In creating a nominally 'new' concept for the proposed successful delivery of multiple policy agendas (Griffith, 2012; Haugh and Kitson, 2007), it was essential that SE was presented as positively as possible to all stakeholder audiences – including the public – as a means of justifying the "pragmatic legitimacy [of] policy measures…[and] confer[ing] the moral legitimacy of policy solutions" (Teasdale *et al*, 2013: 3) with which it was associated, and on behalf of which, such large amounts of public money were being spent.

Thus the political agenda for the rhetorical and discursive construction of SE and SEship in the UK was clearly driven by governmental need in terms of both its *raison d'être* and its content, and the negative impact(s) of this agenda on practitioners and their work emerged as being significant, if necessarily unintentional.

In attempting to establish the dual concept of SEship (as a practice) and SE (as an organisational model for its delivery) as a viable and legitimate means by which to tackle policy priorities, it quickly became "heavily imbued with political language and ideology" (Mason, 2012)

The *idea(l)* of SE and SEship was conceptualised as a 'natural' extension of the market domain into the realm of the 'social', premised upon a basic logic that assumed that social injustice could be "translated and reduced into a managerial – i.e. economic-behavioural – problem and solved as such" (Hjorth, 2010: 2).

As a result, the policy-driven political conceptions of SE – developed through lenses of market-based rationality and managerialism – drew much of their inspiration from conceptions of mainstream entrepreneurship (McAdam and Treanor, 2011). This was reflected in the language used within policy publications, which asserted SE's ability to bring "enterprise, innovation, and competitiveness" (DTI, 2002: 8) to the modernisation and reformation of public services (*ibid.*: 6) whilst simultaneously, and apparently unproblematically,

delivering meaningful and measureable social and economic outputs (Cabinet Office, 2006) through its double or triple bottom line.

The centrality of the business logics evident within governmental conceptions of SE was further reflected in the justification of the huge investment in national infrastructure to support SEs offered by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who asserted that his government desired to "provide a more enabling environment, to help social enterprises *become better businesses*" (DTI, 2002: 5 *emphasis added*). The extension of the 'managerial problem' approach to social injustice outlined above (Hjorth, 2010) through the involvement of double/triple bottom lined businesses (SEs), meant that there followed a further logic that implied that the better the business, the better the social outcome" (Teasdale, 2012).

Thus, when the Department of Trade and Industry provided its governmentally-approved definition of SE in 2002, it was conceptualised through four main 'defining' criteria, which were that SEs were: 1) *businesses*, that aimed to 2) *create surpluses*, that would be used to 3) *sustain the business/assist a given community*, whose owners/shareholders would 4) *not motivated by personal wealth creation*.

However, whilst the DTI (2002) became – and remains – the most cited definition of SE within the UK context within both policy and academic contexts (Bull, 2006; Lyon *et al*, 2010), the particular assumptions and logics implicit in its creation were only relatively recently deconstructed and reflected upon, as the critical stream of SE and SEship literature emerged. Added to this was the fact that whilst the governmental investment in the sector sought to "establish the value of social enterprise, not just to its supporters but to those who currently understand little of what it offers" (DTI, 2002: 29), its 'educative' efforts did not appear to extend to the general public, leaving them confused by, and indeed ignorant of, the concept (HM Government, 2011; SEC, 2009; WISE, 2006).

Thus, the implication that SEs' profit-making activities should clearly differentiate them "from their grant-dependent cousins in the voluntary and community sector" (Teasdale, 2012: 151) was largely lost on a confused

general public, only some 25% of whom knew what an SE was (Griffiths, 2012), and their declared status as "first and foremost businesses" (DTI, 2002: 13) did little to challenge such misconceptions and ignorance.

This ignorance and confusion was similarly reflected within the banking and business support communities, with banks consistently failing to provide SEs with access to debt finance (Hewitt, 2002), largely as a result of using assessment criteria developed for mainstream business (BoE, 2003). These measures identified SEs as 'lacking' in comparison to mainstream businesses in terms of proven business management skills, a lack of capital assets against which to secure loans and, the often poor (or non-existent) profit margins acknowledged to be available to SEs providing services "where mainstream business cannot, or will not, go" (DTI, 2002: 20).

A similar situation emerged with regard to the provision of business support services to SEs, whereby the complexities associated with the effective and balanced management of a double bottom line appeared to be largely unrecognised by the network of governmentally-funded Business Link business support providers (Mawson, 2010). Indeed, as noted by Smallbone *et al* (2001: 7) only 25% of surveyed Business Links had, or were in the process of developing, "a specific policy" on SE that recognised it as having different (additional) needs to those of mainstream businesses, and less than half of those surveyed "considered that social enterprises ha[d] distinctive support needs" (*ibid.*: 7) at all.

Where specific issues were identified by Business Links, they tended to be simplistic in nature, and to coalesce around "legal issues and distinctive financial needs…[as well as] a lack of ability to pay for support services" (*ibid.*: 7), rather than the more complex managerial issues associated with the management of multiple income streams, of both volunteer and paid staff, of the development of appropriate and applicable business management skills where such skills were underdeveloped, and of the maintenance of focus on social output whilst simultaneously ensuring the sustainability (and development/diversification) of the business (trading) function.

The cumulative effect of these findings led Smallbone *et al* (2001: 44) to highlight the pressing need for the development of a "better understanding by public bodies, banks and the community of what social enterprises are about" in order to better provide for the development and trading success of SEs, a sentiment echoed in the BoE (2003: 33) report into SE financing, which noted that:

> "[i]t was clear from our consultations that good business support based on an understanding of the social enterprise sector was considered very important, both to help social enterprises develop a sustainable income from trading activity and to improve investment-readiness. Many consultees did not consider support for social enterprises among mainstream public sector business support organisations to be very satisfactory…"

Bearing in mind the fact that the Small *et al* (2001) report was published in the year preceding the publication of the first official policy document on SE (DTI, 2002), the continued reporting of poor public understanding of SE in the early 2010s spoke volumes about the failure of successive governments to address this knowledge deficit amongst the buying public, given that even some twelve years later, "[t]he most common (32%) main source of income for social enterprises [wa]s trade with the general public" (SEUK, 2013: 7).

The fact that the public were so poorly informed as to the nature of SE meant that in attempting to understand the phenomenon they drew upon erroneous assumptions, usually based on the type of work undertaken by SEs (read: work within marginalised communities, and with marginalised individuals and groups), and the association of this type of work with the voluntary and philanthropic work most often undertaken by traditional charities (SEC, 2011).

Thus, the distinction between SEs as *businesses* with primarily *social objectives* (DTI, 2002), and traditional charities (including trading charities) as *organisations* established to served *charitable purposes* (Charity Commission, 2013: 3) for the *public benefit* (*ibid.*: 7) was not easily discernible. This problem was further exacerbated by the fact that the most well-known British examples of SE – the Big Issue, celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's restaurant 'Fifteen', Café Direct, Divine Chocolate and the Eden Project (Muñoz, 2009; SEC, 2009, 2010)

– represented disparate variations on the type of social output that they generated, and encompassed a variety of legal forms – sales-based income generation for the homeless (Big Issue, registered charity and CLG), culinary training for excluded youth (Fifteen, CLG owned by a registered charity), provision of fair trading conditions for framers and growers in developing countries (Café Direct, Plc and Divine Chocolate, minority-owned workers' co-operative), and conservation and ecology educational facility provision (Eden Project, registered charity and CLG).

The lack of commonality and generalisability of purpose, work undertaken, location of operation, social focus, or legal status did little to assist the general public's understanding of SE as a (hybrid) organisational form, and the often close links to, and ongoing associations with, Christian organisations exhibited by the two best-known Fairtrade SEs served to further 'muddy the waters' in terms of the public's conceptual understandings of SE as different from charity or religious philanthropy – Café Direct, for example, which is sold through all Oxfam shops, and was co-founded by Oxfam (itself was co-founded by Quakers) and Traidcraft, which asserts itself to be an organisation "founded on Christian principles" (Traidcraft, 2015), whilst Divine Chocolate's initial set-up costs were part-funded by Christian Aid, which remains a long-term 'partner' organisation to the brand (Divine Chocolate, 2015). Additionally, both organisations are accredited by the Fairtrade Foundation, which was collaboratively founded by several Christian organisations including CAFOD – "the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales" (CAFOD, 2015) – Christian Aid, and Oxfam.

Thus, the general public tended to (in some cases correctly) assume that SEs were traditional (trading) charities SEUK (2012), whilst simultaneously (and largely negatively) associating the income-generating and politically sanctioned nature of such work of charitable work with what Kettell (2012: 282) described as the "general public antipathy to the intermingling of religion and politics"

The confusion of the general public with regard to SE was understandable given the noted diversity of the sector, and the government's – and other sectoral stakeholders' – reticence in providing either clearly delineated parameters for

the sector, or a definition that would allow SEs to be instantly recognisable as such by those unfamiliar with the sector. The major problem associated with these facts was elucidated by Dart (2004), who noted the difficulty experienced by the public – including those organisations typically associated with supporting businesses i.e. banks and business support agencies – when trying to understand SE as a hybrid business model, that could present as a charity (and may be registered as such), whilst simultaneously engaging in commercial activities.

In this way, the confusing message around the nature of SE as a form of "'business' [whose] operations may be indistinguishable from other private sector companies, or vehicles for the delivery of public service" (ibid.: 21), but which could operate simultaneously across the private, public, and voluntary sectors, whose social outputs could legitimately cover a diverse variety of activities, and which could embody a multiplicity of legal forms, meant that public understanding of SE remained, at best, extremely limited.

Whilst the government's (DTI, 2002) definition of SE was obviously shaped by a political agenda that demanded that it be "kept deliberately open to allow a wide range of organisations that define themselves as social enterprises to be included" (Lyon and Sepulveda, 2009: 85), the other 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) – who were often governmentally-funded or sponsored – had a similarly political motivation to support and echo governmental rhetoric and discourses in order to provide what the government referred to as a "unified voice for the sector to work with government in raising the profile of social enterprise" (Cabinet Office, 2006: 7), the achievement of which attracted significant and ongoing funding for such organisations (Teasdale, 2010).

Thus, as demonstrated in Chapter Six, what the 'unified voice' came to represent was what became known within academic circles as the 'grand narrative', which served not so much as a platform for the shaping of public opinion, but as a source of justification for the ongoing investment in a policy that was untested, and ultimately driven by a governmental desire to both reduce its public service responsibilities, and reduce its financial outlay (in terms of both cost of service provision, and grant provision) in the longer term.

9.1.2 Correlations and conflicts: the idea(l) and practice of SE

As discussed previously, the grand narrative of SE and SEship represented a discursive and rhetorical strategy that aimed to provide persuasive justification for the vigorous pursuit of an expensive, national policy strategy that sought to provide a support infrastructure to SEs and other Third Sector organisations aiming to assume the mantle of the provision of publically-funded social services.

As such, it incorporated the stories of organisations and individuals whose work was claimed to represent 'best practice', and whose approach to SE best matched the discursive ideals encompassed by the grand narrative. In this way, the *idea* of SE as a concept became merged with an *idealised* representation of SEship, such that the *idea(l)* became one and the same thing within the grand narrative.

As a result, the grand narrative glossed-over the problems and contradictions inherent in the Third Way conception of SE that unashamedly sought to "reconcil[e] themes [of enterprise and social justice] which in the past have been wrongly regarded as antagonistic" (Blair, 1998: 1), whilst failing to acknowledge or explore the reasons for their 'former antagonism', and thus failing to take account of the associated practical implications for either SE practitioners, or the ongoing development and deployment of the policy agenda. In this way, as noted by Dey (2010: 1):

> "the meaning of social entrepreneurship is scripted according to the changed social conditions of advanced liberal societies…[and] is rationalized according to a neoliberal political rationality".

Thus, in spite of the lack of public understanding of SE highlighted in many publications spanning more than a decade (for example, Angove, 2007; BoE, 2003; DTI, 2002; Hall *et al*, 2012; Nairne *et al*, 2011; ResPublica, 2013; Smallbone *et al*, 2001; Steinerowski *et al*, 2010), the situation clearly remained largely unresolved. Similarly, the issues highlighted early on (BoE, 2003) with regard to the ability of some SEs (particularly those operating in areas of market failure, or servicing impoverished communities) to realistically function as profit-

making businesses, with all the attendant negative implications e.g. ability to pay staff, ability to become financially self-sustaining, ability to remain sustainable as ongoing concerns providing social services etc., were rendered almost invisible by the 'messianic' tone of the grand narrative (Dey and Steyaert, 2010; Katre and Salipante, 2012).

In this way, the discursive construction of the *idea(l)* of SE and SEship, as a reflection of successive government's policy agendas (Howorth *et al*, 2011), represented little more than a 'marketing strategy' in support of an expensive and expansive policy programme, aimed at bolstering support and increasing buy-in amongst key potential partners and supporters e.g. local authority commissioners. – a recommendation specifically made in the 'Applying social enterprise approaches to services for children, young people, and families' report (Strang France, 2007), and stated as an objective in various governmental and governmentally-sponsored publications (DoH, 2006; OTS, 2006a, 2006c; Westall, 2007).

Thus, the grand narrative can be understood as being entirely (politically) self-serving – as being a vehicle for the positive persuasion and promotion of the idea(l) of SE to bureaucrats, rather than as a means by which to inform or educate an ignorant public. Furthermore, it can be seen to function as a marketing mechanism for a certain form of SEship associated with the delivery of state-funded public services, rather than as a reflection of the type of work known to be most often undertaken by SEs – trade with the general public (SEUK, 2013).

As a result, the applicability of the grand narrative to the actual on-the-ground enactment of SEship by practitioners running small-scale SEs, as opposed to the rapidly growing examples regularly showcased in policy and other documents, and known to be associated with public contract delivery (SEUK, 2013), was questionable as was the link between the rhetorical and discursive content of the grand narrative, to the highly simplistic nature of the DTI (2002) definition of SE.

Indeed the conflicts as well as the correlations between the dominant discourses of SE and SEship including the DTI (2002) definition, and the women SEurs' practical experiences emerged clearly from the interview data. This data in turn highlighted both the problematic practical issues created by a lack of public understanding of SE, and the ways in which the women attempted to gain organisational legitimacy through the adoption of those aspects of the dominant discourses that they perceived to add credibility to themselves as SEurs, and value to their SE organisations.

The next section discusses the ways in which the women SEurs interviewed for this study reported relating to the four component parts of the DTI (2002) definition of SE, and is followed by a discussion of the problematic areas and issues identified by the women in relation to the day-to-day management of the organisational identities of their SEs.

9.1.3 SE and the DTI (2002) definition: synergies and conceptual subtleties

The different components of the *idea(l)* of SE found within the DTI (2002) definition asserted that SEs were: *businesses*, that sought to *make profit*, which profits would be *reinvested in the business or community of choice*, and whose owners were *not motivated by personal wealth generation*. An exploration of these component parts with the women SEurs provided evidence that the women largely accepted the definitional parameters such as they were, with the caveat of specific and central conceptual differences relating to their conceptualisations of SE as a moral and values-driven organisational form, which were entirely missing from the DTI (2002) definition.

9.1.4 SEs as businesses

The concept of SE as a business model did not appear to be in any way contentious to the women SEurs interviewed for the study. Indeed, as all the women's SEs engaged in some level of revenue generation, with those whose earned income was small seeking to expand the scope of their sales activities with the aim of attaining an ever-increasing level of revenue generation, the women unanimously concurred on the fact of their SEs being *businesses*.

However, the unanimity of the women SEurs' contentions with regard to the business-like nature of their SEs was in fact tempered by conceptualisations of 'business' – as it related to SE – premised upon not only the generation of earned income through the sale of goods or services in the marketplace, but more specifically as a form of trade differentiated from mainstream business by a fundamental focus on ethical organisational behaviour centred on the morally-driven motivations of the SEurial owner/manager. This aspect of the conceptualisation of SE business, as a distinct form of economic activity, is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

9.1.5 SEs as profit-seeking business organisations

As a result of the unanimous assertion of the 'business' nature of the women SEurs' SEs, no conflict emerged with regard to the DTI (2002) definition's contention that SEs should seek to make profit from their work. However, what did emerge as a serious and widespread area of concern and disgruntlement was the public's assumption that SEs should, like charities, work for free i.e. not charge for goods/services, and not seek to make profits on goods/service provision. The problems associated with the misconception of SE amongst the general public ranged from suspicion to outright hostility, and caused the women considerable (di)stress, as they were regularly forced to justify and defend their work and the public money that some of them received.

This issue revealed the fact that although the women SEurs accepted, indeed embraced, the definitional parameters associated with the business – and thus profit-seeking – nature of SE set out in the DTI (2002) definition, the lack of public understanding of the same created significant and ongoing organisational problems for the women SEurs and their organisations in terms of perceived legitimacy within the public sphere in which they sought to trade.

9.1.6 SEs as organisations that divest/reinvest profits into the business/community of need

The views of the women SEurs with regard to the investiture of profits back into the business or community of need served by the SE, also appeared to be uncontentious. Whilst the way in which profits were divested or reinvested was

shaped by the needs of the individual SE, with issues such as financial sustainability, ability to pay staff an adequate wage, and the type of business model adopted by the SE playing mitigating roles, none of the women expressed any discomfort with that element of the DTI (2002) definition either.

Thus, similar to other start-up businesses, the women SEurs whose SEs were still at the nascent stage – under four years old (GEM, 2004) – tended to prioritise liquidity for the business above divestment of profits in order to develop ongoing financial sustainability, whereas those SEs established as more 'mainstream'-type businesses i.e. those not directly associated with human development work, chose to divest their profits to a nominated charitable cause.

For many of the women SEurs, the focus on organisational sustainability was key in terms of both the continuation of service delivery to their chosen community of need, as well as to the provision of ongoing job security to employees. Indeed, there emerged a link between the conceptualisation of SE as a unique form of 'ethical profit maximisation' (discussed in more detail later in the chapter), and a communally-held sense of responsibility to the individuals (both staff and service-users/beneficiaries) with whom the SEs engaged. This manifested in one of two ways within the SEs explored for this study; the majority of SEs used any profits made to sustain or develop services, whilst the more 'traditional' business type SEs divested profits to a nominated charitable cause in support of their stated social mission.

Thus, whilst concurring with this particular aspect of the DTI (2002) definition, the women conceived of the sustainability/reinvestment cycle of SE not in terms of organisational capacity-building in the sense of traditional forms of business asset accumulation, but rather in a way that prioritised the social mission above the business function. This conceptualisation was noted by Bull (2006: 12) who noted that for SEs "[t]he sustainability issue is to carry on 'doing'…potentially at the detriment of developing the business and asset base for the sake of it".

Thus, whereas the governmental policy (and other) documents reviewed in chapter six clearly showed that the term 'sustainability' was framed by

mainstream business and entrepreneurship discourses – thereby referring to traditional forms of organisational sustainability – the women tended to view sustainability in modified terms: having enough money to pay staff and to deliver and develop services for their chosen community of need.

It therefore became clear that although the women agreed with this aspect of the DTI (2002), the business side of the SEurial work was most often seen as a 'means to an end' (represented by the social), and that sustainability and the reinvestment of profits was rarely conceptualised in terms of mainstream business/entrepreneurship organisational sustainability, but instead in terms of the ability to sustain (and develop) social service delivery.

As mentioned previously, where differences of approach to the issue of sustainability as it related to the reinvestment of profits did occur, they were directly correlated to the type of SE that the women ran, with those women who ran human-development SEs i.e. those whose revenue generation was undertaken as a means by which to fund social outputs, placing more emphasis on the *human* element of their practice which translated as the development and maintenance of relationships with staff and service-users, and the need to be a reliable service provider to their chosen community of need, and those whose SE business models most closely resembled mainstream businesses i.e. trading goods or services directly to the paying public, and involving no business related interaction with marginalised communities, tended to fore-front the *business* elements of their work, prioritising more traditional organisational sustainability approaches, and divesting both money (profit) and responsibility for the social output to a nominated (expert) charitable cause.

The distinctions in both conceptualisation and subsequent approach revealed that although all the women identified as owner-managing SEurs, the more traditional/mainstream business-type SEs were conceptualised as social *enterprises*, whilst the human-development type SEs were considered to be *social* enterprises.

The subtle difference represented by the two phrases above potentially appear to be purely semantic however, they did, in fact, each characterise a distinct

conceptual schema for SE, which highlighted the most salient features of the individual women SEurs' conceptualisations of their own SEurial activity, enacted through their SEs. In this way, neither the concept of *social* enterprise or social *enterprise* was claimed by the women to represent a 'better' form of SE, but rather served to illustrate the acknowledged diversity of the sector, as well as the tolerance within the sector for this type of diversity.

Indeed, the *how* of the reinvestment/divestment of profits in support of a social cause appeared to be far less important to the women than the motivation, a point captured by Claudette, who expressed outrage at the idea that a token gesture could be interpreted by people outside the sector as being a legitimate expression of SE.

The *percentage amount* of profits divested/reinvested emerged as being the key to the authenticity of SE within the women's minds, with the correlation between moral behaviour and the willing commitment to an (apparently typical) 50% divestment/reinvestment level being considered to be something of a hallmark of SE.

Thus, the diversity noted within the SE literature which, for example, Diochon and Anderson (2009: 16) remarked as including "for-profit business[es] that divert a percentage of profits to a social cause" was considered inadequate by the women SEurs, who insisted that a 50% threshold represented the genuine social commitment of a 'real' SE, neither of which central points (motivation and level of divestment/reinvestment) was present in the DTI (2002) definition.

9.1.7 SEurs as not motivated by personal wealth accumulation

This final aspect of the DTI (2002) definition of SE proved to be a vital component of many of the women SEurs' SEurial identities. The sense of personal privation being linked to the level of 'authenticity' of a SEur and her SE was palpable, and appeared to be experienced as something of a 'badge of honour' for many of the women.

The types of personal privations described by the women related most often to the financial but extended, by association, to the material. Thus, the acceptance

of a diminished income as a result of engaging on SEship was widely perceived as being 'par for the course', and whilst the women asserted their desire to achieve a liveable wage from their SEurial work, they appeared to take pride in the deprivations that they endured. The lack of an income, or a much reduced income, inevitably had a significant impact upon the women's lives, including upon their personal relationships, as they attempted to negotiate the impacts of a diminished income.

For some, the practical implications of their financial privations centred on the navigation of changed power dynamics within their intimate relationships, including in some cases the loss of those relationships, whilst for others the main issues revolved around the creative management of lives constrained by a suddenly reduced level of disposable income.

What emerged strongly however, was the almost religious fervour with which the women embraced their much-reduced circumstances, appearing to view such privations as proof positive of their (lifelong?) commitment to SEship such that it appeared to be variously experienced as akin to a 'marriage', with particular reference to an implied *lifelong commitment* that would remain steadfast 'for richer *and for poorer*', or as a 'transformative' experience that caused the women SEurs to express the kind of evangelical zeal of the recently converted with regard to SE (Zahra et al, 2009).

This second point reflected the passion with which the women SEurs appeared to view SEship, and also appeared to support another emergent component of the women's SEurial identities (discussed in more detail later in the chapter), namely the pseudo-evangelising aspect of 'carrying the message/good news' of SE to a poorly-informed public through their active engagement in public speaking events.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the women tended to conceive of the 'riches' of SEship in terms of the positive impacts that they could have on people's lives, or on the environment. As such, their motivations for engaging in SEship were not premised upon personal wealth accumulation, but on using their time, skills, and energies to effect positive change, rather than to pursue wealth, power and

social prestige, which appeared to be unattractive propositions to the women. The most commonly held attitude to SEship expressed by the women was almost vocational in tone, again supporting the previously mentioned sense of SEship representing a whole-life-encompassing pseudo-spiritual/religious experience.

9.1.8 DTI (2002): a base-line definition for practitioners

As discussed, the component parts of the DTI (2002) definition of SE appeared to be largely accepted by the women SEurs, and as such, incorporated into their conceptualisations of both SE and SEship. However, the single most significant departure from the dominant (business) discourses associated with SE as expressed through the DTI (2002) definition, was the women's assertion of the centrality of morality and values to their conceptualisation and practice of SEship, which concepts were entirely absent from the DTI (2002) definition.

These concepts however, provided a framework within which to meaningfully conceptualise SE as a practice (SEship) rather than as an idea(l), and facilitated the creation of organisations within which the women felt able and empowered to renegotiate the injustices of their past personal and employment experiences, to take personal responsibility for tackling social and environmental injustices, and to rearticulate the concept and norms of 'business' on their own terms.

Thus, connections emerged that pointed to a developmental pathway associated with the women's personal moral development, and the subsequent application of those acquired moral frameworks to the interpretation of their life experiences, which in turn shaped the emergence of their individual visions for a different (better) future for both themselves and others, which they ultimately expressed through the work of their SEs.This finding appeared to concur with that made by Steinerowski *et al*, (2010), Whilst the majority of the women explained the development of their SEs as being driven first by the (opportunity) recognition of a social/environmental need, they all subsequently identified ways by which to create revenue generating businesses in support of the social/environmental cause that first caught their attention.

In this way values, opportunity recognition emerged as two-phase process for the women SEurs, who recognised both opportunities to effect social change (social/environmental need), as well as to create revenue generating businesses in support of the initially identified social/environmental need. The two-phase process was evident across the research cohort, and was evidenced by the establishment of SEs based on the values-driven morality discussed by the women, regardless of the method of addressing the social/environmental need i.e. directly or indirectly.

Thus, the internalised personal moral codes that allowed the women SEurs not only to identify social/environmental injustices, but also to feel compelled to take action to challenge and change the unjust status quo usually through a combination of targeted service delivery supported by revenue generating activities within the marketplace, emerged as being integral both to the development of a SEurial identity, as well as to SE establishment and subsequent SEship practice.

The centrality of morality and ethics to SE, and the implications that it had for both the women SEurs themselves, as well as for the ways in which they chose to develop their businesses, represented a critical omission from the DTI (2002) definition of SE. However, whilst being notably absent from the official definition, the importance of the link between business activity and values as a motivating and driving force was commented upon by both Santos (2009) and Cho (2006)

As such, the DTI (2002) definition of SE was largely embraced by the women SEurs, who accepted each part of its four component parts, but who nevertheless felt compelled to expand upon the very simplistic terms proffered, and to (re)define it to their own satisfaction. Ultimately, the DTI (2002) definition represented a basic framework by which SEurs, would-be SEurs, and (in principle at least) commissioners could understand the concept, which as such made it fit for purpose.

However, the women SEurs unanimously expressed concern that the 'spirit' of SE – the morality and values that they felt truly defined a SE, and which guided every aspect of their own and their organisations' behaviour – was not

adequately captured by the 'not-for-personal profit' aspect of the definition. Furthermore, as discussed, neither the specific content of the DTI (2002) definition, nor the way in which it was disseminated – the audience to whom it was promoted – fulfilled the purpose of informing and educating a largely uninformed general public, the associated problems of which emerged in the stereotype threats and the attendant legitimacy threats experienced by both the women themselves, and their SEs.

9.1.9 Poor public understanding of SE: stereotype, discursive and legitimacy threats

The effects of the ongoing poor public understanding of SE outlined above manifested in several different ways for the women SEurs interviewed for this study. The first level of problematic misunderstanding emerged as being related to the application of erroneous stereotypes to the women's SEs by members of the public (including, in the case of the more traditional-type SEs, prospective clients) as people sought to cognitively categorise the SE with which they were interacting.

As a result, assumptions were made about SE based on experiential and socio-cultural cognitive schema, combined with the limited information relating to SE on which people were able to draw. The most common (and problematic) assumptions made about SE were that SEs were religious organisations, that SEurs were 'radicals', that SE was synonymous with charity, and that SE, as a form of entrepreneurship, reflected the style of entrepreneurship popularly pursued during the Thatcher era.

The second level of problematic misunderstanding involved the discursive associations related to the erroneous stereotypes applied to the women's SEs by a misinformed public. As a direct result of this process, not only were the women's SEs incorrectly judged to be other than they were, the dominant discourses attendant on the stereotypes applied were also assumed to hold true so that, for example, if an SE was assumed to be a charity, it was further assumed to make use of volunteer as opposed to paid staff, and to not charge

for its services. The difficulties created by such discursive associations with erroneous stereotypes are discussed in more detail below.

The final level of problematic issue caused to the women SEurs by the poor public understanding of SE was represented by the professional and organisational legitimacy threats created as a cumulative result of the erroneous (stereotypical and discursive) assumptions applied to their SEs and by association, to themselves as professional women.

Thus, taking the example mentioned above, should a SE be assumed to be a traditional charity, using volunteer staff and not charging for service provision, then the revelation that an SE does indeed charge for its services, does aim to extract profit, and does pay its staff for their work, then the legitimacy of the SE, and of the SEur and her staff, runs the risks of being severely compromised. This in turn can affect trust, alongside the social standing of the SE and its staff within the local community.

9.1.10 Stereotype, discursive and legitimacy threat #1: religion and charity/voluntary work

The first stereotype threat experienced by the women in relation to their SEs and SEurial activities manifested in the regular assumption by members of the general public that the women were running traditional charities. This particular stereotype activation was supported by discursive extensions associated with charitable work, (Humbert, 2012) and that as a result, charitable activities are often the preserve of the "volunteer…middle-class 'lady' juggling church jumble sales with fundraising lunches" (Taylor, 2005: 119).

In this way, it can be seen that the type of (human development) work largely undertaken by the women's SEs activated the initial stereotypical association with religious (read: Christian) charitable works, which assumption was further 'supported' by discursive correlations between such work, and the gender, class, and race of the majority of the women SEurs.

Added to this was the centrality of morality and ethics to the women's SEurial work, which served to create further cognitive and discursive connections

between the erroneously applied stereotypes of religion/religious motivations, charity, and the privileged paternalism of middle class Christianity founded upon a "moral obligation and social duty to those less privileged" (Taylor, 2005: 127).

Thus, the fact that the vast majority of the SEurs were white and middle class, coupled with the fact that they were also women, served to provide apparent supporting evidence of the initial erroneous stereotype related to religiosity and charity. This finding stood at odds with the claim made in two separate publications by SEUK (2011, 2013) relating to the 'fact' that "[s]ocial enterprise is clearly challenging the abiding social stereotype of business as the preserve of the older, white male" (SEUK, 2013: 43).

Such a claim clearly relied on two separate assumptions, the first relating to the visibility of the SEurial owner/manager who should be easily identifiable *as* the SE owner/manager, *and also* be female, the second that the SE should be understood and related to as a *business*. However, the fact that the women reported their SEs being misunderstood as traditional charities, strongly implied that their SEs were *not* in fact seen to be businesses in spite of governmental and other sectoral stakeholders' claims to the contrary.

As such, whilst it may be true that, as noted in the SEUK (2011, 2013) publications, women's participation at Board level within the SE sector is generally more widespread than it is within mainstream business, the fact nevertheless remains that "women dominated boards are more likely to be found in sectors that have stereotypically been a focus for women's employment such as youth and childcare" (Lyon and Humbert, 2013: 8), and that if SE is perceived to be 'charity' rather than 'business', then women's engagement with it at all levels only serves to reinforce the gendered dualism of voluntary, charitable work as 'women's' work, and the 'real' (read: paid, professional) work undertaken by men within the labour market Neysmith and Reitsma-Street (2000).

As such, volunteering work is not only devalued by its association with women and the traditional gender roles epitomised within the male breadwinner model, but it is also simultaneously rendered invisible for the same reasons (Humbert,

2012). Indeed the devaluing effect of SE's association with charity and voluntary work emerged as a legitimacy threat experienced by the women SEurs, who felt that their professional status as both (social) service providers and as business women was constantly undermined as a result.

Bearing in mind the fact that SE was routinely interpreted by the general public as being traditional voluntary and charitable work, the fact, as has been abundantly evidenced within the feminist entrepreneurship literature, that business management and entrepreneurship are gendered to a male norm (Ahl, 2006; Ogbor, 2000; Smith, 2010) would have provided further barriers not only to the women's professional legitimacy as SE business owner-managers based on the gendered stereotype 'think manager, think male' (Heilman, 2012; Schein and Davidson, 1993; Schein *et al*, 1996) , but also to the possibility of their SEs being considered to be anything other than charities based on the gender presentation of the women SEurs themselves.

Thus, if business/entrepreneurship provoked the emergence of masculine gendered cognitive stereotypes, whilst charitable (religious), voluntary, and human development social work elicited cognitive associations relating to women as a result of the stereotypical extension of traditional gendered divisions of domestic labour (specifically caring work) into the labour market, it is not difficult to understand why the additional erroneous application of stereotypes of (faith-based) volunteers as being "bible-bashing do-gooders, or enthusiastic and well-meaning, but essentially impotent amateurs" (King, 2011), resulted in the women SEurs experiencing a sense of constant threat to their professional legitimacy as a direct result of the poor public understanding of SE.

A further area of contention emerged in relation to the (largely) erroneous and stereotypical association of SE with charity/voluntary work, which related to a further assumption that the services provided by the women's SEs would be delivered for free, and that staff would be (unpaid) volunteers. The cumulative result of this situation was that the women SEurs reported regularly experiencing hostility as a result of their (unashamed) revelation of the pursuit of profit in their work, the need to charge for services provided, and the payment of staff in line with other mainstream businesses.

9.1.11 Stereotype, discursive and legitimacy threat #2: radical politics/alternative lifestyle

The next stereotype threat identified by the women SEurs related to a conceptual association in the mind of some elements of the public, that considered SE to represent a form of 'alternative lifestyle choice' embraced by a 'radicals', who were conceived of as either anti-capitalists or eco-activists.

It appeared that the people who understood the SEurs as being 'radicals' of one sort or another, conceptualised SE as a form of activism that sought to challenge the status quo. However, whilst such a conceptualisation of SE certainly echoed the women SEurs' view of SE, they felt that the 'radical/alternative' element undermined their professional credibility – that radicals and other activists were perceived to be anarchic, on the far-left of the political spectrum, and non-mainstream.

As a result, the social activist side of their SEurial identities was fore-fronted at the expense of their professional credentials, and the women felt at best 'indulged', and at worst marginalised rather than taken seriously. Alexandra spoke of feeling that all SEs were "pigeon-holed".). Jessica expressed similar frustrations relating to her perception of her professional identity and capabilities being rendered invisible or subsumed by the imposition of erroneous stereotypes of SE and SEship related to either/both eco-activism (for those SEs, like hers, that dealt with environmental issues), or anti-capitalism by dint of not being traditional mainstream businesses, but ethical businesses with a double/triple bottom line. Like Alexandra, Jessica felt under pressure to constantly explain and justify herself, as the initial stereotypes applied to her and her work within her SE provoked discursive extensions that led her to experience the sense of amused indulgence with which prospective clients interacted with her and her SE, perceiving it to be (in the absence of experiential experience to the contrary) a "hippified, fluffy thing" (Jessica).

Whilst the 'radical/alternative' stereotype was reported by far fewer of the women SEurs than issues relating to the public perception of SE being charity/voluntary/religious, the outcome proved to be the same, namely that the

stereotype applied was erroneous, and that the discursive extensions associated with it served to undermine the women's legitimacy, professional capacity, and ultimately their credibility as business owner/managers.

The lack of professionalism associated with stereotypes of activism and alternative lifestyle choices, mirrored the perceived amateurism of the discursive associations with voluntary work, both of which stereotypes proved personally and organisationally problematic for the women and their SEs as their professional capabilities were effectively challenged on the basis of erroneous assumptions.

As noted earlier, women entrepreneurs and business managers suffer from gender-based legitimacy challenges as a result of the masculine construction of both management and entrepreneurship, which barriers were further compounded by the assumed amateurism and lack of professionalism associated with stereotypes conceptually linked to SE by the general public. When it is further considered that social service delivery is often considered to be an extension of women's unpaid (and therefore unvalued) domestic labour, and as such has a tendency to sectoral feminisation (Humbert, 2012), which as a phenomenon has been shown to be correlated to low pay, low social prestige, and for business-owners operating in such sectors, low growth opportunities (Bourne, 2010; Marlow *et al*, 2008; Marlow and McAdam, 2013; Saridakis *et al*, 2014), the legitimacy threats to the women as both qualified and experienced practitioners, as well as SE business owner/managers were perhaps unsurprising.

However, whilst the gendered aspect of these barriers i.e. the specifically gendered nature of the stereotypes, discursive extensions, and assumptions, are almost entirely absent from both the academic literature and governmental policy documents, they nevertheless provide insight into the ways in which women SEurs' professional identities are placed under the constant pressure of being assumed to be 'lacking' in essential masculine ways (Ahl, 2002; Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Heilman, 2012; Wilson and Tagg, 2010).

Thus, the poor understanding of SE amongst the majority of the general public meant that people sought to understand the concept by drawing on understandings from their day-to-day social and cultural experiences, which in turn led to stereotypical associations being made between, for example, SE and religiously-motivated charity work and volunteering. This in turn exposed the women SEurs to cognitive and discursive links between such activities and traditional expressions of middle class, white, femininity (Taylor, 2005), which put many of them at an immediate professional disadvantage simply on account of their gender identity.

Added to the inherent gendered disadvantage of being female, and having their SE work understood as being charity/ voluntary work, the women SEurs were also subjected to the discursive associations related to the initial stereotyping of their organisations (and by association of themselves), which manifested in an assumption not only of amateurism, as opposed to competency and consummate professionalism, but also of providing services for free, whilst simultaneously not paying staff for service delivery.

As noted by Mirchandani (1999: 231) "femaleness gets inscribed onto jobs which involve little control or power, and these jobs are simultaneously labelled as 'unskilled' work requiring feminine traits". Thus, the 'lack of power and control' associated with the types of (charitable) voluntary work traditionally undertaken by women (read: social work), provided an explanation for its conception as an extension of the 'unskilled' and unpaid domestic labour performed by women in the home. Further, as a result of such work being deemed to be both 'unskilled' and ascribed as 'women's work', the presumption of a lack of remuneration (and charge) for the delivery of such services was almost inevitable.

However, as a result of the cumulative effects of these assumptions, the women SEurs felt denied the legitimacy of a both a personal and organisational professional status, being assumed to be amateurish/unskilled in terms of their personal professional identity, and organisational capacity for service delivery, and as a result of being nominally 'unskilled', to be unworthy of organisational payment and personal remuneration.

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Thus, through the women SEurs' reported experiences, the effects of the invisible masculine norms of skilled (men's) work as worthy of remuneration, set against the feminine norms of 'unskilled' and unpaid (women's) domestic labour and voluntary work were revealed, and the gender-specific personal and organisational issues thereby created were exposed. Alongside these, the women further experienced the denial of the social prestige afforded to paid professional/skilled labour as their professional careers were rendered inconsequential through their association with gendered, feminine stereotypes.

Finally, the assumption that the women's SEs were charities and not businesses was further supported by discourses not only linking women to voluntary, and the social service-type work seen to extend their 'unskilled' and unpaid domestic labour outside the home, but also by those that aligned business management and entrepreneurship with masculinity. As a result, the women were effectively denied the opportunity to express a legitimate and meaningful business owner/manager identity, which in turn denied both their personal and organisational professionalism.

It was thus made clear that the discursive extension associated with voluntary/charity work between the (assumed) lack of cost/payment for a service, and its (perceived) lack of value was central to the denial of professional legitimacy to the women SEurs, and that the (assumed) lack of personal remuneration for services provided was correlated with a (perception) of amateurism. The lack of social and economic value associated with social/environmental service provision (in the home or the labour market), and its association with both women, and lack of skill, stood in direct contrast to the 'professionalisation' of human and environmental exploitation associated with the types of well-remunerated professional work most commonly linked to big business.

In this way, the women SEurs were not only subjected to negative gender-based stereotyping as *women* assumed to be engaged in unpaid social work, and thus *not* to be business owner/managers, but also as *workers* assumed to be unskilled amateurs. Thus the social prestige afforded to the (paid) work that supported environmental destruction and human exploitation was shown to be

far greater than that associated with work attempting to achieve social and environmental justice.

The lack of value (social prestige) placed upon such work led to its 'justifiable' association with women, who were perceived to be willing "mothers of the community…there to help, to build, for others but never for themselves, and…seldom valued or rewarded for their work" (Humbert, 2012: 10). Figure 9.1 on the following page, shows the stereotypes and attendant gendered discursive extensions experienced by the women SEurs.

Stereotypes and discursive extensions associated with femininity/women

Stereotypes and discursive extensions associated with masculinity/men

Charity

Social service delivery

Voluntary work

Amateurism / Unskilled

Extension of (unpaid) domestic labour

Lack of value

Work for free / without charge

Women SEurs

Business management / entrepreneurship

Professional work

Skilled

Breadwinner model

Valued

Paid

Figure 9.1: Stereotypes and gendered discursive extensions experienced by the women SEurs

9.1.12 Stereotype, discursive and legitimacy threat #3: Thatcherite-type entrepreneurship

The final organisational legitimacy threat identified by the women SEurs during the interview process related to the perceived threat posed by some newcomers to the SE field, whom the women believed not only to be acting in a manner contrary to their conceptualisations of 'real' SE/SEship, but simultaneously to exemplify the type of entrepreneurial approach lauded during the Thatcher years.

As noted by Chell (2007: 8), "enterprise culture under Thatcher became a moral crusade" the 'morality' of which was premised upon the enactment of "values of individualism, personal achievement, ambition, striving for excellence, effort, hard work and the assumption of personal responsibility for actions" (*ibid.*: 8). The women SEurs however, felt that the economic rationality and stark individualism of this approach to entrepreneurship stood at odds with the meaningful achievement of the double/triple bottom line associated with SEship, appearing to concur with Grenier's (2009: 179) contention that such an approach was fundamentally underpinned by "avarice, opportunism, and corruption".

As such, this 'mainstream' version of entrepreneurship, which was perceived to lack a foundation of morality and ethics, represented the specific type of entrepreneurial approach that the women wished to distance themselves from, and which they felt posed a legitimacy threat to their own SE organisations by association. Indeed, the incursion into the SE sector of private sector organisations developing nominally SE models in order to gain access to governmental contracts was highlighted as being deeply problematic by the women SEurs, who believed that such approaches represented a diametrically opposite approach to the (social/environmental) opportunity recognition and subsequent (business development) opportunity exploitation that they had undergone.

Thus, the innovation in service delivery exhibited by such interlopers to the SE sector was instead deemed to be founded upon the recognition of an *opportunity to exploit* a policy approach that 'invited' incursion through the open-

endedness of its definition of SE as an organisational form. As such, the perceived fundamental desire to create new SE organisations specifically for the purpose of exploiting an opportunity to extract profit without concern for people or planet, was considered to be symptomatic of the 'morally bankrupt' approach embodied in economically rationalist and individualistic approaches to entrepreneurial profit maximisation. This issue is discussed in more detail in the second section (9.2 to follow), which elucidates the ways in which the women SEurs reported putting their moral principles into practice as enacted SEship, delivered through their SE organisations.

9.1.13 The discursive gendering of SE and SEship: state-sanctioned exploitation?

The obviously gendered presentation of SE and SEship to different audiences by the sector's 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) revealed the gendered ways in which SEship was conceived of and understood within policy-making circles, alongside the assumptions made regarding the gender make-up of the specific groups targeted.

The divide in both target audience, and gendered content represented by the publications made available by government, and those by support agencies (e.g. SEC, SEL, SEUK) was marked, with governmental publications appearing to be aimed at (demand-side) professional audiences, whose support for the sector was subtly being sought, whilst support agencies appeared to target (supply-side) lay audiences of potential SEurs.

This clear 'division of labour' between the two groups representing the 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) within the SE sector was notable for its 360º approach that allowed both demand to be created for the governmental commitment to the development of the sector, alongside the attraction of new SEurs in support of the anticipated and desired expanded provision of services within the sector. However, what it also revealed were the close links between the support organisations, which were nominally 'independent' of government and the government itself, which was pursuing its own policy agenda.

As vehicles for the dissemination of a governmentally-sponsored political agenda, the support organisations' publications, whilst undoubtedly well-meaning in their intent, represented a non-critical capitulation to the governmentally defined parameters of SE and SEship, and to its associated definition. As such, the support organisations were less a voice for the sector and its members, than a voice for the diffusion of governmental rhetoric and discourse on SE, thereby colluding in the propogation of potentially delimiting discursive boundaries relating to SE and SEship, that scholars had critiqued for their tendency to create isomorphic conformative pressures within the sector in support of the attainment of organisational legitimacy (DiDomenico *et al*, 2009; Griffith, 2012).

With regard to the gendered nature of the material within the support organisations' published documentation, the types of words and phrases used were largely 'feminine' in nature, and often referenced traditionally female roles and stereotypes. Examples of the traditionally feminine stereotypes/gender roles that they referenced were typically founded upon an essentialist view of women as: selfless, mother-figures, concerned with others above themselves, giving, unconcerned by monetary gain, and emotionally available.

However, they simultaneously referenced sterotypically feminine 'failings', which were also highly essentialist in nature, and included the conception of (particularly older) women as: mentally stagnating, socially isolated, and believing themselves to be undeserving/valueless.

These linguistics associations clearly demonstrated the highly gendered cognitive correlation between SE and SEship and women, premised upon its inherently social nature, which was assumed to be attractive to the target audience of women based upon their gender-specific 'natural' propensity towards the requisite caring/caretaking roles.

These gender essentialist correlations were borne-out in findings presented by Pines *et al* (2012: 11) who concluded that "social entrepreneurship seems to be an area to which women are expected to be attracted", and echoed by Humbert (2012: 10) who, as mentioned previously, noted women's regular portrayal within the wider Third Sector as:

> "not motivated by pecuniary reasons but more by a desire to act as what can only
> be described as mothers of the community: women are there to help, to build, for
> others but never for themselves, and are seldom valued or rewarded for their work"

The portrayal of women in these highly gendered terms arguably served to reinforce and legitimise both the gendered association between women and all forms of care work, as well as those between women and SE, which according to SEC (2009) represented a 'natural home' for them.

Additionally, the acknowledged fact of start-up SEs' unremitting demands on the SEur's time, alongside the often unremunerated aspect of SEurial work (GEO, 2008), suggested that whilst SE was clearly being targeted to women, its benefits were at best unproven, and at worst non-existent to the extent that participation in SEship was shown to possess the potential to reduce a woman SEur's quality of life along both the financial and temporal dimensions.

Indeed, the unashamed presentation of a case study (GEO, 2008) that depicted a woman whose life was consumed by her paid work during the daytime, and her unpaid SEurial activity during the evenings and at weekends, demonstrated the utter lack of criticality of, and wilful blindness towards, the possibility of negative impacts associated with engagement with SEship.

Furthermore, it suggested an astonishing level of ambivalence towards the promotion to a doubly subordinated group of people – BAME women – of an activity that could have such devastating consequences for a woman's work-life balance, and general health and wellbeing, a situation succinctly summarised by Demsey and Sanders (2010: 437):

> "although popular portrayals of social entrepreneurship offer a compelling vision of
> meaningful work centred on solving pressing social problems, they also celebrate a
> troubling account of work/life balance centred on self-sacrifice, underpaid and
> unpaid labour and the privileging of organizational commitment at the expense of
> health, family and other aspects of social reproduction".

Bearing in mind the potentially negative consequences that engagement with SEship was acknowledged to have, it appeared particularly callous to promote such activities to nominally older women (over 50), through its presentation as an effectively 'redemptive' activity that could 'solve the problems' associated

with being older and female in society. In actuality, its ability to empower women to effect meaningful change in their lives was reduced to the individual level, as the supposed benefits of engagement with SE only had the capacity to address the symptoms (not the causes) of older women's invisibility and lack of social value in contemporary British society. Furthermore, the proffering of a 'solution' to such problems in the form of the 'benefits' derived from undertaking poorly paid (or unpaid) caring, nurturing, and developmental work within an SE sounded less like empowerment, and more like the state-sanctioned exploitation of another group of potentially vulnerable women.

9.2 Enacted SEship delivered through SE: practitioner conceptualisations of SE

The in-depth semi-structured interviews with the women SEurs employed in this study provided rich insight into the ways in which the women made sense of SE as a concept, how they enacted SEship through their SEs, and how the emergent themes linked to one another to form a cohesive whole.

As discussed in the previous section, the women SEurs identified values-driven moral behaviours as being central to both SE as a concept, and to its practice as SEship, and felt that such behaviours manifested as a direct result of the moral attitudes of the founding SEur(s). The ways in which the women conceived of SE as different to, and more than, the DTI (2002) definition of SE discussed above, centred on the ways in which morality and values were expressed in SEship (through SE) which, taken together, formed the concept of SEship as a unique form of 'ethical profit maximisation'.

The women SEurs conceptions of the 'ethical profit maximisation' as a process enacted through SE included not only the types of morally justifiable organisational behaviours actually displayed by the SEs, but also the organisational behaviours and norms relating to mainstream traditional business and entrepreneurship that they actively rejected. As such, ethical profit maximisation was explained as both what the women and their organisations *did*, as well as what they *chose not to do*.

9.2.1 SE as 'ethical profit maximisation'

As discussed above, the differences that the women SEurs most often sought to highlight between their vision of SEship (enacted through SE) and mainstream business/enterprise, centred on the way in which SE was approached by SEurs (their motivations), which in turn reflected the moral/ethical underpinnings that the women were at pains to assert the centrality of.

As a result, the women sought to differentiate SEship from the profit-maximising behaviours of mainstream business/entrepreneurship by way of their demonstrably 'higher order' motivations, manifest in both their reasons for engaging in SEship (in order to achieve positive social and/or environmental outcomes), and the fact that such motivations were premised on passionate political and moral beliefs in social and/or environmental justice, rather than on the desire to accumulate private wealth.

In this way, the women SEurs attempted to exemplify the fundamental conceptual and practical differences between the type of 'enterprising' behaviour embraced during the Thatcher era, and the morally sound behaviours of SEs. Thus, as noted previously, whereas Thatcherite entrepreneurship was envisioned as a 'moral crusade' for individual betterment (Chell, 2007), the women SEurs presented enacted SE as a '*moral* crusade' (with a specific focus on the moral) fought under the banner of social justice for all, and founded upon values of compassion, social responsibility, equality, egalitarianism, and a deep-felt sense of connection to others.

The morality of the women's conception of SEship and SE as 'ethical profit maximisation' was thereby presented in contrast to the 'moral bankruptcy' of traditional business and individualist, Thatcherite-type entrepreneurship leading to the suggestion that some organisations which met the nominal criteria for the accordance of SE status in-line with the DTI (2002) definition (including some organisations specifically held-up as exemplars of SE within governmental and other publications), but which did not demonstrate intrinsically moral motivations or organisational behaviours were simply, as Sinéad put it, "wolves in sheep's clothing".

This was perhaps unsurprising, given that the DTI (2002) policy document on SE asserted that the 'values' that successful SEs would be expected to "exemplify [were] enterprise, innovation, competitiveness and social inclusion" (*ibid.*: 8) which (social inclusion aside) represented standard mainstream business-derived terms that more accurately reflected the Thatcherite-type of entrepreneurial approach that the women SEurs actively sought to reject, than the morally-driven characteristics that they described themselves and their SEs as possessing.

The areas within which the women SEurs reported enacting organisational aspects of their ethical profit maximisation encompassed: staff treatment and working conditions, equitable pay structures, and fair product/service pricing. Each of these individual areas represented a site of contestation and re-imagining of mainstream business and entrepreneurial norms (and 'values') such that the women effectively sought to use their SEs to role model alternative ways in which profit-making (or seeking) businesses could be run both at no detriment to staff, and in a fair and open way for paying customers.

9.2.2 Staff treatment and working conditions as 'enacted ethical profit maximisation'

An active consideration of the fair treatment of staff emerged as a central theme in the enactment of ethical profit maximisation, covering pay and conditions, staff development, and a personalised approach to recruitment and retention.

For all the women SEurs whose SEs employed staff (volunteer, paid, and intern), there existed a wholehearted commitment to the absolute avoidance of exploitation of their employees based on the women SEurs' moral values, enacted within their SEs through a personalised approach to staff that viewed them as individuals, and recognised them as *people* (rather than simply as 'human resources') with lives and responsibilities beyond the confines of the SE business.

The focus on staff members as individuals meant that the women SEurs were willing to invest in the development of their employees in ways that would help them develop skills across a range of contexts that were not solely business

focussed (professional development), but which also included personal developmental skills and experience in order to enhance 'soft skills' such as confidence, assertiveness, and creative thinking.

Whilst a willingness to invest in the development of staff members as individuals with different and evolving developmental needs came at a significant financial cost to the women's SEs, they spoke of making creative use of their networks in order to extract value, and valuable opportunities, on behalf of their staff (free/subsidised training, collaborative training opportunities with other local organisations etc.), which in turn led to the development of great loyalty from staff.

Adopting a personalised approach to staff, as opposed to the type of 'bums on seats' approach often seen in large organisations, and being willing to invest time, money, and effort into both the personal and professional development of their staff created a degree of loyalty that extended beyond the normal working day, and created goodwill amongst staff such that volunteer, paid, and intern staff were reported to be willing to be very flexible in their work, and to 'go the extra mile' on behalf of the SEurs and their SEs.

The person-centred approach also underpinned an attitude towards staff that meant that staff welfare was of paramount importance such that Lucille, for example, spoke of investing all the available income into her volunteer staff – the provision of travel expenses, training opportunities etc. – in order to demonstrate their value to her as the SEur, and to her organisation even in the absence of remuneration (for either them or herself). Jennifer described a similar approach to her volunteer staff (with learning difficulties), which saw her SE only ever employing volunteer staff for 'proper' work i.e. work that would enable them to enhance their skill-sets. In this way, volunteers were never used to fulfil menial tasks, but were instead given (often supervised) roles that enabled them to gain skills and experience, as well as confidence and self-esteem.

For those SEs which used interns, the women tended to pay at minimum wage level if the SE's means enabled it, and in the absence of funds to pay interns, ensured that frameworks were in place to ensure the non-exploitation of intern

staff. For example, Audrey was very clear on the fact that interns were vital to her nascent organisation's development, and as such was at pains to ensure that her (unpaid) interns' experience was meaningful, positive, and personally and professionally enriching. By placing a time limit on internships, providing interns with clearly delineated roles, and by ensuring regular supervision and feedback, she felt able to provide them with valuable professional developmental work placements that would allow them to showcase their skills and abilities to future employers:

> "we are always trying to balance out their contribution to us, with our contribution to them, and ensure that they are not exploited" Audrey.

The main emergent contention from the theme of staff treatment and conditions was a highly personalised approach to staff members that saw them as *people* rather than as human resources to exploit to the benefit of the organisation, which created loyalty, and commitment amongst staff and the communities within which the SEs worked. Thus, the values that the women SEurs appeared to associate with staff treatment and conditions were fairness and person-centredness, which were in turn premised upon a view of staff as individuals engaged in a system of reciprocal value exchange through their work within the SEs.

The conception of person-centred staff development as a value-adding process for both the women's SE organisations and its employees, was widely reflected in the SE literature in papers dealing with social firms employing disabled people (Gray and Law, 2010), those specifically concerned with healthcare sector spin-outs (Addicott, 2011; Marks *et al*, 2007), and SEs more generally (Hoogendoorn *et al*, 2010; SEC, 2009; Allinson *et al,* 2011)

9.2.3 Equitable pay structures as 'enacted ethical profit maximisation'

Another form of positive staff treatment that emerged from the data related to the issue of equitable pay structures within the SE organisations. This issue concerned only remunerated staff, but reflected the women SEurs beliefs regarding the pay differentials between lowest- and highest-paid staff members often seen in large corporations, as well as the ways in which the women actively prioritised the payment of staff in the face of adverse conditions.

Viewing their staff as *people* with financial responsibilities that relied on a regular and reliable income reflected the women SEurs' wider moral and ethical viewpoints. As a result, there emerged a consistently reflected commitment to values of openness, honesty, transparency, and fairness in relation to the payment of staff, at the levels of both remuneration level setting, and the actual payment of staff wages each month, and as markers of moral organisational behaviour and ethical profit maximisation.

Whilst the ability of SEs to offer a 'better' employment experience for staff than mainstream enterprises remains a contentious subject, it was specifically highlighted as a means to attract highly qualified and motivated staff to SE (NHS, 2008; Ohana and Meyer, 2010). As such, it would seem that in spite of very limited information pertaining to the experiences of staff in SEs, the women SEurs were indeed reporting 'best practice' approaches to their staff, based on the application of their personal values to their SE practice.

9.2.4 Fair product/service pricing as enacted 'ethical profit maximisation'

For many of the women, the pricing policy that they adopted developed alongside the more general organisational values within their SEs, such that pricing tended to be based on an assessment of the 'fairness', to both the customer and to the SE, of the proposed price level.

As such, the fair pricing policy issue could be seen as a riposte to the assumption of amateurism and voluntarism experienced by the women as being associated with SE. The women SEurs were unashamed of their need for profit through their work, and felt rightfully justified in setting a price that reflected the resources (human and material) required to deliver a particular piece of work. In this way, the setting of a fair price allowed the women to reclaim and assert their professionalism as both service providers, and as business owner/managers by creating a pricing strategy that allowed them to be competitive within the marketplace, to pay their staff a fair and reliable wage, and to create a profit for divestment to charity/the ongoing provision of services.

The women thereby contended that by insisting on a price that was fair, that adequately reflected the resource demands of the service/product provision,

they would have sufficient of a profit margin to ensure that any additional ad hoc staff required would also be able to be paid at a fair, and non-exploitative rate. Additionally, the women expressed a belief that being seen (understood) by customers to price their work fairly (non-exploitatively), also served to counter the association of SE with free/cheap (charity/voluntary) service provision.

Concern over the perception amongst commissioners (as opposed to the general public) of SE as a 'cheap' option for the delivery of services was rife amongst the women SEurs, with many of them expressing cynical views of the governmental drive towards more SE involvement in the delivery of public services.

Based upon the informed view of the SE agenda having been politically developed in order to facilitate the quasi-privatisation of public services (Haugh and Kitson, 2007; Peattie and Morley, 2008), and nominally at least, to reduce public spending, many of the women SEurs believed that in the wake of the imposition of national austerity measures and attendant massive cuts to public spending, that SE was increasingly seen as the 'cheap' cousin of mainstream (private) business, achieving 'more for less' by working to a double/triple bottom line.

As a result, the women expressed concern that SE was being 'pressed' from both sides – one the one hand by a largely ignorant general public who assumed that SE was synonymous with charity and therefore provided services for 'free', and on the other by local authority and other commissioners believing SE to be a 'cheap', and therefore money-saving option for the delivery of public services.

As noted previously, the very emergence of SE in support of the politically-driven privatisation or quasi-privatisation (through SE/charity etc.) of swathes of public service provision, alongside ever increasing cuts to public funding as a result of ongoing national austerity measures meant that SE became increasingly connected to cost-cutting initiatives within local government, which in turn created cognitive associations between SE and cost-cutting (cheaper service provision) and therefore with it being perceived as being 'cheap'.

However, the pejorative cognitive association between the concept of 'cheap' with the concept of 'nasty' i.e. "sloppiness, shabbiness…[and] sharp dealing" (Zeithaml *et al*, 1990: 8), meant that the women were very focussed on renegotiating such (erroneous) cognitive and discursive associations, such that 'fair' (non-exploitative) became a metaphor for SE more generally.

As a result, the women SEurs's insistence on being viewed as 'fair' in terms of pricing stood in defiance of the notion of SE as either free/cheap and/or amateur, by placing the emphasis on the combination of the values-driven nature of SE, and its business-like professionalism. By so doing, the women sought to assert SE's right to be seen and understood as skilled and professional work, undertaken by trained and experienced practitioners, and as such worthy of competitive rates within the open market. Furthermore, they sought to assert the non-exploitative (fair) nature of SE more generally, and to thereby achieve 'buy-in' from customers on the basis that a fair price would translate not into personal wealth accumulation for the SE owner/manager, but rather into decent, liveable, and respectful (fair) pay and conditions for all staff involved, in addition to the support of social/environmental output. In this way, SE was presented as being a new, 'fair' way of doing business – fair to staff, fair to customers, and fair to society.

Interestingly, the conceptual association between SE and the notion of 'fairness' was central to governmental rhetoric from the policy-driven inception of SE during the Labour incumbency (1997-2010), during which the government sought through SE to combine "[b]usiness dynamism and success with fairness and social justice" (CO, 2006: Foreword by the Chancellor of the Exchequer)

The ConDem coalition government (2010-2015) asserted that "[f]airness is one of the fundamental values of the Coalition Government" (Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, cited in NEF, 2011: 45), and created a vision for SE that was linked to both the delivery of public services, and the 'renewal' of deprived communities (Conservatives, 2010b), and premised upon a belief that "[o]nly when people and communities are given more power and take more responsibility can we achieve fairness and opportunity for all" (ConDem, 2010: 1).

However, in spite of the rhetorical and political connections made between fairness and SE, fairness was clearly associated with social justice – a fairer society – and the achievement of a double/triple bottom line, rather than with a more integrated sense of fairness as a fundamental feature of SE. Thus, it was notably absent from the DTI (2002) definition of SE, and its conceptualisation within governmental rhetoric failed to extend to the ways in which the women conceived of fairness i.e. in terms of the additional areas of pricing (fairness to customers), and staff pay and conditions (fairness to staff), a point reflected in the ResPublica (2013: 35) publication on mutual forms of SE, which asserted the need for "ensuring justice and fairness for all those involved in the [social] enterprise, and affected by what it does".

These incorporations of 'fairness' into organisational behaviours at all levels were similarly absent from the DTI (2002) definition of SE, but the link between 'fairness' (social justice) and workplace environments was noted within the academic literature with Tracey (2011: 130) for example, noting that:

> "fundamentally, fairness and equality of opportunity cannot be achieved without workplaces implementing practices which promote these ideals; ultimately it is through employment that social mobility takes place" (Tracey, 2011: 130).

The notion of 'fairness' then emerged as a metaphor for the moral and values-driven managerial attitudes and organisational practices so highly valued by the women SEurs, and enacted as ethical profit maximisation through their SEs, the absence of which element from the DTI (2002) definition was commented upon by Claudette who mused that "there is something that isn't written down anywhere [in an official definition], and that's about the mindset…"

The 'fair' role modelling behaviours of the human development SEurs is shown in Figure 9.2 on the following page:
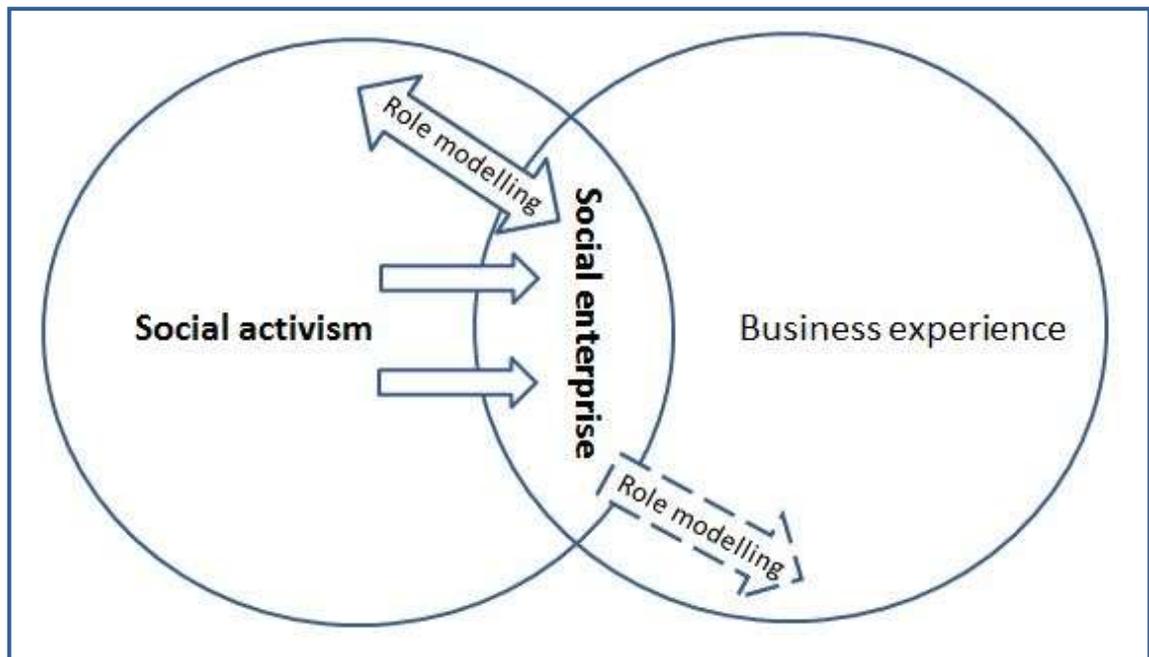
Figure 9.2: Fairness, role modelling, and ethical profit maximisation: human development SEurs

The (solid, two-way) role modelling arrow that moves from 'social enterprise' to 'social activism' represents the *internal* role modelling *behaviours* enacted by the women with regard to their SE's clients and staff, as the core role and function of SEship enacted through SE. The dotted arrow that moves from the 'social enterprise' section into the 'business experience' section represents the important, but somewhat secondary *external* role modelling *activities* engaged in by the women relating to their willingness to engage in public speaking activities to raise awareness, and improve public understanding of SE, alongside their desire to role model the intrinsically ethical nature of the SE model as a workable and viable business proposition to non-sector audiences.

Like the human development SEurs, the more mainstream business-like SEurs also saw themselves as role models for 'fairness', and similarly enacted the values that they wished to see internalised by others. As such, whilst the role modelling behaviours were comparable to those expressed by the human development SEurs, the specific focus was reversed, such that the *internal* role modelling *activities* were largely achieved through functional organisational policies (e.g. the payment of living wages to all staff etc.) and through recruiting like-minded people whose intrinsic values would reflect those of the SE organisation, whilst the *external* role modelling *behaviours* that sought to prove

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the legitimacy of SE to an ignorant and slightly hostile mainstream business environment was the main focus of the women's role modelling efforts as shown in Figure 9.3 below:
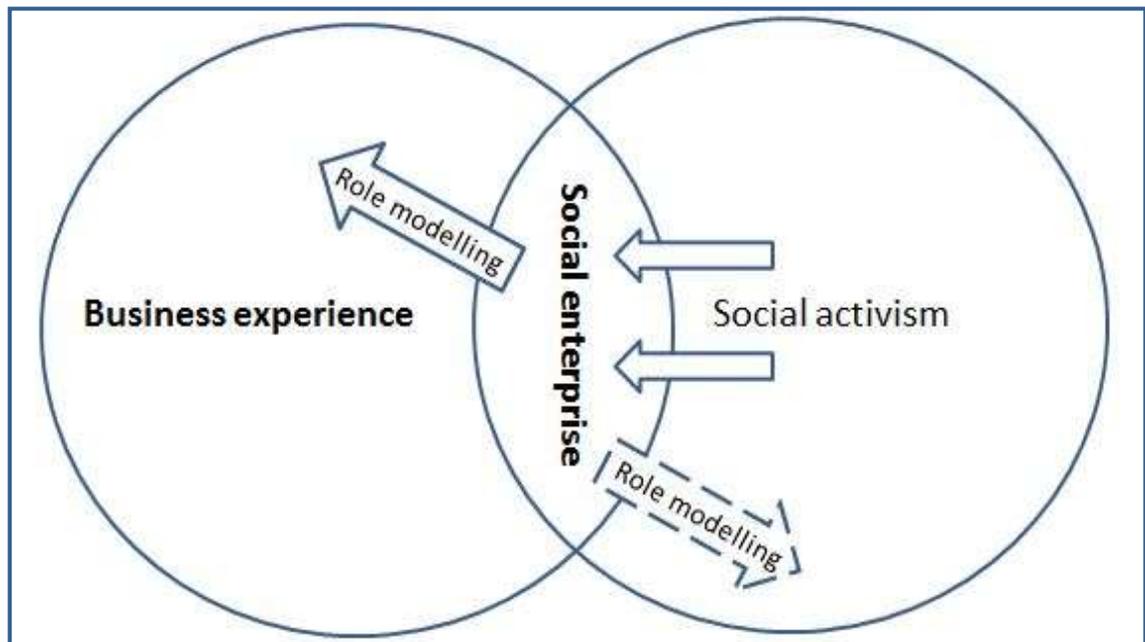
Figure 9.3: Fairness, role modelling, and ethical profit maximisation: 'more mainstream' SEurs

In this way, the core role modelling component – enacted as role modelling *behaviours* – for each of the two types of SE organisation was represented as the *solid* role modelling arrow, whilst the secondary role modelling component – enacted as role modelling *activities* – was represented as the *dashed* arrow.

9.3 SEurial identity: influencing factors and manifestations

Chapter eight explored the women SEurs' SEurial identities with specific reference to what factors were influential in their development, and how the women perceived themselves to enact that aspect of their wider identity within their day-to-day lives.

9.3.1 Life experience and SEurial identity formation

The most significant factor described by the women SEurs with regard to the emergence of a SEurial (as opposed to mainstream entrepreneurial) identity, was that of life experience. The influence of life experience appeared to manifest in two separate but linked ways, with the women describing being

'politicised' as children – through being exposed to politicised adults, coming to understand the inequalities prevalent in society, developing attendant morality and values, and believing that social/environmental injustice could be challenged and resolved – and as adults, using their 'sensitivity' to social/environmental injustices to recognise opportunities to effect change.

As discussed previously, the notion of opportunity recognition for SEurs consisted of two components– the social/environmental, and the entrepreneurial – as reflected in SE's double bottom line. The fact that less than a third of the women SEurs interviewed had prior business experience (n = 8 of the 30) suggested that SEurial opportunity recognition was heavily associated with social/environmental injustice, made visible by the morality and values developed by the women as a result of their life experiences.

This contention was supported by data drawn from the women SEurs' interviews, who regularly described identifying a social need prior to creating a business to provide financial (and other resources) in support of its resolution, and appearing to believe that SE was an almost 'inevitable' or 'logical' outcome of their life experiences.

Indeed, UnLtd (2012: 4) not that "social entrepreneurial activities…are wide ranging, and are strongly linked to each individual's background and life experience", which perspective was echoed by Steinerowski *et al* (2010). However, the lack of theorising of the connections between life experience and values as motivating factors for SEship meant that these emergent connections represented a gap in the nascent SE and SEship literature, a contention supported by Corner and Ho (2010).

9.3.2 Life experience, morality/values and meaningful work

The ways in which the women's life experiences and personal moralities and values came together to influence their SEurial identities and subsequent activities were manifold, and included a rejection of male-defined notions of 'meaningful' work and 'success'. The women SEurs almost invariably described the satisfaction that they derived from creating, within their SEs, an enabling

and supportive environment within which people could improve their own lives on their own terms, out-rightly rejecting the notion of personal financial gain.

Thus, whereas male-defined notions of entrepreneurial success tended to be based on masculine traits (Polack *et al*, 2012), "mimic[king] the masculine work model" (Mirchandani, 1999: 227), and correlated with the acquisition of money, power, and attendant social prestige (Smith and Anderson, 2003), the women SEurs interviewed tended to stress the importance of the positive outcomes associated with the human development aspect of their work.

This type of approach to SE was noted by Muñoz (2009: 7) who, whilst acknowledging the revenue-generating activities undertaken by SEs, nevertheless theorised "social enterprises as spaces of empowerment and wellbeing". Furthermore, the types of skills and competencies required to create and sustain the trust-based relationships that the women SEurs spoke of valuing so highly, were very similar to the managerial "traits (such as relationship-oriented, nurturing, and caring) regarded by experts to be important for entrepreneurial success [which are considered to be]…stereotypically feminine" (Gupta *et al*, 2009: 410).

The association between feminine stereotypes and person-centred managerial traits has emerged as a result of the extension of essentialist stereotypes of women's 'natural' propensities – for caring and nurturing tasks within the domestic sphere – from the domestic sphere into the workplace environment (Bellamy and Rake, 2005; Buttner, 2001; Hughes and Jennings, 2012; Levie and Hart, 2011). However, the transference of such stereotypically 'women's' work to the marketplace has brought with it an association with often denigrated 'soft' skills (Doherty and Manfredi, 2006; Shaw, 2010), which are in turn socially and economically devalued through their association with both the 'feminine' , and with women.

Thus, in spite of the empirically-based acknowledgment of the organisational benefits of the utilisation of so-called 'soft skills' within business management (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2005; Eagly *et al*, 2003; Heilman, 2012), the association of such person-based, interactional skills with the feminine (Mavin *et al*, 2004; Tyler, 2005; Weyer, 2007), and the feminine association with

socially devalued and unpaid domestic labour and caring roles, means that the traditionally 'masculine' leadership style known as 'transactional leadership' (Bass, 1990) is still the preferred *modus operandi*.

This 'masculine' approach encourages a style of leadership premised upon "getting things done by making, and fulfilling, promises of recognition, pay increases, and advancement for employees who perform well…[whilst b]y contrast, employees who do not do good work are penalized" (*ibid.*: 20), and assumes that male-defined (and culturally valued) success measures – money, power, and social prestige – are the most meaningful motivating factors shaping experiences of workers in the public (non-domestic) sphere.

By contrast, the transformational leadership style, which brings the person-centred skills that women largely acquire through gender socialisation (Linehan and Scullion, 2008), which "view suggests that observed gender differences represent real psychological differences in the motivation to work that arise out of the different socialisation processes of men and women" (Shaw and Cassell, 2007: 499), is based on a style wherein:

> "[t]ransformational leaders establish themselves as role models by gaining followers' trust and confidence…[s]uch leaders mentor and empower followers, encouraging them to develop their full potential and thus to contribute more effectively to their organizations (Eagly and Carli, 2007: 67).

Interestingly, if the phrase 'their organizations' in the above quote is replaced with the word 'society', the notion (and benefits) of transformational leadership are immediately applicable to the approaches utilised by the women SEurs, and enacted through their SEs. Thus it would appear that the moral values held by the women conspired with their gendered socialisation to create not a specifically 'feminine' approach to socially/environmentally focussed business (SE), but more a 'best practice' approach that applied the same value-creating approaches not only to the leadership aspect of SE (treatment of staff and creation of organisational behaviours), but also to the production of social/environmental output (treatment of clients/other stakeholders), and within society more broadly (through their personal and organisational role-modelling behaviours).

The connection between transformational leadership styles and its ability to appeal to others' values/morality was noted by Dunn (2007: 470), who stated that "transformational leadership appealed to the moral values of followers in an attempt to raise their level of consciousness about ethical issues", which itself appears to describe the attitudes expressed by the women SEurs in terms of their overall approach to, and relationship with, SEship.

What the nexus of life experience, values/morality, and SEship appeared to show therefore was that the women SEurs' human development-based work was socially devalued through its cognitive and discursive association with the feminine, and thus with the gendered division of caring work (read: women's work), whilst simultaneously appearing to represent the enactment of empirically proven effective leadership styles within multiple, simultaneous contexts.

Thus, the focus on 'meaningful' work as a reflection of the women SEurs' values and morality enacted through SEship, appeared to be gendered towards the feminine both as a concept – rejecting the masculine focus on profit maximisation, personal wealth accumulation, attainment of power and prestige, and the pursuit of a highly individualistic career path – as well as in the type of work undertaken – the (generally) human development work associated with the transposition of women's unpaid domestic labour into the marketplace – such that these findings provided an additional potential explanation for the general public's association of SE with 'free' (voluntary/unpaid) service provision as discussed previously.

The women's SEurial work was therefore clearly subject to gendered stereotyping based both on what it *was/what it appeared to be* i.e. work with a focus on the personal development of marginalised/vulnerable individuals and communities, as well as what it *was not* i.e. a (culturally lauded, normative) typically masculine model of business and business management/leadership. This in turn provided explanatory power for the contention made by many of the women of not being taken seriously as business owner/managers, which gendered barrier to business ownership has been widely documented in the feminist entrepreneurship literature as discussed in the literature review.

Within the context of SEship, the 'meaningful' work described by the women as being central to their motivation towards SEship could also be seen to be gendered not because of its inherently 'feminine' (read: human development focussed) nature, but rather because of its rejection of masculine paradigms of success and meaningful/valuable labour. Thus, by occupying a position of 'not-masculine', the women's SEurial attitudes, actions, and behaviours were assessed to be 'feminine' within the dichotomous, male-as-norm gender binary and consequently socially, culturally, and economically devalued.

9.3.3 Lack of focus on monetary gain

The women SEurs were unanimous in their assertion that engagement with SE should not be motivated by, or even linked to, personal wealth accumulation. This topic appeared to find its meaning in the rejection of traditional 'malestream' forms of business activity, premised upon business models designed to ensure profit maximisation as a fundamental *modus operandi*.

The rejection of traditional profit maximisation strategies, such as paying workers along the supply chain below living wages, offering casual contracts with no associated benefits (such as paid leave, sick pay, pensions etc.), charging excessive prices for goods/services etc., meant that the cost of running an SE was usually higher than running a similar business that did not work to the additional social/environmental bottom line (BoE, 2003; nef, 2005). Whilst higher costs undoubtedly correlate with lower profit margins, and therefore less money available to owners/shareholders to extract, the women's insistence on the lack of importance placed on personal monetary gain through SEship meant that the perceived personal 'cost' to the women (as business owners) of the ethical business practices of their SEs was similarly minimal.

Indeed, the personal 'cost' of SEship as enacted 'ethical profit maximisation' appeared to be off-set by the satisfaction that the women derived from providing the frameworks within which their client group could be supported to achieve their potential at a pace, and in a way, that was self-driven and therefore personally sustainable.

The issue of 'meaningfulness' within SE work that the women described both seeking and experiencing, was highlighted by Dey and Steyaert (2012: 96), who noted, rather sceptically, that SEurial autobiographical narratives often present a:

> "standard of meaningful work based on self-sacrifice […] propagating the idea that the sense of satisfaction and meaningfulness one gains from working in the non-profit sector will (or indeed must) compensate for the social and personal costs related to this kind of work".

The sense of self-sacrifice mentioned above certainly appeared to echo the ways in which the women SEurs described the economic and personal privations that they, apparently willingly, endured or embraced in order to pursue a SEurial career. Similarly, the women were quite free in their acknowledgment of the gendered perception and nature of their SEurial work, and indeed of their own attraction to it.

However, what was noticeable from the women's comments on the issue of the gendered nature of their work, and indeed their attraction to it initially, was the lack of value judgement with which they regarded gender in the context of SEship. They therefore did not appear to consider 'feminine' gendered work to be intrinsically better or worse than any other type of work, nor did they seem to believe that feminine gendered work was best performed by women. Instead, they concentrated their energies on developing systems and processes that enabled them to enact their values-driven politics through their SEs, using their professional and interpersonal skills and competencies in combination in pursuit of their ideals of social/environmental justice.

Thus, whilst acknowledging the gendered aspects of SEship, the women refused to buy-into an us/them gender dichotomy, thereby asserting the value of their work as equal to mainstream (malestream) business initiatives, whilst simultaneously and deliberately enacting counter-normative business/organisational ideals and behaviours. By refusing to dwell on the issue of the feminine, and instead emphasising the ways in which SE represented an amalgamation of, what Jasmine referred to as, the "best bits" of capitalism, the women created coherence between their conceptualisation of SE and SEship as a 'better', in the sense of being more ethical, version of traditional business,

and their educative and role-modelling efforts within the wider community as a form of social change. The women's contentions almost entirely echoed Spreckley's (2011) findings.

This gender-neutral focus on the benefits of SEship enacted through SE allowed the women to move their conceptualisations of SE and SEship beyond the constraints of gender and its attendant dichotomous stereotypes, and to open-up the possibility of large-scale social change for every business, and for everyone involved in business, regardless of gender identity.

By so doing, the women acknowledged themselves as gendered actors, accepting the influences of gender as a pervasive social system on their choices and the life-long development of their skill-sets, whilst simultaneously rendering themselves 'genderless' as SEurs (SE owners) and thereby denying the punitive imposition of gender on their SEurial identities and their SEurial work (Lewis, 2006). In this way, they attempted to neutralise the disabling effect of gender on themselves as SEurs – i.e. as *wome*n SEurs in the workplace – and to focus attention on what they considered to be the important factor in their work; the values-based motivations and behaviours, and not their femininity.

The gendered nature of SEship and the ways in which the politics of gender emerge within it is an area of research that is largely absent from the nascent literature, and deserving of more attention. If, as is contended above, the women SEurs' were unconsciously applying the principles of transformational leadership to not only their SE organisations, but also to their social/environmental output, and their community-based educative work, then its further exploration and theorising would logically appear to be a foregone conclusion. Furthermore if, as it seems, gender norms and stereotypes continue to have a constraining effect on the establishment of SE as an "integral and dynamic part" (DTI, 2002: 6) of the economy, then efforts to both understand and address these disabling, socially constructed barriers would seem a natural first step.

9.4 A discussion of the emergent findings in relation to key literature

The emergent findings from this exploratory study reflected findings already established within the nascent SE and SEship literature, whilst also providing new insights into the phenomenon.

This section explores the findings in relation to the three areas of entrepreneurship literature included in the literature review, which were feminist entrepreneurship literature, the mainstream entrepreneurship literature, and the critical SE/SEship literature. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the relevance of the emergent findings from this study to some of the key texts – specifically Ahl (2006) from the feminist entrepreneurship literature, Levie and Hart (2011) from the mainstream entrepreneurship literature, and Dey and Steyaert (2010) from the critical SE/SEship literature – in order to situate them within the context of current debates and theoretical insights within entrepreneurship research.

Ahl's (2006) paper 'Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions' brought together feminist theory and discourse analysis in order to provide insight into the power effects of what she termed "discursive practices" (*ibid.*: 597), which "shape the discourse on women's entrepreneurship" (*ibid.*: 596) and ultimately serve to continuously reproduce women's subordinate status.

Whilst all of the ten discursive practices identified by Ahl (2006) – the entrepreneur as male gendered; entrepreneurship as an instrument for economic growth; men and women as essentially different; the division between work and family; individualism; theories favouring individual explanations; research methods that look for mean differences; an objectivist ontology; institutional support for entrepreneurship research; and writing and publishing practices – have clear relevance to the development of entrepreneurship theory and attendant policy, the discursive practices most applicable to the findings of this study are outlined below:

9.4.1 'The entrepreneur as male gendered'

The women's discussions of the struggles that they had to attain and assert their legitimacy as SEurs largely reflected Ahl's (2006) contentions relating to the effect on women of entrepreneurship being gendered to an invisible masculine norm.

As a result of subjecting some of the 'foundational texts' in entrepreneurship to feminist critical discourse analysis, Ahl revealed the construction of the entrepreneur as not only male gendered, but more specifically as "an unusual and extraordinary figure with levels of achievement orientation, optimism, self-efficacy, internal locus of control, cognitive skills, and tolerance for ambiguity above the ordinary" (*ibid.*: 599). Indeed, not only was the entrepreneur presented as a male gendered heroic figure, he was also described in highly gendered terms, using adjectives that connoted the male to the almost entire exclusion of the female.

This finding is echoed in many other gender-critical entrepreneurship papers, which have similarly critiqued the effects on (particularly) women of the construction of the entrepreneur as a heroic male figure (Bruni *et al*, 2004, 2004a; Lewis, 2006; Ogbor, 2000), which construction has been found to reduce the legitimacy and credibility of women entrepreneurs (Baughn *et al*, 2006; Langowitz and Minniti, 2007; Nelson *et al*, 2003),and to lower the level of normative support that they receive in attempting to both engage in entrepreneurial activities and run businesses (Brush *et al* 2009; Welter *et al* 2006).

Additionally, the masculine work model, which imposes an artificial disconnect between the private and public spheres (Bruni *et al*, 2004a; Marlow, 2002; Marlow *et al*, 2011; Mirchandani, 1999), means that women's continued gendered responsibility for domestic chores and caring tasks have the effect of reducing the hours that they have available for labour market participation compared to men (Matthews *et al*, 2012; Pardo-del-Val and Ribeiro-Soriano, 2007), which subsequently reduces their perceived organisational commitment based on:

> "discourses about women that, in turn, reproduce their subordination in organizational hierarchies: that is, that women have a lower commitment to paid work and are generally more interested in domestic life" (Dick and Hyde, 2006: 549).

These issues were emerged from the data derived from the interviews with the women SEurs, wherein discussions around both personal professional and organisational legitimacy were central to many of them. Indeed, the women reported experiencing ongoing and unresolved problems relating to their clients' and other stakeholders' view of their (lack of) personal professional legitimacy, based on the physical manifestation of their gender identity i.e. their presentation as business owners with female-sexed bodies (Nadesan and Tretheway, 2000; Pringle, 2008), and the type of 'social' work that they (largely) engaged through their SEs.

The devaluation of the professional identities that the women SEurs reported experiencing was almost certainly linked, in part at least, to cultural discourses within which:

> "women entrepreneurs are represented as located in ghettos within entrepreneurship, notably in more backward sectors where skills are an extension of what has been naturally learnt through gender socialization; sectors that are easier to enter and which therefore have little value" (Bruni *et al*, 2004a: 260).

Bruni *et al* (2004a: 261) made further connections between the devaluation of 'women's work' in the private sphere, its consequent devaluation in the public sphere, and its gendered association with women, stating quite unambiguously that "female entrepreneurship is connoted with the devaluation implicitly associated with the 'female' gender". As suggested in the discussion above, and borne out in the experiences described by many of the women SEurs, being a *woman* entrepreneur (SE business owner) created barriers to the acquisition of social legitimacy through entrepreneurship's construction as a masculine pursuit as noted by Nelson *et al* (2009: 61)

> "[f]or business leaders generally, the images, symbols and ideologies are typically presented as gender neutral, though in fact they usually align with idealized images of masculinity – aggressive, goal oriented, and competitive".

Similarly, being a *female* entrepreneur brought with it all the 'implicit devaluation' associated with femaleness as the diametric opposite to the socially and culturally lauded masculine norm, whilst engaging in socially-minded (human development) entrepreneurial activities extended negative gendered stereotypes relating to both womanhood and femaleness from the private sphere into the public sphere, to form the triple nexus of subordination experienced by the women SEurs.

This triple nexus was manifest in the women's descriptions of the difficulties they routinely faced in being understood as profit-seeking business women, rather than as (mostly) middle class charitable volunteers. The activation of gendered stereotypes across a variety of domains meant that the women reported feeling under constant pressure to explain and justify not only themselves as professional people, but also their SE organisations in the face of widespread public ignorance of SE as a 'hybrid' business model.

A significant part of the barriers created at the triple nexus of subordination for women SEurs related to the fallacy of the gender neutrality of businessesAhl (2006). As a two-way constraining influence – for both women and men – which limited the gender-permissible sectors within which women and men could work, as well as linking workers within a particular industry with gender-normative identities, it provided a further plausible explanation for the activation of the erroneous gendered stereotypes experienced by the women:

> "businesses are not gender neutral. Certain types of businesses are more readily available to a woman than are others. Some are compatible with an identity as 'woman' while others are not. The reverse is, of course, also applicable. A man who starts a beauty parlour should, in my country, consider this very carefully if he wants to project a heterosexual, unambiguous 'he-man' image" (Ahl, 2006: 612).

Thus, whilst the human development work undertaken by the majority of the women SEurs was clearly 'compatible with an identity as woman' extending, as it did, the notion of domestic caring roles into the public sphere, discursively manifested in what Humbert (2012: 10) described as the role of "mothers of the community", the close cultural association of this type of work with philanthropy, charity, and voluntarism, as well as with white, middle class femininity created a

further barrier to the attainment of entrepreneurial legitimacy, as the owner/managers of profit-seeking businesses.

Thus, as discussed in the literature review and expanded upon above, whilst such gendered connections have been extensively explored and reported in the feminist critical entrepreneurship literature, the SE/SEship literature has yet to demonstrate a research focus on, let alone provide empirical evidence of, the gendered professional and organisational legitimacy threats that women SEurs face.

9.4.2 'The entrepreneur as male-gendered' and 'Men and women as essentially different'

> "The assumption of essential gender differences is a strong discursive practice. It affects research questions, hypotheses, methods, and interpretations of results. It may even lead to questionable research results. Not only researchers but also men and women entrepreneurs usually subscribe to the idea of men and women as being different." (Ahl, 2006: 604)

As discussed in the literature review, essentialist conceptualisations of women and men have long been critiqued in the feminist critical entrepreneurship literature for their tendency, amongst other things, to encourage sex difference studies which specifically seek out differences (rather than similarities), to reproduce women's subordination by presenting her as 'lacking' (invisible) normative masculine traits, skills, and competencies, to propose that the remedy for women's 'lack' lies in the replication of normative entrepreneurial masculinity, and to render invisible gender as a system of marginalisation, subordination, and oppression:

> "[t]he result [of which] is that women's subordination to men is not discussed. Making gender power structures invisible serves to exclude any discussion of how the social world is arranged and the possibility of structural changes. Shortcomings are attributed to individual women and not to social arrangements" (Ahl, 2006: 606).

Arguably the most pernicious effect of the gender-based difference dichotomy is the invisibility of normative masculinity, divergence from which - either deliberate or culturally enforced - is proffered as proof of women's difference, and attendant lack in the form of their 'othering' to the masculine norm (Lewis,

2006). Women's inability to protect themselves from the (usually negative) process of othering when engaging in traditionally masculine pursuits e.g. entrepreneurship, and business management, creates barriers to their attainment of legitimacy within such arenas ((Baughn *et al*, 2006; Langowitz and Minniti, 2007; Nelson *et al*, 2003), which situation was aptly described by the women SEurial participants in this study.

An additional barrier to legitimacy experienced by the women SEurs reflected the flip-side of the gender-based difference dichotomy, which saw the automatic mapping of feminity onto the social element of social entrepreneurship. The association of women (not men) with caring work, and caring work with social enterprise resulted in women being cast not simply as 'other' within the (social) entrepreneurial domain, but rather as (m)'other'.

9.4.3 'Entrepreneurship as an instrument for economic growth'

> "entrepreneurship…is characterised by words such as innovation, change, risk taking, opportunity recognition, driving force, and economic growth. It is constructed as something positive, leading to improvement. It fits nicely into the grand narrative of modernity in which development not only implies change but also implies progress, which is both valued and expected… It tends to make research on women entrepreneurs focus on performance and growth issues while ignoring issues such as gender equality and gender/power relations." (Ahl, 2006: 601-602)

The issue of the conceptualisation of entrepreneurship as a primarily economic activity was evident in the political discursive and rhetorical construction of SE which was positioned as 'first and foremost a business' (DTI, 2002). Indeed the focus of the Labour government's SE strategy centred on three outcomes, the first of which was the creation of an 'enabling environment' (DTI, 2003: 6) for the growth of the SE sector, and the second, the development of SEs into 'better businesses' (*ibid.*: 6), which demonstrated the direct transposal of mainstream conceptions relating to entrepreneurship into the SE domain.

Words and phrases such as innovation, dynamic, effective, energetic, driven, highly responsive, entrepreneurial drive, bigger and stronger, higher quality, lower cost etc. became rhetorical watchwords for SE and SEship, as politicians

sought to achieve their third SE strategy outcome: to 'establish the value of social enterprise' (*ibid.*:6).

The political desire to co-opt the legitimacy of mainstream entrepreneurship in support of the SE development policy agenda meant that not only was the hybridity, complexity and diversity of the SE sector rendered invisible by business and management discourses, but the conceptual simplicity of the transposal of business and management rhetoric to SE meant that the contradictions and tensions around the concept were also minimised to the point of (seeming) irrelevance. This approach enabled policy-makers to present SE to potential stakeholder audiences (Local Authority commissioners etc.) in a very accessible and immediately recognisable way – SEs were simply businesses that additionally delivered social and/or environmental benefits.

The concept 'growth' in relation to SE was also a key concept, relating to all three aspects of the stated SE strategy policy outcomes. First, the growth of local and national infrastructure to support the anticipated burgeoning of the SE sector, then growth in the numbers of SEs trading, and finally growth in the simultaneously social and economic outputs of SEs as they became 'better (read: growth oriented) businesses'.

However, the rational economic approach to growth was not easily transferable to the SE sector as profit margins, where they existed at all, often tended to be slim, income was often derived from a combination of trade and donations, and social impact measurement was almost impossible to reduce to mere facts and figures (Murphy and Coombes, 2009; Westall, 2009). Furthermore, the processional nature of the type of human development work that many SEs engaged in – rehabilitation of prisoners, work integration, assisting socially and economically marginalised groups etc. – meant that there could be expected to be a time lag between the start of an intervention process and the achievement of a 'measureable' outcome (Ruebottom, 2011), however those terms might be defined.

The focus on growth as a central conceptual component of the political construction of SE and SEship in the UK also had potential implications for practitioners, as legitimacy would only be conferred on those SE organisations

that conformed to normative models of 'successful' (read: growth oriented) SE (Peattie and Morley, 2008), increasing isomorphic pressure on individual SEs within the sector to conform to the transposed, celebrated and validated "private sector practices" lauded within success models of SE (Bull, 2006: 10; Spear and Bidet, 2005).

Bearing in mind that models of entrepreneurial success have derived from studies of men's (as opposed to women's) entrepreneurship (Bird and Brush, 2002; de Bruin *et al*, 2007; Mirchandani, 1999), and that such men's 'successes' are often founded upon the invisible support function fulfilled by his wife (Marlow, 2002), the unquestioned imposition of normative models of success that take "men's labour as the general standard for understanding women's work" (Kobayashi *et al*, 1994: xv) could be expected to have significant gendered implications for women SEurs.

Ahl (2006: 605) acknowledged that the gendered expectation for women to take on the "double responsibilities [of] - work *and* family - means that she cannot compete on equal terms with a man". Added to this, is that fact that women entrepreneurs have been shown to prefer to grow their businesses more slowly, steadily, and sustainably (Carter *et al*, 2001; Fleck *et al*, 2011) than men, tending to eschew the high-risk, 'heroic masculinity' of normative models of growth-oriented entrepreneurship (Cliff, 1998; Greene *et al*, 2003), which 'aberrent' behaviour has long resulted in women's businesses being deemed to 'underperform' compared to men's.

However, the fact remains that it is only the assumption that masculine normative models of success represent best practice that creates a situation within which alternative, non-normative (read: not male) models are denigrated. Thus, the implications of the transposal of mainstream entrepreneurial conceptualisations, theories, and models are that it risks producing significant negative consequences for practitioners across a range of contexts.

Indeed, the imposition of normative mainstream notions of success (as prerequisites to growth) assumes a certain level of economic rationality within SEship that critical scholars have shown to be often absent (Ridley-Duff, 2008; Steinerowski *et al*, 2010), as well as rendering the centrality of the values-driven

(as opposed to financial and power-driven) motivations of SEurs irrelevant, which would in turn have significant impacts upon both conceptualisations and measurements of 'success'.

For women SEurs specifically, the above-mentioned barriers created are experienced in addition to those caused by the normative masculinity of entrepreneurship, and gendered stereotypes pertaining to both women and men, to include the possible dismissal of novel forms of (social) entrepreneurial best practice premised upon the enactment of morality and values due to its non-normative (i.e. non-male) presentation, and its subsequent association with the (non-male) feminine.

As a nascent area of study, SE and SEship runs the risk of not only replicating the same gender-blind, masculinised theory development seen in mainstream entrepreneurship, but also of failing to recognise and celebrate possible examples of best practice in socially-minded businesses through dint of the innate sexism associated with women as a subordinated group, and their association with SE and SEship.

9.4.4 Politics and the discursive and narrative construction of SEship

> "if we want to understand…the political unconscious contained in social entrepreneurship stories, we have to accept that narrations, including its academic subset, have far-reaching consequences, not least because they imply a certain priority setting and narrative closure" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 87).

Echoing the theme of Ahl's (2006) paper, Dey and Steyaert (2010) contend that the discursive and narrative construction of a concept (in this case SEship) is a fundamentally political act that establishes delimiting parameters of understanding around a particular phenomenon. As such, 'the political unconscious in social entrepreneurship stories' refers to the underlying rationalities of such stories, and the assumptions and discursive domains that they utilise in support of their 'priority setting and narrative closure'.

As demonstrated earlier in the chapter, the political construction of SE and SEship by the Labour government was shaped by a policy agenda that sought to bring the rationality of the market to bear on entrenched social problems, within the context of a neo-liberal approach to social democracy. Thus, whereas

the SE support organisations produced documentation aimed at potential SEurs that reflected a gendered understanding of SEship as being attractive to women as a result of its social component, the documentation produced by government, and targeted at an audience of (male) potential stakeholders and collaborators, exhibited the masculinised language and discourse of business and management.

9.4.5 Individualism and the heroic social entrepreneur

Whilst Dey and Steyaert (2010) did not apply a gender lens to their work, the contentions that they made in relation to discursive control in terms of power were almost identical to those made by Ahl (2006). The heroic masculinity of entrepreneurship that Ahl (2006) and other feminist scholars had critiqued was also problematised by Dey and Steyaert (2010: 89), who noted that:

> "the grand narrative of social entrepreneurship often relies on an individualized notion of social transformation…[but] individualism is an elitist repertoire that emphasizes that "not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur" (Roling, 2002: 301) and that entrepreneurial success depends on certain capabilities. In turn, those pre-eminent entrepreneurial capabilities are deemed to be both appealing and indispensable. When social entrepreneurship is visualised as an attractive opportunity for the individual, entrepreneurial characteristics such as commitment and determination, leadership, opportunity obsession, tolerance of risk, and self-reliance gain in value and appeal" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 89).

Thus managerialist discourses encompassed by the 'grand narrative' of SEship served both to render invisible (and thus illegitimate) more communal approaches to SEship – a notion reflected by the women SEurs in their descriptions of the 'family-like' community environments created within their SEs – and focussed on the particular (rare) skills and competencies of the individual, leader-figure.

However, whilst the women SEurs interviewed for the study often asserted that their SEs were fundamental reflections of 'themselves' (their values, beliefs, and life experiences), they did not conceive of themselves as powerful, top-down leaders in the sense of the heroic masculine entrepreneur (Nicholls and Cho, 2006). Furthermore, whilst they clearly described many of the 'entrepreneurial characteristics' noted above for example, an almost unwavering commitment to

SE/SEship, the determination to succeed in the face of adversity, the leadership skills to inspire confidence in themselves and others, the constant search for new opportunities to improve or diversify their SEs etc., they did not consider such attributes to be out-of-the-ordinary (rare), or their work to be necessarily innovative and 'heroic'.

Instead, they contended that the skills that they were able to bring to SEship derived from their working lives, whilst the values and so-called 'soft skills' that gave shape to their SEs emerged as a result of their personal experiences. The entire (social) entrepreneurial journey was therefore conceived of in a totally different way, with connection to others (and/or the planet) being the catalyst for the application of specific managerial skills to the solving of a social or environmental problem. Thus, in a similar way to that described by Ahl (2006), Dey and Steyaert (2010) also felt that the rationalist, individualist, and (masculine) managerial discourses used to politically delineate SE and SEship, actually served to diminish the rich and complex reality of a phenomenon premised on a fundamentally different value-system than that of mainstream (malestream) enterprise.

9.4.6 Economic rationalism as the 'saviour' of the third sector

> "Rationalism *inter alia* implies that by applying best-management approaches to social issues one can remove uncertainties and make chaotic and complex affairs of (social) life appear well-ordered and manageable. In this way, the grand narrative hawks the promise that following the right code makes it possible to overcome the flabbiness and amateurishness casually attributed to the third sector so as to reach a higher social order" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 89)

The 'flabbiness and amateurishness' attributed to third sector organisations was a problem that the women SEurs identified as creating both organisational and professional legitimacy threats, and which they sought to counter through the forefronting of legitimating business discourses. By so doing, the women demonstrated a (perhaps subconscious) acknowledgement of the discursive power associated with such discourses, made dominant by 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) in support of their own political agendas.

This in turn showed the isomorphic pressures that such discourses brought to bear on SEurs and their SEs in order to achieve social legitimacy, the burden of which was considerably heavier for women SEurs who were additionally forced to confront gendered assumptions about themselves both as women, and as (social) entrepreneurs.

Thus, as discussed earlier in the chapter, the political insistence on the conceptualisation of SE as 'first and foremost a business' (DTI, 2002), alongside the application of its attendant legitimising managerial discourses, gave the women SEurs no choice but to draw upon the only available legitimising narrative (that of business/enterprise and management) at their disposal in their attempts to counter the gendered assumptions and negative stereotypes that they were subjected to. This in turn meant that, as pointed out by Dey and Steyaert (2010) amongst others, other perhaps equally valid and applicable discourses were sidelined as the discursive limits of business discourses and rhetoric marked the boundaries of possible conceptions of SE and SEship.

As a result, the main distinguishing feature of SE that the women sought to highlight – its moral footing and values-driven behaviours – was almost impossible to meaningfully articulate within the confines imposed by business discourses within which such ethical considerations were non-normative, and represented 'irrational' economic approaches. This lack of 'fit' between the legitimising discourses of business, and the foundational 'spirit' of the work carried out by the women SEurs created further stereotype threats for them and their organisations, as the public attempted to form an understanding of these discursively antagonistic concepts (business vs ethical behaviour), resulting in the assumption of 'radical' intent, manifesting in what was most commonly perceived to be 'anti-capitalism'.

However, the negative connotations of anti-capitalism, with its association with anarchic politics and anti-establishment rhetoric, failed to provide the sought-after social legitimacy, representing instead a stereotype threat that the women forcefully rejected. Thus any positive aspects of such a conceptualisation – for example, the need for collective action, the direct challenging of a flawed

economic system, the potential 'creative destruction' represented by alternative political ideologies – were lost, as the negative, over-arching dominant discourses (anti-capitalism, radicalism, and anarchy) were denied.

As a result of the women's enforced capitulation to the discursive limitations imposed by business and managerial discourses of SEship, the collective effort required to meaningfully combat social and environmental injustice was also denied, and the women's SEurial work reduced to the disparate efforts of often geographically dispersed, but ethically-driven individuals, whose lack of collective ideology or political organising meant that systemic change was impossible. In this way, whilst undoubetedly creating social and economic value through their SEs, the women's visions of large-scale social/environmental change moved out of reach, and their work was diminished to treatment of the symptoms of social/environmental ills, rather than the causes of it.

Whilst in terms of social change, any action is better than none, the introduction by the grand narrative of SEship of a "de-politicized image of social change that simultaneously relies on and creates a mixture of harmony, messianic redemption, and collective passivity" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 92) serves to mask the root causes of social and environmental injustice, and thus to prevent the large-scale political and economic reorganising required to meaningfully deal with it.

9.4.7 The 'messianic script' of SEship

> "[Whilst] the religious meta-script of social entrepreneurship is not necessarily discernable prima facie. This is the case precisely because it is "covered" by an ostensibly ideology-free façade…the grand narrative of social entrepreneurship relies on a stream of religious thought which positions the subject matter as the other of late capitalism's disenchantment, as an antidote to displaced idealism and the end of grand utopias or history altogether. What we mean by this is that the sign 'social entrepreneurship' has created a (however contrived) anachronistic move by dint of which dreams, hopes and promises again become possible" (Dey and Steyaert, 2010: 91-92)

As discussed earlier in the chapter, many of the women SEurs' narrations of SEship appeared to contain all the fervour of the recently converted; they discussed their relationship with SEship in terms associated with marriage –

commitment, and fidelity even in the face of poverty – whilst simultaneously describing their attempts to 'carry the message/good news' to the ignorant (evangelising), and to lead by example (role modelling). Many of the women spoke of a 'realisation' that SEship could offer them a meaningful way to combine work and activism, which echoed the contentions made by Dey and Steyaert (2010) of a 'religious meta-script' of SEship and an 'anachronistic move by dint of which dreams, hopes and promises again become possible'.

Whilst many of the women SEurs expressed a pseudo-religious relationship with SEship, the did not conceive of themselves as 'messianic/heroic' figures as such, but rather as 'foot-soldiers' in the fight for social justice. This conceptualisation allowed the women to draw upon the 'collective' discourses that were denied to them by mainstream business discourses, and to assert the communitarian 'ground swell' nature of the SEship movement, whilst simultaneously downplaying the need for political organising.

By so doing, and in line with the contentions made by Dey and Steyaert (2010), the women cast SEship itself (rather than themselves) as the redemptive 'messiah' and themselves in the role of its 'disciples'. In this way, they were able to undertake political action through SE, whilst simultaneously maintaining an air of political objectivity and indeed neutrality. This in turn allowed them to individually challenge the status quo at the micro level – through the work carried out by their SEs, through their 'evangelising' activities, and through the organisational role-modelling that they undertook with their SEs – whilst retaining social legitimacy through apparent conformity to the 'ideology-free façade' of SEship.

9.4.8 Women SEurs – qualitative versus quantitative findings

Levie and Hart's (2011) paper compared business and social entrepreneurs in terms of 'gender, context, and commitment', in order to inform policy development related to the Conservative Party's 'Big Society' policy agenda, the successful instigation of which would require "the foundation of new social enterprises by individuals: social entrepreneurs" (*ibid.*: 201).

Applying a multivariate logistic regression approach to the analysis of data derived from the "GEM UK 2009 database of 20,919 respondents aged between 18 and 64 years who completed a telephone interview between May and September of that year" (*ibid.*: 206), the study assumed an essentialist understanding of 'gender' (read: sex), applying it as one of several variables in order to compare populations of female and male social and mainstream entrepreneurs, based on the development of two hypotheses:

> H1. Early-stage social entrepreneurs are, ceteris paribus, more likely to be female than early-stage business entrepreneurs.

> H2. In communities of increased socio-economic need, female entrepreneurs are more likely to be social entrepreneurs than are male entrepreneurs (*ibid.*: 204).

The conclusions drawn from the work undertaken by Levie and Hart (2011) are considered in relation to the emergent findings from this study, and the similarities and differences discussed.

The first conclusion of note was that compared to mainstream entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs were found to be "more likely to be younger (18-24 years of age) and slightly more likely to be in their middle years (35-44 years of age); be better educated (i.e. with a degree); [and] operate the business on a part-time basis (i.e. commit less than ten hours a week)" (*ibid.*: 208).

Whilst basic demongraphic data was collected from the women SEurs interviewed for this study, the application of a qualitative methodology within a gender-aware, feminist informed framework meant that the emergent theorising was derived from the narrative, rather than the demographic data.

However, as shown, whilst none of the women SEur participants in this study fell in the 18-24 age group, 43% (n=13/30) were aged 35-44, which represented a nearly 10% increase on that reported by Levie and Hart at 35.3%. Similarly, 87% (n=26/30) of the women SEurs had a University education, a finding that again represented a more than 25% increase than that reported by Levie and Hart at 58.3%. As regards the time commitment of the women SEurs in this study, none of them reported operating their SEs on a part-time basis of less than ten hours per week, compared to Levie and Hart's finding of 73.3%.

Levie and Hart's contention that "[w]ith increasing levels of education, entrepreneurs are increasingly likely to be social entrepreneurs" was certainly borne-out by the demongraphic data provided by the women SEurs, and whilst demographic data regarding ethnicity was not directly sought within this study, only one participant (3%) claimed a non-white (Pakistani) heritage, which was a much smaller percentage of ethnic minority SEurs than that found by at 13.2%.

This study adopted a deliberate strategy of the application of qualitative methods in-line with its feminist theoretical framework, and thus collected only the most basic demographic data, considering that such 'impersonal' data could add little to theory development around women's experiences of, and participation in SEship. Furthermore, whereas Levie and Hart's (2011) study formulated conclusions based on data from nearly 21,000 research participants, this study's findings were based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with just thirty SEurs.

As such, it is perhaps unsurprising that the emergent results differed somewhat; the lack of ethnic diversity within this study's research cohort was noted early on, and (unsuccessful) steps were taken to address it, and whilst ethnic minority SEurs were identified and approached, the majority declined to participate. Of those ethnic minority women who decined to participate in the study and further provided reasons for this, the barriers appeared to centre on an unwillingness to give up their time for no financial return – a position that strongly asserted the professional value placed upon their time by these women, and further suggested the possibility of a lack of sufficient income/financial support to allow the provision of unpaid services (that may not have applied to the white women participants), as well as the possibility of a perception of racism on the part of the researcher as a privileged white woman requesting the free provision of time and information from a group of doubly subordinated (as women, and as ethnic minorties) people.

The age band within which the majority of the women participants in this study fell was, similar to that reported by Levie and Hart (2011), 35-44 years which appeared to reflect the richness of the life experiences that the women SEurs drew upon in first developing a SEurial identity, and then in developing

organisational norms and values for their SEs. Many of the women spoke of having had previous managerial employment experience, which again, would appear to 'fit' with the age group within which most of them fell. However, the almost 10% increase in the numbers of SEurs falling into that age band within this study as compared to Levie and Hart, is somewhat more difficult to explain. One possible explanation relates to the different data collection methodologies, with Levie and Hart's data being derived from a random sampling survey technique, whereas the women involved in this study were recruited specifically on the basis that they self-defined as SEurs, and owner/managed SEurial businesses.

9.4.9 Women's SEship: gendered conclusions, concluding with gender

Within their (2011) paper, Levie and Hart made a number of claims relating to women SEurs that merit comment. Whilst some reflected the emergent findings from this study, others simply rehashed the usual unquestioned, tired, gendered, male-as-norm, and essentialist views that feminist scholars have long critiqued:

> "while female entrepreneurs are less likely than male entrepreneurs to devote themselves fulltime to their venture, if they do, they are much more likely to be social entrepreneurs than are their male counterparts female social entrepreneurs are more likely to work full time on their ventures than male social entrepreneurs" (Levie and Hart, 2011: 214).

This comment, presented a gender-blind view of women's entrepreneurship, that failed to acknowledge the gendered reasons for which women, rather than men, might devote less time to their enterprises (i.e. child-rearing duties). By presenting an invisible male-as-norm view if entrepreneurial activity, the women's 'choice' not to engage as intensely with their businesses as their men colleagues, was presented as noteworthy (read: problematic), and used as a reference point for the behaviour of women SEurs, who were apparently more likely to work full-time on their ventures – a finding borne-out by the data from this study.

With regard to opportunity recognition, Levie and Hart proposed that being employed increased the chances of opportunity recognition, which contention

was linked to the average age of start-up entrepreneuers. The fact that the acknowledged 'peak age for business start-up' correlated with the 'peak child-rearing age for *adults*' (*emphasis added*) was then used to (partially) explain the lower levels of entrepreneurial start-up activity within the age group between women and men:

> "individuals already in work tend to be more likely to spot opportunities for starting a business than those not in work, and women tend to have a lower participation rate in the workforce at just the age group that has the highest startup rate: in one's 30s, where experience and interest are at an optimum. This happens to also be the peak child-rearing age for adults in the UK and thus the level of work experience is lower on average among women than men at the peak age for business startup" (*ibid.*: 203)

However, in spite of the use of the apparently gender neutral phrase 'child-rearing for *adults*', the unacknowledged assumption was that child-rearing was in fact *women's* work, which was proffered as the explanation for their lower entrepreneurial participation, as well as for their 'preference' for fewer hours devoted to their businesses per week.

These unacknowledged, gendered assumptions reflected precisely the types of discursive practices and positivistic approaches that Ahl (2006) and other feminist entrepreneurship scholars have critiqued: the invisible male-as-norm view of entrepreneurship, the normality of the gendered division of domestic labour, the lack of criticality of the gendered expectations and attendant constraints experienced by women, alongside the adoption of positivist methodologies that presented findings as facts, rather than simply as opinions (Gartner and Birley, 2002).

Levie and Hart (2011) went on to assert that for SEurs:

> "it is exposure to community issues that reveals opportunities for social entrepreneurship. Far from being an obstacle to spotting opportunities for social entrepreneurship, child-rearing duties are likely to increase the awareness of women to pressing social issues in the community" (*ibid.*: 203)

The assumed gender-based division of labour (childcare is *women's* work) allowed Levie and Hart to make such an assertion, in spite of the fact that whilst more women are acknowledged to be SEurs than mainstream entrepreneurs,

the fact remains that there are more men SEurs than women. If 'exposure to community issues' is indeed key for SEurial opportunity recognition, how then are men spotting opportunities for SEship if they are presumably at work, and not at home caring for children, or unemployed. Such a gendered assertion further assumed that women's opportunity recognition was intrinsically linked to their maternity (to their identity as 'mothers') which supported Humbert's (2012) contention of the framing of SEurial women as 'mothers of the community'.

By failing to adopt a gender-aware approach to their work, Levie and Hart (2011) unwittingly fell into the traps highlighted by Ahl (2006) of:

1. Undertaking sex difference research that "recreates a binary polarization between groups of individuals based on their sex…[thus]reproducing the subordinate role of women" (*ibid.*:597)

2. Applying mainstream entrepreneurship theory to the study of women thus effectively "comparing tehm to a male-gendered archetype" (*ibid.*: 601)

3. Using research methods designed "to find statistically significant differences between groups...[which] in combination with the assumption that men and women are different [proposes that] explanations [for these differences] are to be found in the individual, not in institutional arrangements" (*ibid.*: 608)

4. "[F]ocussing on gender as an individual characteristic rather than as something socially and culturally constructed that varies in time and space, [creating] research [that] tends to overlook structural factors and proposes that women have shortcomings" (*ibid.*: 609).

9.5 Conclusion

From the discussion of the findings and an exploration of their relevance to some of the key literature used to inform the development of the conceptual framework it is clear that gender, as a socially constructed system, neagatively manifests in a number of ways that hinder the ease with which women SEurs can engage with SEship.

Whilst discourses that associate women with the types of caring/human developmental work often undertaken by SEs increases (some) women's legitimacy in terms of their perceived competence, any gains are off-set by gendered associations relating to both the provision by women of such services

in an unpaid capacity – either in the domestic setting, or as volunteer staff – that serve to undermine the professional identities of the women SEurs, as well as to the strong and invisible discursive association between men and entrepreneurship.

Adding to the barriers to the straightforward engagement with SE of the women SEurs was the poor public understanding of SE, which resulted from the ongoing governmental failure to properly delineate the phenomenon, and to subsequently educate the public as to its value and merits. This in turn created the situations wherein the women SEurs were continually forced to defend themselves and their organisations by association, from the application of contextually erroneous gendered assumptions and stereotypes that posed significant legitimacy threats.

The power-effects associated with the control of dominant discourses by 'key paradigm-building actors' (Nicholls, 2010) showed how SE had been constructed in the UK for the benefit of policy-makers, rather than practitioners, and demonstrated the ways in which political values and ideologies were written-into the discourses. As such, the 'key paradigm-building actors' were able to assert the parameters for inclusion/exclusion and legitimacy/lack of legitimacy for all aspects of SE that were political pertinent, which had significant potential and practical implications for the women SEurs.

Finally, the emergence of the inter-connections between life experience, values and morality, the development of a SEurial identity, and the subsequent establishment of an SE organisation evidenced the very personal (and political) nature of the women's journeys to SEship.

Chapter Ten: Conclusions

10.0 Introduction

SE and SEship represent an under-researched sector, which "suffers from a tendency towards myth and assumption" (Peattie and Morley, 2008: 56) as a result. Within this under-researched sector, literature relating to women's SEship is almost non-existant, leading to an increasingly vocal call for women-centred SEship research, which this study aims to contribute to.

The politically contrived 'grand narrative of SEship' (Dey and Steyaert, 2010) is now been subjected to scrutiny by critical scholars concerned with the power implications and deliminating effects of its discursive dominance as a tool developed in support of a particular political ideology. As such, the developmental context of SE within the UK is closely linked to the 'grand narrative', yet little is yet known about how and in what ways practitioners relate to it, and exploit or reject it to their own ends.

With these issues in mind, the aim of this thesis was to explore the contextualised experiences, identities, motivations, values, and visions of success of women SEurs operating SEs within the UK. In support of this aim, the following four objectives were utilised:

- A contextualisation of the contemporary social entrepreneurship landscape in the UK

- An investigation of the personal construction of social entrepreneurial identity as a process that facilitates SE action, and an investigation of its relationship to lived experience, and personal values

- An examination of the meaning(s) ascribed to the term 'social enterprise' and 'social entrepreneurship' by the women participants, and an exploration of the effects of the political construction of the same on conceptualisation(s) by practitioners

- An exploration of the meanings ascribed to 'success' by the women social entrepreneurs specifically as they relate to life experience, values, and identity

The purpose of this concluding chapter therefore, is to demonstrate how the aim has been addressed through the four objectives, and to outline the contribution of this study to the advancement of theory, and the generation of novel empirical evidence. The chapter concludes by identifying the limitations of this thesis and by exploring potential avenues for future research.

10.1 Contribution

Due the almost non-existance of research data relating to women's experiences of, and engagement with SE and SEship, the emergent findings from the three empirical chapter discussed above all represent 'gaps' in the literature. However, of particular interest and relevance were the findings that emerged in relation to the women's conceptualisations of SE and SEship, which offered a novel, practitioner-defined view of the phenomenon.

10.1.1 The processional nature of SEship engagement

The first of these was the emergence of very strong connections between life experience, the development of morality and values, and the eventual establishment of an SE organisation. Life experience and morality/values have been acknowledged to be of importance to the development of SEurial propensity, but are also acknowledged to be poorly articulated within the literature (Westall, 2009).

The ways in which the women SEurs described their journey to SE establishment involved input from their family environment during their formative years, at which time their sense of morality and their personal values developed, as a result of these values the women were able to identify instances of social/environmental injustice as they moved through their adult lives, the eventual development of a SEurial identity was a precursor to the establishment of an SE, and allowed the women to hone their alertness to social opportunity identification, which facilitated the establishment of an SE organisation as shown in Figure 10.1 on the following page:
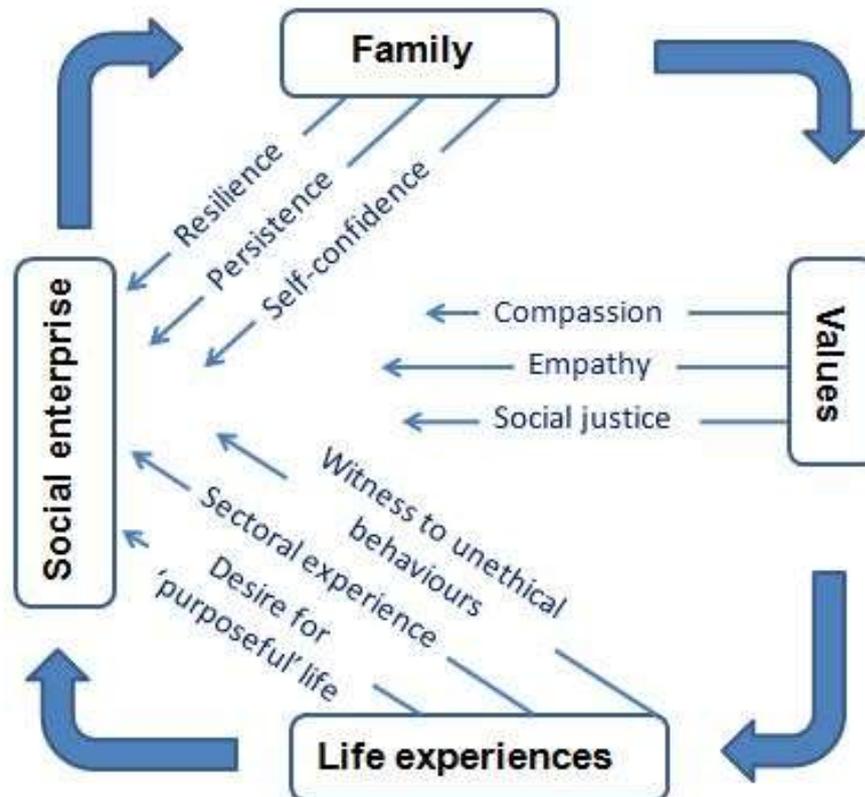
Figure 10.1: Motivations for social enterprise: pathways from family, values, life experiences

For many of the women whose SEs engaged in human development work, the role modelling of the personal competencies developed within their family environment formed a central component to their conceptualisation of themselves and their organisations as facilitators of their clients' personal potential maximisation.

As such, these insights into both the processional nature of the development of a SEurial identity, and its effects on SEurial opportunity recognition, subsequent SE establishment, and the organisational practices developed represented a clear response to the identified knowledge gap relating to understandings of SE and SEship derived from the exploration of the "intersection of personal and organisational social enterprise narratives" (Cornelius *et al*, 2008: 366).

10.1.2 The gendered cumulative disadvantage

The second emergent finding of note was the revelation of the cumulative, and largely negative, gendered effects experienced by the women as a result of the (gendered) discursive construction of certain domains – specifically, entrepreneurship as male-gendered, charitable work/volunteering as female-gendered, and caring (social) work as female-gendered.

Feminist scholars have long established the veracity of the masculine norm of entrepreneurship, which is known to create barriers to women's engagement with entrepreneurship across a variety of contexts. However, the revelation of the additional gendered barriers experienced by women SEurs based on the discursive domains of the female gendering of caring work (as an extension of the unpaid domestic caring undertaken by women into the marketplace), and the female gendering of socially-focussed volunteering work (as a further extension of the unpaid domestic caring undertaken by women into the social sphere) provided novel ways by which both to understand women's experiences of SEship as intrinsically gendered, and also to meaningfully apply feminist theorising in a new context.

These highly gendered discursive domains conspired with the lack of clarity provided by the DTI (2002) definition of SE, and the assumptions of an ill-informed public to create significant legitimacy threats to both the women SEurs and their SEs, which required efforts to rebuff or manage, and which were constantly recreated in what the women experienced as an ongoing battle for legitimacy. This gendered aspect of SEurial experience represents an entirely new line of empirical evidence that explores the "influence of community on women's social entrepreneurial activity" (McAdam and Treanor, 2011: 5) as a source of both opportunity and potential threat.

The gender-aware approach embodied in this study also facilitated the exploration of the discursive gendering of SE, which was simultaneously shown to glorify 'heroic' male social entrepreneurs, whilst using masculinised language and images for professional (read: male) audiences, and feminised language and images for the consumption of the female targeted general public. As discussed, such approaches did little to support the professional legitimacy of

women SEurs, but rather served to underpin essentialist, gendered understandings of SE and SEship.

The gender-aware framework also assisted the exploration of the gendered effects of the 'grand narrative of SEship' (Dey and Steyaert, 2010) on the women SEurs, which revealed a rarely remarked-upon, and almost entirely untehorised 'dark side' of SE/SEship which was shown to have the potential to represent a site of significant economic and social disadvantage for women involved at all levels within the sector.

This gendered disadvantage was shown to mirror the wider gender-based subordination experienced by women in the workplace, which suggested that contrary to the 'messianic' claims of the grand narrative, SE may not in fact represent any more equitable an environment for women than mainstream employment, and that for owner/managers of SEs, may result in the acquisition of ongoing poverty of both time and money.

10.1.3 Defining SE

The third gap in the literature to which this study contributes relates to the ways in which SE is defined. With no widely agreed-upon definition of SE within the UK other than the DTI (2002) definition, the practitioner-led explanations of their own understandings of these concepts provided rich insight that served answer the call to better understand the "agency of practitioners in constructing the meaning of social enterprise" (Teasdale, 2012: 107)

Whilst, it emerged that the DTI (2002) definition provided a fit-for-purpose framework for non-specialists to understand SE, the women SEurs did not necessarily conceive of the component parts of the definition in the same way in which they were presented by policy-makers. Thus the practitioner framework for sense-making was shown to be partially at odds with the (rationalist) assumptions underpinning the policy-driven dominant discourses, with the women SEurs simultaneously co-opting the value-adding aspects of the dominant discourses, whilst exerting their agency through the provision of redefined conceptual frames for those component parts that did not fit their own personal understandings of SE. By so doing, the women demonstrated their

agentic power through both their "resistance [of] political narratives that…arise in the face of asymmetrical power relations" (Mason, 2012: 126), and their willingness to redefine SE on their own terms.

10.1.4 Defining SEship

The fourth contribution to the literature made by this study related to the emergence of new knowledge concerning practitioner-led conceptualisations of SEship as the enacted extension of their own, personal values and moral code. The insistence by the women SEurs of centrality of morality and values-driven behaviours as hallmarks of 'real' SEship was striking, as was the influence of personal value codes on the subsequent development of SE organisational norms and behaviours, which provided rich evidence of the SEurs' own "understanding of themselves, their identity, their beliefs, [and] their own meanings of issues that are going on around them" (Jones *et al*, 2008: 333).

The 'spirit' of SEship emerged as being founded on a sense of 'fairness' in every aspect of the SE's work. In this way, fairness (which served as an organising metaphor for values-driven behaviours more generally) was seen to drive organisational behaviours relating not only to employees in terms of their pay, terms, and conditions, but also to service users in terms of the delivery of person-centred interventions whose outcomes were driven by the aspirations of the individual, and also to customers in terms of the 'fair' pricing of services offered in the open market.

The 'fairness' encompassed at every level of the SEs' activities translated into what was termed 'ethical profit maximisation', the enactment of which allowed the women SEurs to bring together the potentially disparate discourses of the entrepreneurial and the social, and to define their practice-based understandings of SEship on their own terms in what Nicholls (2010: 612) described as "the legitimating strategies of the key actors who are driving the processes of paradigm building".

10.1.5 Visions of SEurial success

The fifth contribution to the creation of new empirically-based knowledge emerged from the investigation of the women SEurs' visions of success which,

like other aspects of their SEurial activities, were framed by their personal values and life experiences. Indeed, as noted above, for the women running human development-type SEs, a major component of their SEurial identities appeared to coalesce around the desire to role model the types of personal skills and compentencies that they had been exposed to and subsequently developed within their family environments.

The development of identity capital by their clients/service users was deemed to be vital to the success of any 'intervention', such that the creation of a safe, family-like environment within which the marginalised individuals with whom the women worked could take (supported) risks associated with the development of so-called 'soft skills' such as emotional resilience and self-esteem was considered a success in and of itself. Furthermore, the focus on person-centred outcomes (rather than more easily quantifiable numbers-based ones), established by individual clients for themselves, suggested a potentially more sustainable and meaningful approach to the engagement of marginalised individuals and groups, than the payment-by-results types of outcomes favoured by successive governments, and open to flagrant abuse by unethical organisations.

The emergent person-centred, identity capital development as a fundamental vision of success for many of the women SEurs reflected the contention made by feminist scholars of "the differing contribution that women entrepreneurs make to society" (Shaw *et al* 2009: 37), which positioned women SEurs not as 'lacking' compared to men, but rather as (potentially) having a different way of conceiving of success, not based on a masculinised norm.

Furthermore, as was evidenced by the emergent results, the "conceptualizations of success and performance among people managing social enterprises…are radically different to those gleaned from a reading of the social entrepreneurship rhetoric" (Parkinson and Howorth, 2008: 286). Thus, whilst governmental visions of SEurial success were premised upon economically rationalist values such as "enterprise, innovation, competitiveness and social inclusion" (DTI, 2002: 8), the women SEur participants in this study conceived of success in much more human terms.

10.2 Implications of the research

The almost entire absence of women's SEurial experiences from the SE and SEship literature and attendant theorising meant that this study would be exploratory in nature. As such, its aim to explore the contextualised experiences, identities, motivations, values, and visions of success of women SEurs was met through the achievement of four specific objectives, which facilitated a contextualised and socially embedded exploration women's SEship through the investigation of the development and construction of their SEurial identities, an examination of the ways in which they conceived of both SE and SEship, and through the study of their notions of SEurial success.

The emergent, practitioner-centred results, answered the call "to imbue entrepreneurship theory with practitioner knowledge and understanding" (Chell, 2007: 7), whilst providing rich insights into the experiences of women engaged in SEurial action within the UK. The implications of this research for theory development are manifold, due to both the paucity of research on women's SEship, and the nascent nature of the SE and SEship literatures more generally, which gaps this study seeks to contribute to.

Arguably the most impactful finding, which has implications for theory, policy, and practice, relates to the ways in which the women conceived of SEship as a process enacted through their SEs. The centrality of morality and values that the women asserted represents a glaring omission from the DTI (2002) definition, which makes no reference whatsoever to SEurial motivations. The link between life experience and the development of personal morality and values, and the link between that and the development of a SEurial identity, the alertness to social opportunity recognition, and the development of organisational norms relating to 'ethical profit maximisation' all represent new knowledge that will enrich the SEship literature, and has the power to inform policy development.

To date, SE and SEship policy in the UK has been underpinned by economically rationalist concepts, and business management discourses imported from mainstream entrepreneurship theorising. Such foundations have served to limit conceptualisations of SE and SEship to the point where SEurial

'success' has been reduced to a 'numbers game' wherein growth has become a proxy for social impact, regardless of the sustainability of interventions over the longer term.

The presence of developed moral codes and values amongst the women SEurs suggested that they conceived of themselves as political activists, and that rather than being business owners with a social focus, they were considered themselves to be social change agents, using SE to recast business in a less heroic, individualist, and emotionally distant undertaking.

A politically motivated approach to engagement with (social) entrepreneurship that rejected the the economically rationist paradigm, and put in its place an approach founded on principles of community, connection, care, and non-exploitation of people and planet may appear to the 'feminine' in its nature, and disregarded or dismissed as such, but should policy-makers take such approaches into account, the thoroughly moral undertakings exhibited by the women SEurs could be de-gendered i.e. disassociated from its conceptualisation as feminine as a result of its rejection of the normative masculine, and its value as a workable approach to both business and social justice could be validated.

Indeed, the replication of a supportive 'family'-type environment within their SEs that many of the women spoke of effectively mirrored the contentions made in the 2010 Conservative Party manifesto:

> "[s]trong families are the bedrock of a strong society. They provide the stability and love we need to flourish as human beings, and the relationships they foster are the foundation on which society is built." (Conservatives, 2010: 41)

The fact that the conceptualisations of SE currently in use provide no room for the recognition of such forms of social organising means that SE policy in the UK is self-defeating through its own blindness to the already well-established best practice approaches already being employed.

10.3 Limitations

This study represents an important point of departure for the investigation, and theoretical incorporation of women's experiences of SEship. However, the study

was limited by the brevity of the research process, which could be usefully addressed through a longitudinal study of the participants of this original research cohort in order to explore whether and how the women's experiences change over time – including organisational attrition etc.

A second limitation of the study related to the lack of data from the SEs' clients/service-users. In order to fully evaluate the women SEurs' visions of success, data should be collected from service-users in order to compare their experiences and opinions with the views proffered by the women SEurs, and thereby establish the veracity (or lack of it) of the women's stated visions.

As gender varies across time and place, the wider applicability of the research findings may be reduced, as the experiences of women operating SEs within the UK may not typify the experiences of women SEurs in a different cultural context. Furthermore, do to the gender-exclusive nature of this research study the applicability of the findings to men SEurs may be limited. These issues represent the third limitation of the study.

The fourth limitation relates to both the lack of ethnic diversity within the research cohort, and its limited size. As discussed previously, the lack of ethic diversity amongst the research cohort was identified relatively quickly, and steps were taken to resolve the issue. These however, were unsuccessful, resulting in a cohort of women who were all white, bar one British Pakistani woman. The diversity of the sample was however increased on other dimensions, including sector of operation, age of participant, nationality of participant, whether or not participants had dependent children etc.

Whilst the cohort of women SEurs interviewed for this research was relatively small, the data derived from their in-depth interviews was rich, and reflected the lived experiences of the individual women. The study was exploratory in nature, and employing a feminist theoretical framework, did not seek to 'discover truths' (Gartner and Birley, 2002) but rather to explore the complexities and contradictions of the "messy 'real-life' variety of entrepreneurship" (de Bruin *et al*, 2007: 331). Thus, the emergent findings and conclusions are generalisable to the sample and to theory, but not to the population of women SEurs as a whole.

10.4 Future research

Future research should seek to build upon the empirical and theoretical foundations laid by this study, and could beneficially incorporate a longitudinal study of the women involved in this study to explore the stability of the emergent findings across time, the inclusion of more women SEurs with specific reference to diversity of ethnicity, explorations of the gendering of SE and SEship in other countries (both advanced, and developing), a national or international quantitative survey of women SEurs and their SEs in order to test the emergent themes from this study with regard to SE representing a site of potential (economic and temporal) impoverishment for women SEurs, and a feminist-informed study of SEurs that included male participants in order to further explore the issue of gender as it relates to SE and SEship.

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Appendix 1 – *Research interview guide*

<u>Micro issues</u>

Can you tell me about your social enterprise and what it does? What is its mission and its vision for the future? Strap-line?

How far do you think your desire to establish your social enterprise was a result of your life experiences to date and why?

Have you ever established/owned/run a business before this one?

What subjects did you study at A-Level and at University? Do you have any formal business qualifications?

What frustrations or problems did you encounter whilst getting to the point of establishing your enterprise?

How did they make you feel and how did you resolve/deal with them?

Did you ever experience any of those 'magic' moments where everything just fell into place? What happened?

Have you diversified your activities since you established? How?

What do you consider the term 'innovation' to mean and what role (if any) does it play in SE?

What do you consider the term 'social entrepreneur' to mean? Do you consider yourself to be a social entrepreneur? If not, what?

What skills/characteristics/attributes 'make' a social entrepreneur? Which of those attributes do you possess?

What would you say are the main strengths that you bring to your enterprise? What areas of weakness?

What do you find least rewarding about your work? Most rewarding? Why?

Do you experience any work-life conflict? In what areas/why? How do you manage such conflicts?

Who sits on your Board of Directors? Stakeholders?

What skills do they possess? How did you recruit them? What do they contribute? Do you have any skills gaps?

Do you have a strategic plan for your enterprise? Where do you want to be in 5 years time? How will you get there? How do you monitor progress?

Do you consider 'ethics' and/or 'morality' to be important to your enterprise and SE more generally?

In what way do they manifest in your enterprise and its work?

What does the term 'sustainability' mean to you? (empowerment, engagement, stakeholders, governance)

How would you consider that a SE could best achieve sustainability in the long-term?

What legal form did you choose for your enterprise?

How many employees do you have? Paid, voluntary? How many of each? Hours of work? Are you all able to draw a liveable wage from the enterprise? If not, how do you support yourself/family?

Do you provide staff development opportunities? How do you keep your staff loyal and motivated?

Have staffing levels changed since you established? What prompted the change? Any challenges related to this?

How did you fund the start-up process?

What were the main costs involved?

Does your customer have buy-in to your social mission or are they simply purchasing a quality service/product from you?

How is your income split earned versus unearned income? Where does your unearned income come from?

Does your enterprise make a surplus yet? If so, when did it first achieve that?

How is the surplus used?

Do you own any capital assets (buildings, land, equipment)? Do you have an 'asset lock'?

How do you measure your social/environmental impact? How do you market/report it?

Do you have an exit strategy in place? What is it/why not?

What do you consider are the markers of a 'successful' SE? (people, profit, longevity)

Do you think that the typical success markers of mainstream business are applicable to SE – turnover, profit, number of employees etc. What would you add?

I will read out a list of eight possible success markers. Could you give me your thoughts on each: LEADERSHIP, EMPLOYEES, MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, EMPOWERMENT, DIVERSIFICATION/INNOVATION, SUSTAINABILITY, CHANGE

What do you know now that you wish you had known right at the beginning? What's your number one top tip?

Age, caring responsibilities, postcode (why there?),

<u>Macro issues</u>

<u>Politicians and policy</u>

Social enterprise has been on the political agenda for more than 10 years. Do you think that the politicians who promote it really understand what it is, how it works, and its benefits? Do they understand the business side of things (cash flow, volunteer management etc.)? Do they understand the social side and the interaction between the two?

What do they understand? – economic benefits? environmental benefits? social inclusion? social cohesion? What do these benefits 'look like'? How do they measure them?

Many social enterprises serve specific disadvantaged communities – disabled, poor, elderly etc. Do you think that the politicians understand/have experience of the issues facing these groups? If not, do you think that their lack of knowledge could/does have a detrimental effect on policy development?

Do you think that politicians consider/understand the knock-on effect of policy decisions on vulnerable groups?

New Labour encouraged LAs should procure a minimum of 8% of their contracts from SEs. Do you think that SEs are enabled to compete on an equal basis with the 'big boy' national service providers e.g. SERCO, Norse, G4S? If not, what could/should be done to improve this situation/create a level playing field?

NL invested heavily in infrastructure to support SE activity, including part-funding the creation of the SE Coalition (now SE UK) as a 'voice' for the sector, and the development of SE-specific business advisors within Business Link. Do you belong to SE UK? Do you know any SEs that do? If not, why not? Do you consider them to be a 'voice' for the interests of your enterprise? Why not?

Have you ever made use of any SE-specific business advice service? Which one? Why?

Do you subscribe to the SE Mark? What are the benefits for your enterprise? If not, why not?

What do you consider to be the biggest challenges facing SE in the context of the economic crisis on a national and more local level?

Do you consider that the Government understands that? If so, what are they doing to alleviate the problem(s)? If not, why not?

Big Society

What is your understanding of the Big Society?

Is there a link between BS, voluntary action, social enterprise, and social justice? In what way? Is the BS agenda a useful tool for communicating these links to the public?

Do you think that the general public understands what the Big Society is?

Has the concept of the Big Society helped/hindered your business – in what way?

It has been said that the Big Society agenda is 'nothing more than a cynical attempt to justify massive cuts in public spending' – what are your thoughts?

It has been suggested that 'the state must ensure that services are in place to meet people's essential needs regardless of their means (e.g. for health and autonomy, education, a fair living income, care, housing, and security)'. Are there any services that the state should always provide? Which ones and why?

Is there a conflict between the cost-cutting of austerity measures and the payment-by-results quality benchmarks that the Government have proposed?

The Localism Act aims to devolve power away from central Government to "individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities as well as local councils and other local institutions". Has this/will this open up opportunities for SEs or create further barriers? Why/in what ways? (http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/)

Do you consider that the Government understands the value of tendering to locally-based SEs rather than national/international companies? Local skills, expertise, employment, money stays in community etc.

What is your opinion on payment-by-results? What do you see as being the problems/benefits of such an approach? Has the Government thought it through (from an SME/SE perspective)?

Both the previous and this Government have focused on identifying and supporting 'successful' SEs to 'scale up'. What do you think the Government wants to achieve with this policy? Is it appropriate bearing in mind the nature of

most SEs? What would happen if your enterprise was scaled up to national level? Would it be a good thing? Why/not?

Voluntary Action

Do you believe or have you witnessed/had experience of increased voluntary activity in the wake of the Big Society agenda?

Has the recession and attendant austerity measures had a noticeable effect on voluntary action in your opinion/experience?

Does your enterprise make use of volunteers? Who are they, where do they come from, what socio-economic bracket do they fit in, are they mostly women or men? Why?

Do you believe that the general public feels obligated/motivated to engage in voluntary action in their local community as a rule? How, where, why/not?

What barriers to voluntary action do you think/know that people experience?

Does the Government give due recognition to those who always have volunteered?

Should there be some roles that are always paid for or could (in theory) every role be filled by volunteers?

Definition

What do you understand SE to be/what defines a SE?

A social enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximise profit for shareholders and owners.

Do you know what the Government definition is? Do you find the Govt definition useful? If not, why not?

What would you do to change the definition? Is an over-arching definition of SE possible?

Does the general public understand what SE is? Do they care? Implications?

Meso issues

Tendering

Has your enterprise ever tendered for a public contract? What was your experience of the process and were you successful?

Does you LA understand what 'added value' SE can bring? Does this impact on their tendering process? In what ways are SEs encouraged/discouraged by the tendering process?

Do you think that there is a conflict of interests for LAs needing to save money and being asked to procure from SEs? In what way(s)?

Do you belong to any local/regional SE networks? What value do they bring/why not? Do you know any other social entrepreneurs?

Appendix 2 – **University of East Anglia Research Ethics Checklist**

NBS-REC / E1

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
NORWICH BUSINESS SCHOOL
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

RESEARCH ETHICS CHECKLIST

This form should be completed by all staff and students planning to conduct research that involves collecting data from human participants.

Before completing this form please read the University research ethics principles at:
http://www1.uea.ac.uk/cm/home/services/units/business/rbs/Research/Research%2BEthics/1.29004
Other useful resources are available on the NBS Research Ethics Blackboard site:
http://www.blackboard.uea.ac.uk.

Students should also discuss the ethical aspects of their proposed research with their supervisor before completing the form.

1. Applicant Details

Name: Ms. Arabella Beckett

Student no. (if applicable): 3513998

Status (circle appropriate): PGT student / (PGR student) / Staff / Other

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2. Project Details

Title of project: Women's Social Entrepreneurship in the UK: An exploration of the experience of women social entrepreneurs.

Appendix 3 - **Examples of coded data and emergent themes (and sub-themes)**

Examples of analytical themes and coded data				
Stage 1 Coding ⟷			**Stage 2 Coding** ⟷	
Analytical themes	**Examples of data derived from first phase analysis (manual, and key phrase search)**	**First order codes**	**Examples of data derived from second phase analysis (connections between emergent thematic categories)**	**Second order codes**
Definition	"For me, social enterprise is something that does something for a reason – so you trade, you're mission driven, and that mission is social or environmental, and it is the DNA of the business. It's why you're doing it." Claudette	Social and business inseparable/values -driven	"If we interviewed someone for a job, we would want to engage with somebody who had the same vision as us - it would be important that we felt that they had a similar value system" Anne "a social enterprise is different from a mainstream enterprise in that it has its social commitment at the heart of the business, that is enshrined within the business - you have to have a moral compass to what you're doing" Alexandra	**SE *is…*ethical and values-driven** ('SEurs behave morally' in **Identity** below)
	"A social enterprise should be profit-making but using its profits wisely. It should not be having a detrimental impact on the environment, and it should look after its people and the community it's working within and serving - be that geographical, or client-group based." Anne	Values-driven/genuine businesses	"I've had a lot of conversations where people have accused me of being anti-capitalist, but I kind of feel like we work exactly within the capitalist system but just tweak it slightly – you know, take the best bits really" Jasmine "[s]o often, social enterprises are pigeon-holed…so it's about dispelling the myth that it's only sort of 'greenies' and 'lovies' running social enterprises" Alexandra	**SE is *not…*radical politics/anti-capitalist** ('SEurs are serious business people' in **Identity** below)

	"You can be big, but…you want to keep it accessible, you want to keep it part of the community, you want people to know who the manager is, and you want people to be able to call the manager if they're not happy, or if they are happy, or if they want to know something. You want to be transparent, you want to be there." Lucille	Community/values-driven	"there are some other 'social enterprises' that I don't think should be called social enterprises because they are kind of soiling the whole concept of social enterprise, they are very focussed on money and I think they are using the concept for their own benefits. I mean I'm not saying that social enterprise shouldn't make money or shouldn't be well off or anything, but they show social enterprise in a light that is not really doing us any favours" Lucille "There are wolves in sheep's clothing - money-making schemes where being a 'social enterprise' is very convenient, and you can use it as a means to get in on the kind of contracts you want. It's just hopping on the bandwagon, and the spirit is not right" Sinéad	**SE is _not…_ Thatcherite entrepreneurship** (money-focussed, exploitative, morally bankrupt) ('SEurs behave morally' in **Identity** below)
	"we would like to see a social/community element within the fabric, in the same way that our business model cannot be divorced from our social commitments. We still run a business, we run it profitably, we run it from trade, but the social commitment is absolutely enshrined in our Mem. and Arts. There's no 'this year we won't do this'!" Alexandra	Social and business inseparable/values-driven	"People get really upset with us when we say that we want to make money" Audrey "What really upsets me is that people hear the term 'social enterprise' and they assume that you should work for nothing, or for peanuts, but you should be able to pay yourself a similar amount to what you would earn in a similar role elsewhere" Anne	**SE is _not…_charity** (free) ('SEurs are serious business people' in **Identity** below)
Motivation	"setting up the social enterprise was 100% life experience I think. I mean, the partners in the business all have their individual motivations and reasons, but where we come together is that we all	Life experience/ethics/ values	"respect, mucking in, and watching out for people – people are people, so being un-judgemental, those kinds of values. My memories of school holidays are of going	**Family values as motivational basis for SE**

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	"fundamentally believe that business should be more sharing, more ethical, and that being an employer is about wealth generation for everyone, not just a few individuals" Alexandra		"into school with my [teacher] Mum and watering the plants with loads of adults with learning disabilities, and they were looking after us, and so I think that kind of underpinned what I did [in my SE]" Jennifer (SE working with adults with learning disabilities) "my Mum was very inspirational and very hard-working and carved a career out for herself in education, and definitely didn't give us the sense that, you know, if you're from a different socio-economic background then you must be stopped in any way" Nisha (SE working with BAME women) "I was brought up on a farm, and we lived in poverty - not nasty poverty, but poverty where Mum and Dad grew our food, and made out clothes. We lived sustainability, without me realising what it was and Mum and Dad never, ever made me feel as though I couldn't do stuff. And I left school at fifteen with no qualifications whatsoever, but never felt as though that was disabling - I had competence, and self-esteem, and a family that brought me up with values of respecting people, and not just taking" Jessica (sustainable living SE)	('People-centred/ values-based' in **Success** below)
	"my SE is very much because of those life experiences really, it's everything actually, more or less. Yeah, it's our values and our experience in life that made us think it was important to set up our	Life experience/values	"I think that [SE] is an industry that women tend to gravitate to because quite a lot of us are not motivated by money - it's that idea that what you do actually matters, and is	**Meaningful work - improving others' life**

	[SE]" Lucille		making a difference to people's lives in a meaningful way that draws us in" Rosemary **chances** ('Helping people to help themselves' in **Success** below)
	"It's completely [about my life experiences]! 100%! Yeah, it's everything! I think I've always felt other people's pain. Where I went to school was one of the toughest comprehensives in [the area] and we all started off the first year feeling equal really, and then very, very quickly it became apparent that some were more equal than others, and by the time we got to our third year, some of them had dropped out completely, and there was no wonder when you knew their backgrounds and stuff. You know, they didn't have a chance, and that was the thing that really stuck with me - how some people are just born without a chance and the injustice of it all" Suzanne	Life experience/social injustice	"Knowing that you're making a difference to real people's lives [is what matters]; I don't know how you capture that, bottle it, because that is the main motivator" Emma "It's about helping people to get on with their lives - into a new job, into some training, you know, just making decisions for themselves, and just feeling better about themselves" Anne
	"I suppose my own personal values have brought me to SE – I am a Christian, I have my own value set, I'm not driven by money anyway" Claudette	Values	"I suppose I never wanted to make lots of money. The social passion side of it is what motivates me" Rebecca	**Nexus of social work and business** ('Frustration with mainstream employment experiences' in **Identity** below)
	"I felt that what do I really want to do is to keep waste out of the ground, I want people to value the resources that we have, I want to change people's relationship with the environment and my best way of doing that is through business" Margot	Social change through business	"I think social enterprise is so attractive to me it's because it brings such a human dimension to it - to enterprise, and to business - and that's what I like about it" Fiona "the excitement of finding a new way to address a social issue just absolutely floats my boat! It's so exciting!" Claudette "I want to be in touch with people, I want to be real, I want to be doing things that matter to me, I suppose. With social enterprise I

			can fulfil my ideals" Lucille	
Success	"[w]hat I absolutely value is a lot of the stuff that is often described as 'soft' outcomes. Is confidence a soft outcome? That's not soft, that's so hard! That's brilliant! That's what you basically need to succeed in life. That's like one of the critical things you can have. So I think that there are quite narrow measures of success when it comes to social enterprise" Nisha	People-centred/ values-based	"what matters isn't how many thousands of pounds I've helped people with or how many events I have run, or how many people I've mentored, it's the blog post from the girl, who a week ago told me that she couldn't do anything worthwhile, and who is now telling the world that she's really proud of herself because she came to me and got kicked up the arse!" Jessica "[our clients move] onto either training with us, or with other training establishments, or employment, so it's all part of their progression really, which is what we're into" Rosemary	**Success is helping people to help themselves** ('Meaningful work – improving others' life chances' in **Motivation** above)
	"[w]e work very hard – the self-belief/emotional resilience stuff we've worked on over the years has been very much in me wanting to find ways to help people get their own tool kit if you like, in terms of starting to gain that self-belief and the ability to bounce back when things don't go as right as you'd like them to be" Claudette	People-centred/ values-based	"'success' is [conceived as being] all about how many jobs you can create, and there's no recognition of that gap between people in crisis and people being ready to join the labour market" Suzanne "there is a lack of understanding of what it might need to kick-start stuff in some places, because that's quite different to the leafy, Surrey suburb that will do it quite happily of its own accord" Claudette	**Success is understanding and meeting local need** ('SEurs are social change agents' in **Identity** below)

Identity	"we do have a challenge and a stigma about people not believing that we are real businesses or real business people" Holly	Lack of legitimacy	"I figured that someone like me needed to approach sustainability in a pragmatic, practical kind of way instead of 'beating you over the head with a broomstick', or doing the whole 'anti-capitalist' thing that really puts off big business. So that's the way I've gone about this place – I have rented a huge 20,000sq/ft premises, and it's a very business-like place, it's not a hippyfied, fluffy thing" Jessica	**SEurs are serious business people**
	"the nature of the hierarchy [in my previous employment] means that you don't always get to do what you would like to do, or what you feel intuitively is the best thing to do, and I think we can use our intuition - you know, our sense of fairness and all of those things, here. It's really nice to have the confidence and experience and to put it to good use [in my SE]" Anne	Frustration with 'mainstream' employment experiences		('SE is *not* radical politics/anti-capitalist' in **Definition** above) ('SE is *not* charity' in **Definition** above)
	"I have, over the last year, done a lot of thinking about my personal values, and fairness, honesty, and sharing really are key ones, and I was operating in an industry that runs the other way…so, running a social enterprise for me is inextricable from life experience and my values, why I get out of bed, and of course actually in truth, saved my career, because I really was considering leaving the industry because it felt so wrong, whereas this appears to be a way of doing what I want to do without compromising on my own values." Alexandra		"The difference between us and a mainstream business is that we have three measures of success - turnover and profitability, the kilograms of waste saved from landfill and the amount of donations [to charity] that we make" Margot "we are a business with a social conscience, so we weren't set up with a primarily social function like a number of social enterprises, we are a business but we have a very strong social ethic and our mission is that we aim to do high quality work, and combine that with a social return. So we really want to realign being a normal, good, solid business that also has a genuine return to society, which in our case, is that we share 50% of our profits with social causes" Alexandra	('Nexus of social work and business' in **Motivation** above)
	"[the Big Society] is being driven by the social entrepreneurs that are out there on the ground - it's the ground swell, it's not a top down thing"	Political activists/values-driven	"This is about massive cultural change, so it's a whole shift of the system. And I think it's absolutely fundamentally important	**SEurs are social change agents**

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Margot		because it's what will set us out from the crowd. Why would you go to a social enterprise if it's not going to deliver you something that's different?" Claudette	(Life experience/ values/social injustice in **Motivation** above)
"people will see that actually we've got something to offer and that whatever they [individuals SEs] are doing, however small it is, action has a huge impact nationally, because together it's important" Suzanne	Social change/values-driven	"around me [in my SE] is a culture of self-respect, empowerment, creativity, fun, happiness, friendship, and also resilience in dealing with things that aren't fluffy, and happy, and lovely. You know, a strength of collaborative support for each other. If you have people running businesses with that attitude, the solutions you can create are massive." Jessica "You create a platform, you're a catalyst, and people take the power or they don't. It's a choice. But your power is to create a platform where either people can step in or not, and have the ability to grow; and the power? They take it themselves" Caroline	
"I'm not interested in making loads of money, so for me, my comfort at being in business is because it's about nurturing others – it's still very female, it's very much a social venture, it's not about becoming rich" Nisha	Values-driven/not driven by personal gain	"People with learning disabilities often have files and files full of 'achievements' that mean nothing, so we aim to help people to reach their potential: for them to grow in confidence, to be part of something, and to	**SEurs behave morally** ('SE *is* ethical and values-

	"We usually have three or four interns, but because we cannot pay our interns, we are very, very concerned that we give them a good experience when they're here. We only ask for fifteen days [commitment] because we think more than that is not fair – up to fifteen days is ok, more than fifteen days and I start to worry, because we should be paying them. We need all these talented people to help us grow, so we are always trying to balance out their contribution to us, with our contribution to them, and ensure that they are not exploited" Audrey	Values-driven/non-exploitative	have experiences that are meaningful, that are not tokenistic." Jennifer "we all fundamentally believe that business should be more sharing, more ethical, and that being an employer is about wealth generation for everyone, not just a few individuals" Alexandra "[a]s long as I'm earning enough money to eat, and I know that I need say, a grand a month, so if I can earn a grand a month, I'm happy, I've got more than enough money" Suzanne "we secured a grant to pay our volunteer travelling expenses, because we have really committed volunteers and we wanted to show that we are not only kind of taking peoples' energy and time, we are also rewarding them even though we don't have much money. So the money we have, we spend on people, and yeah I think it was a good move actually because we secured two really, really committed volunteers that way" Lucille	driven' in **Definition** above) ('SE is *not* Thatcherite entrepreneurship' in **Definition** above)