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The Shifting Meanings of Entrepreneurship in Post-industrial Finland

Henri Koskinen

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the ways in which the meanings of entrepreneurship have shifted in post-industrial Finland on both sides of the millennium. The meanings of entrepreneurship are examined in the following three contexts: Finnish political discourse, the entrepreneurial environments of Finnish higher education institutions (incubators, accelerators and entrepreneurship societies) and Finnish startup discourse. The data consists of Finnish government programmes from 1979 to 2015, the websites of entrepreneurial environments, and Finnish startup guidebooks and other non-fiction literature. The data is analysed through discourse analysis by examining the ideal entrepreneurial subject the texts produce.

Besides economic activity, entrepreneurship in this research is understood as a cultural, political and discursive phenomenon. Startup or growth entrepreneurship has been highly visible in Finland since the 2000s, and startup entrepreneurs have emphasised that their activities are transformative in regard to traditional entrepreneurship. Therefore, the shifts in the meanings of entrepreneurship are viewed through the prism of startup entrepreneurship. Startup entrepreneurship denotes economic activity involving high potential for growth, high risk and a focus on the development and commercialisation of a novel innovation, product or service. This research approaches the phenomenon from a sociological viewpoint by interpreting startup entrepreneurship as a discourse with its own distinctive semantics, conceptual repertoires and ways of producing self-understandings.

The research places startup entrepreneurship into the framework of Finnish political economy. In the new millennium, Finland has a post-industrial service economy with an emphasis on the so-called knowledge economy. High expertise and innovation capacity are seen as Finland's advantages in the accelerating global competition, and the research interprets startup entrepreneurship in this light. Through the examination of the shifting meanings of entrepreneurship, the research illuminates a broader economic shift.

Theoretically, the research draws on three scholarships: the scholarship on the analytics of government; the scholarship on post-industrial work, especially on therapeutic culture and on the knowledge-based economy; and thirdly, the scholarship of global forms and domestication. Entrepreneurship is viewed as a historically constructed discourse that produces self-understanding and subjects. In governmentality studies, entrepreneurship has been approached as an all-

encompassing form of self-understanding and a part of neoliberal political rationality that perceives every societal and social sphere in economic terms. In this framework, people are invited to see themselves as an enterprise that needs to be managed. In the post-industrial age, entrepreneurship has also expanded in the labour market: various new forms of self-employment blur the boundary between wage work and entrepreneurship and obscure the concept of entrepreneurship.

The research consists of three peer-reviewed articles and one chapter in a peer-reviewed, edited volume. The findings show that in the new millennium, entrepreneurship in Finnish political discourse is detached from the context of the labour market and attached to economic growth, innovations and expertise, whereby growth entrepreneurship is given a significant role. The ideal entrepreneur starts to resemble an innovative startup entrepreneur. Simultaneously the meaning of entrepreneurship grows vague and its connection to the labour market dissolves. The ideal entrepreneurial subject constructed in the entrepreneurship environments of Finnish higher education institutions depicts passionate self-realisation and exciting collaboration. The ideal entrepreneurship in this context reflects the virtues of the neoliberal entrepreneur of the self – proactivity, reflexivity, self-sufficiency – and combines them with notions familiar from the analyses of post-industrial labour, such as the emphasis of teamwork and social skills. In the Finnish startup literature, the ideal entrepreneur embodies two post-industrial ideals: the reflexive entrepreneur of the self and the emotionally alert team player. The construction highlights entrepreneurship as an individual attitude and fades out questions of livelihood and economic viability. At the same time, startup entrepreneurship is constructed in relation to the Finnish society. Startup entrepreneurship is domesticated in the Finnish context by emphasising its contradiction to the traditional Finnish mentality. Finnishness is partially defined as being averse to startup entrepreneurship, and therefore, Finnish culture should be reworked to be more receptive. In part, domestication of startup entrepreneurship functions as the adaptation of the neoliberal entrepreneurial self to the Finnish context.

The research argues that startup entrepreneurship crystallises the broader shift in the meanings of entrepreneurship in the post-industrial age. Entrepreneurship is growingly constructed in the framework of innovations and the knowledge-based economy, and as a universally applicable, individual attitude and worldview. Startup entrepreneurship is a product of the knowledge economy and a condensation of post-industrial ideals. With the shift in the meanings of entrepreneurship, the majority of the entrepreneur populace is written out of the new content of the notion.

KEYWORDS: entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial self, knowledge-based economy, neoliberalism, post-industrialism, startup entrepreneurship, subject

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Väitöskirjassa tutkitaan, miten yrittäjyyden merkitykset ovat muuttuneet jälkiteollisessa Suomessa 2000-luvuille tultaessa ja sen jälkeen. Yrittäjyyden merkityksiä jäljitetään kolmessa kontekstissa: suomalaisessa poliittisessa diskurssissa, suomalaisten korkeakoulujen yrittäjyysympäristöissä (yrityshautomoissa, -kiihdyttämöissä ja yrittäjyysyhteisöissä) sekä suomalaisessa startup-puheessa. Aineistoina toimivat Suomen hallituksien ohjelmat 1979–2015, suomalaisten korkeakoulujen yrittäjyysympäristöjen internet-sivut ja suomalaiset startup-opas- ja tietokirjat. Aineistoja analysoidaan diskurssianalyysin keinoin etsimällä teksteistä piirtyvää yrittäjämäistä ideaalisubjektia.

Yrittäjyys ymmärretään tutkimuksessa paitsi taloudellisena, myös kulttuurisena, poliittisena ja diskursiivisena ilmiönä. Yrittäjyyden muutosta tarkastellaan startup-yrittäjyyden kautta. Startup- tai kasvuyrittäjyys on ollut näkyvästi esillä suomalaisessa julkisessa keskustelussa 2000-luvulta alkaen, ja startup-yrittäjät ovat korostaneet yrittäjyyttään uudenlaisena, perinteistä yrittäjyyttä mullistavana toimintana. Startup-yrittäjyys tarkoittaa kasvuhakuista, riskialtista yritystoimintaa, jonka keskiössä on uuden innovaation, tuotteen tai palvelun kehittäminen ja kaupallistaminen. Tutkimus tarjoaa ilmiölle sosiologisen kehyksen tulkitsemalla startup-yrittäjyyttä diskurssina, jolla on oma kielensä, käsitevarantonsa ja tapansa tuottaa itseymmärryksiä.

Tutkimus asettaa startup-yrittäjyyden osaksi suomalaista poliittista taloutta. 2000-luvun Suomi on jälkiteollinen, palveluvetoinen yhteiskunta, jossa painotetaan ns. tietotaloutta. Korkea osaaminen ja innovaatiokyky näyttäytyvät Suomessa valtteina kiihtyvässä kansainvälisessä kilpailussa, ja tutkimus tulkitsee startup-yrittäjyyttä tässä valossa. Analysoimalla yrittäjyyden muuttuvia merkityksenantoja tutkimus valaisee laajempaa taloudellista muutosta.

Teoreettisesti tutkimus ammentaa kolmesta keskustelusta: hallinnan analytiikasta, jälkiteollisen työn, erityisesti terapeuttisen kulttuurin ja tietotalouden keskusteluista sekä globaalien muotojen ja domestikaation keskustelusta. Yrittäjyys on historiallisesti rakentunut diskursiivinen kudelma, joka tuottaa itseymmärryksiä ja subjekteja. Hallinnan analytiikan keskusteluissa yrittäjyyttä on lähestytty kaikkialle ulottuvana itseymmärryksen muotona ja osana uusliberaalia poliittista rationaliteettia, jossa jokainen yhteiskunnan ja ihmiselämän alue tulee ymmärrettäväksi talouden käsittein. Ihmisten tulee tässä ajattelussa nähdä itsensä

johtamisen tarpeessa olevina yrityksinä. Jälkiteollisena aikana yrittäjyys on laajentunut myös työmarkkinoilla: erilaiset työn muodot, kuten alustatyö sekä erilaiset itsensä työllistymisen muodot, hämärtävät yrittäjyyden ja palkkatyön välistä rajaa ja samalla epämääräistävät yrittäjyyden käsitettä.

Väitöskirja muodostuu kolmesta vertaisarvioidusta tutkimusartikkelista, yhdestä toimitetussa teoksessa julkaistusta luvusta ja yhteenveto-osasta. Tutkimus osoittaa, että poliittisessa diskurssissa yrittäjyys irtoaa 2000-luvulle tultaessa työmarkkinoiden kontekstista ja siirtyy osaksi talouskasvua synnyttävää osaamis- ja innovaatiopuhetta, missä kasvuyrittäjyydelle annetaan merkittävä rooli. Ihanneyrittäjä alkaakin muistuttaa innovatiivista startup-yrittäjää. Samalla yrittäjyyden merkitys epämääräistyy ja sen yhteys työmarkkinoiden todellisuuteen hälvenee. Korkeakoulujen yrittäjyysympäristöissä rakentuva yrittäjyys näyttäytyy yhtäältä intohimoisena itsensä toteuttamisena ja toisaalta innostavana yhdessäolona. Yrittäjyysympäristöistä hahmottuva ihanneyrittäjä toisintaa uusliberaalin yrittäjäminän perinteisiä hyveitä – proaktiivisuus, refleksiivisyys, itseriittoisuus – ja yhdistää siihen jälkiteollisen työn analyyseistä tuttuja merkityksiä, kuten tiimityön ja sosiaalisten taitojen korostuksen. Suomalaisissa startup-opaskirjoissa ihanneyrittäjä yhdistää niin ikään kaksi jälkiteollista ihannetta: refleksiivisen yrittäjäminän sekä tunnetaitoisen tiimipelaajan. Konstruktio korostaa yrittäjyyttä yksilöllisenä päämääränä, josta toimeentulon ja taloudellisten mahdollisuuksien kysymykset häivytetään. Samalla aineistosta piirtyvä startup-yrittäjyys konstruoidaan suhteessa suomalaiseen yhteiskuntaan. Startup-yrittäjyys domestikoidaan suomalaiseen kontekstiin korostamalla startup-yrittäjyyden vastakohtaisuutta perinteiselle suomalaiselle mentaliteetille. Suomalaisuus määritetään osittain startup-yrittäjyydelle vastakkaiseksi, ja siksi kulttuuria tulee muuttaa startup-myönteisempään suuntaan. Osaltaan tämä toimii uusliberaalin yrittäjäminän sovittamisena suomalaiseen kontekstiin.

Tutkimus väittää, että startup-yrittäjyys kiteyttää yrittäjyyden ymmärryksessä jälkiteollisena aikana tapahtuvan laajemman muutoksen. Yrittäjyys saa merkityksensä enenevissä määrin innovaatioiden ja tietotalouden kautta ja toisaalta yleispätevänä yksilöllisenä asenteena ja maailmankatsomuksena. Startup-yrittäjyys on tietotalouden tuote, johon yhdistyvät ja jossa tiivistyvät jälkiteollisen työn ihanteet. Yrittäjyyden merkitysten muutosten myötä valtaosa yrittäjäväestöstä jää uuden merkityssisällön katveeseen.

ASIASANAT: jälkiteollinen, tietotalous, startup-yrittäjyys, subjekti, uusliberalismi, yrittäjyys, yrittäjäminä

Acknowledgements

Writing these last lines is a good chance to reflect on the process of this thesis. Looking back, I realize that writing this thesis has made me consider the ambiguity of entrepreneurship in a very concrete way. Many aspects of the work of a PhD researcher could be characterized as entrepreneurial. One must constantly be able to reflect on and reformulate one's ideas to match the desires and emphases of potential funders. One must also be constantly aware of the bigger picture of the research and try to maintain a balance between the arguments and insights in the individual research articles. For a researcher, resourcefulness, self-reliance and flexibility – the qualities often used to define an entrepreneurial mindset – are not virtues but essential requirements, because the security and continuity of work are often fragile and limited. In this way, academic work in general and PhD research specifically are good examples of a context in which an entrepreneurial subject is constructed. Thus, while conducting research on the construction of entrepreneurial subjects, I have lived and worked in such conditions that continuously emphasise entrepreneurial attitude.

Writing this thesis has been demanding, not least because of the lack of predictability and stability inherent in the PhD process that I described above. However, the research has not been without its rewards. Academic work is full of positive experiences, sudden bursts of creativity, inspiration and successes. These joys trace back to the people I have encountered in the process of doing research, and I wish to thank them all for enriching this project in various ways.

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March 2022
Henri Koskinen

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List of Original Publications

This dissertation is based on the following original publications, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals:

I Koskinen, Henri & Saarinen, Arttu: Innovaatioita, kasvua ja yrittäjämäisiä kansalaisia. Yrittäjyyspuhe suomalaisissa hallitusohjelmissa 1979–2015. *Sosiologia* 2019; 56(2); 141–156.

II Koskinen, Henri: Yrittäjäyhteisön taika. Yrittäjyyden muotoutuminen korkeakoulujen yrittäjyystoiminnassa. *Aikuiskasvatus* 2019; 39(2); 108–121.

III Koskinen, Henri: Tahto muuttaa maailmaa – startup-yrittäjyys terapeuttisen työn näyteikkunana. In Brunila, Kristiina; Harni, Esko; Saari, Antti & Ylöstalo, Hanna (eds). *Terapeuttinen valta ja kansalaisuus*. Tampere: Vastapaino. 2021, 309–332.

IV Koskinen, Henri: Domesticating Startup Culture in Finland. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 2020; 8(2); 175–196.

1 Introduction

In 2015, *Helsingin Sanomat*, the largest subscription newspaper in Finland, published an article in which Timo Tuomi, a 65-year-old car dealership owner, attended Slush, the renowned international startup business event that takes place each November in Helsinki. In the article and its accompanying video, Tuomi wanders about the Slush venue and observes the companies and products on display, finding most of them peculiar and trivial. For example, he comments on a demonstration of virtual reality equipment with a sardonic remark, 'this must be some kind of new sport' and adds that he 'sees no point' in the whole virtual reality business (Ala-Kivimäki 2015).

In the article, Tuomi is evidently labelled as an entrepreneur who is touring the realm of a new kind of entrepreneurship in which he himself is presented as redundant and antiquated. This juxtaposition expands to symbolize an emergent transformation of entrepreneurship in Finland. The article concludes with a contemplative remark that, for most people today, the word 'entrepreneur' may mean something that stems from Slush rather than from Tuusula (the municipality near Helsinki in which Tuomi runs his car dealership business). It is implied that entrepreneurship nowadays is personified by something other than what the elderly car salesperson represents. Through an analysis of startup entrepreneurship in the Finnish context, I offer an interpretation of that something else.

In this research, I enquire how the meanings of entrepreneurship have shifted in Finland in the post-industrial age. By analysing the meanings given to and associated with entrepreneurship as 'both a cultural and economic phenomenon' (Doody et al. 2016, 859), this research contributes to the scholarships of entrepreneurship and political economy (see, e.g. Harni & Pyykkönen 2018; Marttila 2013; Pyykkönen 2014; Turunen 2011) by examining startup entrepreneurship, a phenomenon that has gained much publicity, both in Finland and globally, over the past decade. Startup entrepreneurship is a prism through which this research examines the shifts in the meanings of entrepreneurship in Finland more generally.

Entrepreneurship in this research is approached as a discursive construction that gains its meanings in communication and is mediated through various, intertwining and overlapping discourses (see, e.g. Bill, Bjerke & Andersson 2010). The meanings

of entrepreneurship are historically contingent: they are continuously contested and renegotiated (Marttila 2013). For example, depending on the aims and endeavours of the actor, entrepreneurship can be constructed as economic activity aiming at maximising one's gains, as societally beneficial and aspirational activity or as the qualities and competencies of the individual (Niska & Vesala 2011, 94; Perren & Jennings 2005, 174–175). These different meanings of entrepreneurship are intertwined and employed variedly in different social settings and arenas of communication. Entrepreneurship thus surpasses the economic sphere: it is a construction that is maintained and reproduced in social practices (see, e.g. Hasanen 2013, 24–25).

Startup entrepreneurship can also be viewed as both a specific area of entrepreneurship and as a discourse. Briefly defined, 'startup entrepreneurship' refers to young or fledgling companies that have discovered or are developing a novel innovation. Startups usually aim for rapid growth, and their product is typically thought to be scalable, which has been understood to mean that it can be easily multiplied and tailored to new contexts (Blank 2006; Blank & Dorf 2012; Ries 2011). Sociologist Antti Hyrkäs (2016, 21) has suggested that popular literature on startup entrepreneurship describes four central features of startups: a scalable business model, the attempt to create new products or services, the high risk of failure and temporality. A startup attempts to grow out of the startup status and become an established company through, for example, acquisition by a larger company or going public, which can often be achieved when the startup's product is scaled to a large enough size. Instead of operating on entrepreneurs' of founders' capital, startups principally operate on investor capital that is typically acquired from institutional financers, risk capital funds and individual investors (Blank 2006; 2010; Hyrkäs 2016; Maliranta et al. 2018).

In terms of discourse, Antti Hyrkäs (2016; 2017) has shaped startup entrepreneurship as a cultural form with its own distinctive shared stories, semantics, symbolism and tools for identity construction. These include the importance of visionary leadership, passion, the imperative for disruption, the possibility to experiment freely and informality in terms of work organisation, time and place. In the 2000s and 2010s, the success of internet-based service startups (such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Skype) and mobile gaming companies (such as the Finnish Rovio and Supercell) have resulted in the routine association of startup entrepreneurship and technology. To many, startup entrepreneurship evokes mental images of coding, IT software, and the development and application of futuristic technology. These imageries are indeed prominently present in the article on Timo Tuomi at Slush referred to earlier.

Technology startups in the 2000s have contributed to the development of the so-called platform or sharing economy and played a crucial role in upending entire

industries, such as the devastating effect of Airbnb on traditional accommodation business and Uber's enormous impact on established taxi business, for example (see, e.g. Vallas & Schor 2020). In startup language, these kinds of sweeping effects on industries and markets that are initiated by a single company are referred to as 'disruption', and many startups frame their product as potentially disruptive in their respective industries (Hyrkäs 2016; Ries 2011). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that startup entrepreneurship denotes entrepreneurial action in a Schumpeterian sense. The Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950), to whom the idea of creative destruction is often attributed, saw the entrepreneur as a reformer and a non-conformist who strives to create new markets and innovations by reassembling existing resources – a process that involves the embracement of uncertainty (Christiaens 2019; Pilotta 2016; Schumpeter 2010).

The disruptive effects of technology startups have greatly contributed to the spreading and normalisation of the term 'startup' in the 2000s and 2010s. Initially, the term was intermittently applied to business ventures in the 1970s and 1980s, but during and after the IT bubble at the turn of the millennium, the label increased in popularity. Thereafter, it has formed a loose category of nascent businesses and business cultures involving the utilisation and development of technology, software, communications and media. (Cockayne 2019; Egan-Wyer et al. 2018, 60–61; see also Mannevuo 2015, 111–112; Lemola 2020, 203–204.) Consequently, startup entrepreneurship has been popularised and diffused into society through various ways. Daniel Cockayne (2019) has remarked that a crucial element of startup discourse is its capability to expand to different areas and social spheres. Startup semantics, stories and meanings are circulated in mainstream media, popular business thinkers' speeches, management texts, governmental strategies and so on (Egan-Wyer et al. 2018). Silicon Valley in California is often viewed as the cradle of the current mode of startup entrepreneurship by academics and the public alike, to the extent that Silicon Valley has formed an emblem of startup culture (Gill & Larson 2014; Maas & Ester 2016; Saxenian 2006; Valaskivi 2012).

Indeed, Finnish startup entrepreneurs are often depicted as ambassadors of Silicon Valley culture in the Finnish media (Mannevuo 2015, 115–119). Aaltoes, the pioneer of the student-led startup entrepreneurship movement in Finland, has explicitly defined startup entrepreneurship as a cultural campaign that affects Finnish economy and work life (Aaltoes 2011; Lehdonvirta 2013; Mannevuo 2015; Siivonen et al. 2019). Similarly, the original mission of the Slush event was described as 'to change attitudes towards entrepreneurship' (Slush 2020). From the very beginning, it seems, startup entrepreneurship in Finland was constructed as societal and cultural change.

From the perspective of political economy, this is curious as the 1990s and 2000s have witnessed an unforeseen promotion of entrepreneurship in every imaginable

area of society. It seems that entrepreneurship has never been as important as it is today, and it is being promoted by international governmental bodies, national governments, public institutions and political parties across the political spectrum (see, e.g. Harni & Pyykkönen 2018; Laalo et al. 2019; Marttila 2013; Perren & Jennings 2005; Pyykkönen 2014). In Finland, for example, entrepreneurship appears in a vast array of contexts – ranging from education to welfare state services and to third sector organisations – and many scholars have noted that it is commonplace for entrepreneurship to be defined as a vague but self-evidently positive and aspirational goal (Harni & Pyykkönen 2018; Komulainen et al. 2010; Korhonen 2012; Pyykkönen 2014). As Lilly Irani (2019, 1) has aptly pointed out, 'vagueness has been core to the global promise and portability of the entrepreneurial ethos.'

Thus, startup entrepreneurship has emerged in an atmosphere of what could be described as omnipresent entrepreneurship, and from this perspective, the rhetoric of social and cultural change seems redundant. However, the aim of this cultural mission, as implied by the *Helsingin Sanomat* article, is not only to promote entrepreneurship but to change the *understanding* of entrepreneurship. It is this latter aspect on which my research focuses.

I approach startup entrepreneurship from the viewpoint of political economy. In my understanding, 'political economy' denotes the intertwinement of *the political* (i.e. politics, policies, political action, actors and institutions) and *the economic* (understood as economic and market action, actors and institutions). The political sphere cannot be separated from the economic sphere in a meaningful way and vice versa; economic phenomena become realised in accordance with political frameworks that enable and regulate their conditions, and conversely, economic phenomena frame political action and thought. The capitalist system and production are inherently political in that they are constructed through politics and policies (see, e.g. Sorsa 2013). In my understanding of political economy, I draw from the scholarship of so-called cultural political economy (see, e.g. Jessop 2004; Sum & Jessop 2013). This approach emphasises the discursive aspect of the creation and understanding of politics and economics. The relationship of meanings and practices are complex: 'technical and economic objects are socially constructed, historically specific, more or less (dis)embedded in broader networks of social relations and institutional ensembles' (Jessop 2004, 160).

In this framework, I aim to locate startup entrepreneurship in the Finnish context by examining its political underpinnings, thereby inspecting the broader shifts in Finnish political and economic discourses regarding entrepreneurship. I examine startup entrepreneurship in the context of the pervasiveness of entrepreneurship by drawing on the scholarships of governmentality and subjectivity inspired by the work of Michel Foucault (e.g. Bröckling 2016; Foucault 1991a; 1997; 2008; Komulainen et al. 2010; Peters 2001; Rose 1999), post-industrial work (e.g. Boltanski &

Chiapello 2005; Farrugia 2021; Julkunen 2008; Vallas 2012), therapeutic culture (e.g. Cabanas & Illouz 2019; Davies 2015; Foster 2016; Illouz 2008), the knowledge-based economy (e.g. Brunila et al. 2015; Moisio 2018; Moisio & Rossi 2020) and the domestication of global forms (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014; Collier & Ong 2005; Ong 2007; Syväterä 2016).

As an objective of social-scientific inquiry, entrepreneurship is multifaceted: it has been approached from the perspective of economic activity, sociology of work and cultural criticism, and each perspective holds somewhat different assumptions regarding the meaning of entrepreneurship (Doody et al. 2016). Accordingly, in the field of sociology of entrepreneurship, the usage of the term entrepreneurship ranges from a label of economic activity to a broad metaphor for action within organizations and in society more generally (Ruef & Lounsbury 2005). Thus, Sean Doody, Victor Tan Chen and Jesse Goldstein (2016, 859; see also Bill et al. 2010) contemplate that there is a need for "unifying narratives that address entrepreneurship as both a cultural and economic phenomenon."

To address this issue and to account for the ubiquity of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship in this research is theorised about in terms of subject production, denoting the practices through which people form their identity and self-understanding in a given context. There is a rich scholarship on this kind of approach to the pervasiveness of entrepreneurship, and the formations of the entrepreneurial subject have been analysed throughout the late 1990s and 2000s in various contexts, such as in precarious work (e.g. Ikonen 2013; Scharff 2016), unemployment services (e.g. Brunila & Mononen-Batista Costa 2010; Ikonen & Nikunen 2019) and education at all levels (for comprehensive school, see, e.g. Komulainen, Korhonen & Räty 2012; Korhonen 2012; for higher education, see, e.g. Laalo & Heinonen 2016; Laalo 2020). In these studies, entrepreneurship functions principally as a metaphor for ideal self-understanding and is therefore viewed through a lens of Foucauldian governmentality. In this tradition, the preconditions for forming self-understanding are understood as historically contingent, meaning that different technologies of the self vary across time and place (Cruikshank 1999; Dean 2009; Foucault 1991a; 1997; Kelly 2013a; Miller & Rose 2008). Many scholars have noted that today, entrepreneurship is the ideal form of self-understanding in every context (e.g. Brown 2015; Bröckling 2016; Komulainen et al. 2010). By following the path set by such studies, this research associates itself with the school of governmentality and analytics of government (e.g. Helén 2016; Kaisto & Pyykkönen 2010; Miller & Rose 2008).

As pointed out above, the construction of startup entrepreneurship in the Finnish context relies on a rhetoric of change and juxtaposition (see, e.g. Lehdonvirta 2013). In my view, startup entrepreneurship denotes both a certain type of economic activity and a host of discursive practices and cultural meanings. When understood in these

terms, startup entrepreneurship can be perceived as an amorphous cultural form that is able to adapt to new contexts, thus gaining new meanings and interpretations. As such, startup entrepreneurship is a global form that migrates to different environments and locations, transforming and gaining new meanings through discursive negotiations (Collier & Ong 2005; Ong 2007). To study the discursive negotiations of startup entrepreneurship in Finland, I employ the concept of domestication. In social sciences, the concept refers to the process in which exogenous ideas or cultural meanings are interwoven into local cultural meaning systems. In this process, a new version or reinterpretation of the exogenous phenomenon is conceived (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014; Syväterä 2016). In the process of domestication, such phenomena are actively fitted to local contexts by reinterpreting them, thus making them appear familiar (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014). This understanding enables the study of the current political and cultural prominence of startup entrepreneurship in Finland.

Based on the discussion above, the main research question is formed as follows: **How have the meanings of entrepreneurship as a political and cultural construction shifted in Finland?** This question is addressed through the examination of startup entrepreneurship, approached from a discourse-analytical perspective and by applying threefold textual data. The objective of the research is to chart and interpret the shift in the meanings of entrepreneurship through a discussion with scholarship that deciphers the current mode of capitalist production under the titles of the 'post-industrial economy' (Bell 1973; Boltanski & Chiapello 2005) and the 'knowledge-based economy' (Brunila et al. 2015; Moisio 2018; Olssen & Peters 2005). The research objective is twofold: firstly, to locate the broader meanings of entrepreneurship in Finland as a cultural and political construction, and secondly, to interpret startup entrepreneurship against this backdrop.

The main research question is divided into four sub-questions:

1. How have the meanings of entrepreneurship shifted in Finnish political discourse?
2. How is the ideal entrepreneurial subject constructed in the discourse of Finnish higher education?
3. How is startup entrepreneurship constructed in relation to post-industrial work?
4. How is startup entrepreneurship domesticated in the Finnish context?

This thesis comprises three original scientific articles and one chapter in an edited volume. The first two articles focus on analysing the construction of entrepreneurship in Finnish political discourse and higher education, thereby

answering Sub-questions 1 and 2. The third article and the chapter in an edited volume focus on the description and elaboration of the entrepreneurial ideal subject in the context of startup entrepreneurship through the analysis of Finnish startup guidebooks and other non-fiction literature, thereby answering Sub-questions 3 and 4.

A central conclusion reached in this research is that startup entrepreneurship crystallises an ongoing shift in the meanings of entrepreneurship as a political and cultural construction in Finland. I argue that in the context of a post-industrial knowledge economy, entrepreneurship is increasingly understood through the notion of startup entrepreneurship, and thereby, the extremely heterogeneous reality of entrepreneurial work is obscured.

This research portrays startup entrepreneurship in Finland in a sociological context, which has until recently been lacking in the scholarship on the phenomenon. Startup entrepreneurship has mainly been discussed in the field of business and management studies, and economics (e.g. Maliranta et al. 2018); few studies have charted the phenomenon from a sociological perspective as a distinct area of entrepreneurial discourse (Hyrkäs 2016, 7–8). In the fields of management and business science, however, some recent studies have approached startup entrepreneurship from a discursive perspective (e.g. Egan-Wyer et al. 2018; Maula 2018). In recent years, startup and technology entrepreneurship have been studied in the fields of geography and anthropology, utilising ethnographic data and other forms of qualitative data (Cockayne 2019; Irani 2019; Moisio & Rossi 2020; Pollio 2020; Rossi & Di Bella 2017). The focus has been on the local–global dynamics of startup entrepreneurship as well as on the political legitimation of startup entrepreneurship.

My research brings these lines of inquiry to the field of political economy by examining the discursive underpinnings of startup entrepreneurship in Finland, that is, by examining how startup entrepreneurship is constructed and legitimised in the Finnish context. In this way, this research aims at grounding the research on startup entrepreneurship in a Nordic context. Thus, the research contributes to scholarship on the Nordic competition state (e.g. Kananen & Kantola 2013; Kananen 2017; Saarinen et al. 2014) by deciphering the meanings of entrepreneurship within this framework.

As a theoretical contribution, the thesis contributes to the discussion on Foucauldian governmentality and entrepreneurial subjectivity (e.g. Bröckling 2016; Dean 2009; Miller & Rose 2008; Pyykkönen 2014) by stressing the discursive and contextual aspects involved in researching and interpreting the varieties of entrepreneurial subjects. In Foucault-inspired studies, ‘entrepreneurship’ is often an umbrella term that incorporates various elements under the rubric of entrepreneurial subjectivity in a rather totalising way. Therefore, the entrepreneurial subject shaped

in these studies tends to be rather blurry: ‘entrepreneurial’ denotes a rather imprecise host of qualities and characteristics, such as self-reliance, proactivity, calculability etc. In this research, the focus is on how the preconditions for self-understandings are produced in texts, and the data used in this research consists of texts from Finnish political governance, texts describing entrepreneurial activities in Finnish higher education and Finnish startup literature. The overarching focus of the analyses is describing the ideal entrepreneurial subject taking shape in the texts – what kind of an ideal subject do the texts produce and under which conditions? By concentrating on startup entrepreneurship and emphasising the importance of context, this thesis attempts to elaborate the framework’s ability to explain different entrepreneurial phenomena and thereby expand its capability in the analysis of political economy.

The thesis unfolds in the following manner: in Section 2, I contextualise entrepreneurship from the perspective of Finnish political economy and locate startup entrepreneurship in a broader societal context in Finland. In Section 3, I theorise about entrepreneurship from the perspective of governmentality. In doing so, I examine the ubiquity of entrepreneurship through theorisations on neoliberalism, post-industrial labour, therapeutic culture and the knowledge-based economy. In Section 4, I introduce the data sets utilised in the research and offer methodological considerations. Section 5 summarises the original articles (I–IV) comprising this research, and Section 6 presents the conclusions the research reaches.

2 The context of the research: Entrepreneurship in Finnish political economy

In this section, I contextualise the starting points of this research by examining entrepreneurship from the perspective of the Finnish labour market and political economy. I frame entrepreneurship within the wider shifts in the Finnish economy in the latter half of the twentieth century, which are dubbed as the transition from the industrial economy to the post-industrial and knowledge-based economy. Thus, entrepreneurship becomes understandable in the broader transition of the economy and society. In addition, the discursive side of entrepreneurship is illuminated.

2.1 Entrepreneurship in the Finnish labour market and post-industrial economy

In Finland, the percentage of entrepreneurs in the workforce is slightly lower than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average (OECD 2016). The number of entrepreneurs in the labour market has remained relatively stable throughout the 2000s, being approximately 12–14% of all the employed workforce (Official Statistics Finland, Labour Force Survey 2021; Pärnänen & Sutela 2014; 2018). Finnish entrepreneurship is characterised by small and medium-sized businesses with over 95% of all enterprises employing less than 10 people. In fact, over half of all enterprises employ only one person, meaning that solo entrepreneurs form the bulk of Finnish entrepreneurship. Their number is on a slight rise: between 2000 and 2017, the number of self-employed people has increased by over 40 000 people, meaning an increase of approximately 1.5 percentage points (Lemola 2020, 199–200; Ojala et al. 2017; Pärnänen & Sutela 2018, 16–17).

As a labour market category, ‘entrepreneurship’ is extremely heterogeneous. It consists of people who have very little in common in terms of industry, organisation and income. This heterogeneity is reflected in the terminology of entrepreneurship: it is customary to divide entrepreneurs into the categories of ‘rural entrepreneur’, ‘employer’ and ‘self-employed’, the last category being divided into smaller sub-

groups based on the nature of the individuals' work and income sources (solo entrepreneur, freelancers and grant recipients). The differences – especially between the sub-groups of the self-employed – are blurry, and people within them tend to move between groups according to their changing income sources (Pyykkönen, Sokka & Kurlin Niiniaho 2021; Pärnänen & Sutela 2014; 2018). However, some generalisations can be made: the typical Finnish entrepreneur is a self-employed, middle-aged man with a mid-level education who works in construction or a similar industry (see, e.g. Pärnänen & Sutela 2018; Tammelin 2019). The majority of entrepreneurs are male, but there is some variation between industries and categories, and the majority of entrepreneurs work in the manual labour or service industries (Pärnänen & Sutela 2014, 10–13). It has also been noted that entrepreneurship is somewhat segregated by gender: women's entrepreneurship tends to focus on personal service industries, while men's entrepreneurship is located more firmly in construction, agriculture and logistics (Pärnänen & Sutela 2018, 21–24; see also Hasanen 2013).

In terms of income and job security, entrepreneurship is rather polarised, but generally speaking, entrepreneurs are in a relatively vulnerable position: entrepreneurs' income is low and they are less protected from economic turmoil compared to wageworkers. This is especially poignant amongst the solo self-employed (Ojala et al. 2017; Pärnänen & Sutela 2018, 61–64; Tammelin 2019). Despite the relative uncertainty with regard to livelihood, entrepreneurs in general express positivity and motivation in regard to their work, and the freedom associated with entrepreneurial work is especially appreciated (Pärnänen & Sutela 2014; 2018; Tammelin 2019).

Startup entrepreneurship is equally elusive in terms of exact definitions. A common classification emphasises the young age of the company and actively seeking the growth of the company. With these criteria, it has been estimated that roughly 5% of all companies founded yearly are startups. Among startups, roughly 5–10% are aggressively seeking growth. Further, of this 5–10%, roughly 1–2% are eligible for considerable capital investments (Lahtinen et al. 2016; Maliranta et al. 2018; see also Lemola 2020, 204–205). Thus, Maliranta et al. (2018) estimate that less than one percent of all companies founded early are scalable startups. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that startup entrepreneurship is not exactly common in the Finnish economy. The majority of startups operate in the fields of IT and knowledge-intensive services, and they typically employ less than 10 people (Lahtinen et al. 2016).

Although the number of entrepreneurs has remained rather stable from the late 1900s onwards, there is a stark change to be observed in the composition of entrepreneurship. From the 1990s onwards, the number of rural entrepreneurs has diminished and the number of self-employed persons has grown correspondingly

(OSF Labour Force Survey 2021). In addition, entrepreneurial forms of work have spread to sectors that were previously largely outside the realm of entrepreneurship, such as care work (see, e.g. Hasanen 2013). Moreover, entrepreneurship is becoming an increasingly common conceptualisation of labour in sectors that are characterised by precarity and fragmentary work conditions, such as the arts and cultural work (Pyykkönen et al. 2021).

Simultaneously, due to shifts in the economy and work organisation, entrepreneurship is becoming even less fixed as a labour market position. Especially in the field of self-employment, the 2000s have witnessed an increase in forms of work that blur the division between 'wage work' and 'entrepreneurship' (Pyykkönen et al. 2021; Pyöriä 2017). These new forms of entrepreneurial work, such as platform work and light entrepreneurship, challenge the tradition of categorising the worker as either a wageworker or an entrepreneur (Seppänen et al. 2019). 'Platform work' denotes work that is organised through an online service that connects the worker to customers. The worker is usually thought of as an entrepreneur as most often the worker is not in an employment relation to the platform; the platform acts as a mediator of assignments (Seppänen et al. 2019; Vallas & Schor 2020). 'Light entrepreneurship' is best described as a form of self-employment whereby work is technically conducted in the manner of entrepreneurship, but the bureaucracy related to business management is outsourced to a specialised company. This has proven problematic in terms of legislation as the legal status of a light entrepreneur is difficult to define (Sitra 2016). Despite their relative marginality – at a European level, around two percent of working-age people work primarily through platforms (Seppänen et al. 2019) – these forms of work are prominently discussed in public debates and illustrate the shifts that the economy is undergoing.

The changes in entrepreneurial labour reflect a more profound trend in the Finnish labour market. After WWII, Finnish society established itself as a wage work society in which the interplay of the organised workforce, industrial employers and the state marked the central societal dynamic (see, e.g. Alasuutari 2017; Blom et al. 1984; Kettunen 2008, 154–162). However, throughout the late twentieth century, Finland rather swiftly transformed from a rural society into having a heavily industrialised economy and, further, into having a post-industrial service economy. From the 1970s onwards, the role of agriculture, forestry and fisheries has diminished drastically, and today, services form the majority of the Finnish economy (Statistics Finland 2020, 83; Väänänen & Turtiainen 2014). In a European comparison, this change has occurred in a rather short period of time, and it has had drastic consequences for the Finnish economy, labour market and society more generally.

Post-industrialisation of the economy has characterised the entirety of the Western world from the 1960s onwards, and it has generated a vast scholarship in

social theory. Daniel Bell's *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society* (1973) is seen as a classic on the topic of post-industrialisation. Bell describes the post-industrial society as a service economy instead of an industrial one, where the production of knowledge, new knowledge-based industries and services surpass the manufacturing sector. In the following, I illustrate some key aspects of post-industrialism from the Finnish perspective.

Scholarship on post-industrialism emphasises the primacy of the service sector: service work is the dominant form of work, and industrial forms of work are increasingly conceptualised as service work (Farrugia 2021; Parviainen et al. 2016). On the other hand, 'post-industrialism' refers to a mode of capitalist production in which communication, innovations and production of knowledge – mediated by various novel forms of technology – are central components (see, e.g. Peters 2010). Concomitantly, post-industrialisation involves a transition from tangible goods to intangible goods and consequently from manual labour to immaterial labour, in which the value of the product is largely formed immaterially, that is to say, in the minds and in the communication of the workers and/or the customer (Brunila et al. 2015; Hardt & Negri 2009; Parviainen et al. 2016). This has meant a trend which some scholars have dubbed as the 'linguistic turn' of the economy: language and semiosis are inherent parts of post-industrial capitalist production and accumulation (Marazzi 2006; Viren & Vähämäki 2015; see also Fairclough 2002).

It is necessary to reflect on the term 'post-industrial'. The narrative of the post-industrial economic shift states that, due to a shift in the political atmosphere, management practices and economic shifts beginning in the latter half of the twentieth century, and capitalist production began – sporadically, gradually but inevitably – to transform from a mode characterised by mass production to a mode defined by flexibility, the differentiation of markets and networked production. This transformation took place in 'the West' (denoting developed, industrialised countries and welfare states on both sides of the Atlantic). Of course, the narrative is simplistic: the shifts in the modes of production cannot be encapsulated in a way that would grasp all the sides and viewpoints, and in scholarship, this recapitulation of post-industrialism has been criticised for using monolithic, totalising terms. There have always been workers and modes of work that cannot be located within this framework. Moreover, the industrial regime is a rather brief exception in the history of work (e.g. Karppi et al. 2016; Neilson & Rossiter 2008; Suoranta 2009). Central to the narrative of post-industrialisation is the crisis of the Fordist mode of production in the latter half of the twentieth century, which was answered by the post-Fordist regime of flexible production. The regime was established and institutionalised in the course of the late twentieth century through many practices, such as through policies emphasising globalisation, competitiveness and the role of knowledge and through organisation cultures and management techniques

highlighting efficiency and entrepreneurial attitude (Jakonen 2018; Jessop 2004; Moisio 2018; Sum & Jessop 2013; Vallas 2012).

An important aspect of the scholarship on post-industrialisation is the discussion on the precarity of labour and the precarisation of labour markets (see, e.g. Standing 2011). According to this scholarship, it is more commonplace for employment to become fixed-term and temporary in the post-industrial age in order to maximise the flexibility of production. In addition to the increase in the forms of work that combine elements of entrepreneurship and wage work that were discussed above, post-industrialisation has been marked by the rise of temporary forms of employment – such as freelancing, employment via agencies etc. – and the number of people in atypical employment has grown (Jakonen 2018; Nuutinen 2017; Standing 2011; Vallas 2012). Therefore, in the post-industrial age, the role of full-time employment as a stabilising factor in peoples' lives is declining as labour is becoming increasingly fractured (Jokinen & Venäläinen 2015).

The scale of precarity is a much-debated issue among scholars – partly because of the complexity related to the operationalisation of precarity – and it is generally viewed that while the amount of precarious employment in Finland has increased slightly over recent decades, precarious labour is not especially common. However, it has been noted that the job quality of the jobs involved in precarious work is deteriorating. (Jakonen 2018; Pyöriä & Ojala 2016.) However, some scholars emphasise the broader nature of precarity: it is a phenomenon that characterises a far-reaching development in current societies and therefore cannot be adequately explained by statistical examinations of the labour markets. When understood in this way, precarity denotes a broader experience of uncertainty in post-industrial capitalism that is characterised by flexibility and individuality (Jokinen & Venälälinen 2015). Curiously, entrepreneurship has been presented as a solution to these developments, both in the sense of cultivating an entrepreneurial individual attitude in flexible labour markets (see, e.g. Gershon 2016; Ikonen & Nikunen 2019) and in the sense of steering people towards the labour market position of entrepreneurship by encouraging self-employment (see, e.g. Brunila & Mononen-Batista Costa 2010; Arola & Hackman 2016).

Post-industrialisation aptly captures the general developments of the Finnish economy. The Finnish labour market of the twenty-first century is characterised by an increase of precarity and the primacy of service work and knowledge work, and Finland has transformed into having a knowledge-based economy (e.g. Brunila et al. 2015; Jakonen 2018; Moisio 2018). This transformation has entailed entrepreneurship having a new importance (see, e.g. Audretch 2003; Perren & Jennings 2005; Thurik et al. 2013), and this thematic will be explored more thoroughly in the following section.

In cultural terms, the Finnish entrepreneurial ethos – much like that of wage work – has traditionally been characterised by simultaneous modesty and ambition that stem from the protestant ethic typical to rural societies: work per se is valuable and respectable, but the wealth acquired though work is less valued (Peltomäki 2002; see also Kantola & Kuusela 2019, 140–147; Kortteinen 1992). Entrepreneurial identity can be seen as leaning towards middle-class values. Entrepreneurs are neither seen as wageworkers nor as part of the societal elite. Due to expanding urbanisation and the stable wage work institution after WWII, there was room for the service and trade sectors to redefine entrepreneurial work as both mental and physical labour, which foreshadowed the subsequent dominant understanding of entrepreneurship as a quality or characteristic (Peltomäki 2002).

As a discursive phenomenon, entrepreneurship is multifaceted. Reflecting the heterogeneity described above, entrepreneurship has been promoted by political actors, educational institutions and public administrators from the late twentieth century onwards as both a means to attain employment and as a more general worldview (Bröckling 2016; Komulainen et al. 2010; Pyykkönen 2014). Furthermore, the discourse of entrepreneurship is increasingly produced by self-proclaimed advocates for entrepreneurship, such as management consultants, public business speakers, life coaches etc. (Pyykkönen 2021). It can be said that entrepreneurial language penetrates all spheres of society, and 'the entrepreneur' is viewed as a cultural hero of today (Kantola & Kuusela 2019, 129–133; Pilotta 2016). So, the meaning making of entrepreneurship and the shifts thereof become understandable against the wider backdrop of post-industrialisation and the growing ubiquity of the notion of entrepreneurship.

2.2 Entrepreneurship in a knowledge-based economy

Due to the post-industrial changes in the global economy from the latter half of the twentieth century onwards, entrepreneurship started to become increasingly important for national economies. Throughout the Western world, special entrepreneurship policies were created to boost the development of new ventures and to support nascent entrepreneurship (Perren & Jennings 2005). In Finland, entrepreneurship policy as a separate area of political intervention developed in the late 1990s, although the foundation had been laid decades earlier with various political manoeuvres to fortify small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Niska & Vesala 2011; Turunen 2011). At the same time, the concept of innovation policy was introduced: innovations, and research and development (R&D) were framed as the saviours of the economy in the era of globalisation, and the state was to promote, advance and support the creation of innovations (Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014;

Kettunen 2008; Lemola 2020; Moisio 2018; Moisio & Rossi 2020). In political economy, entrepreneurship became entangled with the framework of the creation of innovations and new ventures, and it came to be understood as the source and enactor of innovations (Niska & Vesala 2011).

Therefore, as Tero Turunen (2011; see also Moisio 2018) argues, the centrality of entrepreneurship in the Finnish political economy in the post-industrial age has not solely been due to new ventures' growing importance to economic growth, but rather, the promotion of entrepreneurship has been a joint project of political actors and key industrial players. In this political project, entrepreneurship was to replace the dynamic that the economy was deemed lacking. Consequently, meanings of innovation and dynamism were associated with the term, and in the course of the 1980s and 1990s, entrepreneurship established itself as synonymous with growth and inventiveness. Gradually, entrepreneurship became to be understood as a skill set and a quality that is latent in every individual. Due to this dormant nature, entrepreneurship was something that could be teased out and cultivated (Turunen 2011; see also Pyykkönen 2021). Along with this understanding, entrepreneurship has become firmly attached to education policy from the 1990s onwards (Korhonen 2012, 16–22).

This phenomenon is global in its origins. In the OECD and the European Union (EU), especially after the establishment of the so-called Lisbon Strategy (a pivotal economic roadmap for Europe devised in 2000), entrepreneurship has been understood in a Schumpeterian framework, meaning that entrepreneurship – through its catalytic function as the mobiliser of Schumpeterian creative destruction in the markets – is a source of economic growth and job creation (Audretsch 2003; Audretsch, Keilbach & Lehmann 2006). Sami Moisio (2018, 98–99) suggests that the growing understanding of entrepreneurship as a central factor of national competitiveness needs to be understood in the context of intensifying global mobility and the knowledge economy. Knowledge-intensive entrepreneurship, in particular, is seen as performing the Schumpeterian function of innovative, creative destruction; oftentimes, this function is articulated through technological discourses and ideas (Jessop 2004, 168–169). This in part explains the current prominence of startup and technology entrepreneurship in Finland and elsewhere in the Western world.

In a knowledge-based economy, the aptitude for generating, producing, analysing, distributing and organising information is seen as a central advantage in global competition, which consequently increases the importance of education, R&D and the ensuing allocation of resources to those sectors by governmental institutions at both national and international level (see, e.g. Moisio 2018; Olssen & Peters 2005; Peters 2010). Along with natural resources, the labour force and capital, knowledge is seen as a basic principle of production, which implies a focus on technological change and the ability to utilise and develop technology (Audretch 2003; Castells

1998; Peters, Marginson & Murphy 2009). In Finland, for example, this has meant efforts to boost people's education level and the R&D investments of the business sector throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Blom, Melin & Pyöriä 2001; Brunila et al. 2015; Lemola 2020). Post-industrialisation in Finland has been marked by a rising level of education: the share of people with a higher education degree tripled from the 1980s to the 2000s (see, e.g. Aro 2014, 9–14).

In my understanding of the knowledge-based economy, I follow Sami Moisio (2018; Moisio & Rossi 2020) who conceptualises the knowledge-based economy developments as knowledge-based *economisation*. This view – influenced by the discussions of cultural political economy (see, e.g. Sum & Jessop 2013) – highlights the epistemic dimension of the knowledge-based economy and emphasises the political forces and practices in the understanding of an economy. The discourses of knowledge-based economy have penetrated social reality and become tacit knowledge in the sense that they 'condition policy practices across many geographical locations', resulting in knowledge-based economy becoming 'politically understood and framed as "the only option"' (Moisio 2018, 17; see also Jakonen 2018, 350–354).

Thus, the knowledge-based economy is embedded in and established by social practices and various actors and institutions (Jessop 2004). International organisations, such as the EU and OECD, have played a key role in this establishment, and national governments in Western countries have included the promotion of innovation-led growth on their agendas. In the Lisbon Strategy, the creation of entrepreneurship-friendly structures and systems for innovation development were defined as central components of the economic strategy for the EU (European Council 2000). Member states of the EU have implemented this strategy in their domestic politics in various ways.

Therefore, the knowledge-based economy promotes the understanding of entrepreneurship as the source of innovations and consequent job creation (see, e.g. Irani 2019). Entrepreneurship's centrality to post-industrial economy is underlined by the term 'entrepreneurial economy' that is used by some scholars (see, e.g. Thurik et al. 2013). In Finland, the political project of the knowledge-based economy is interlinked with the Finnish self-understanding as a 'people of engineers' and with the political imperative that, in the globalised economy, Finland should compete with talent and technological expertise rather than with inexpensive labour (Kettunen 2008, 119–127, 221–222; Lemola 2020; Moisio 2018).

From a wider perspective, the new prominence of entrepreneurship as a vital ingredient of national competitiveness is linked to a broader reformulation of the Nordic welfare state in the advent of the new millennium. The welfare state has been reworked along neoliberal understandings of competitiveness and an all-encompassing market logic, which are seen as replacing the Keynesian welfare

regime (see, e.g. Blomberg & Kildal 2011; Eskelinen et al. 2017; Julkunen 2017; Kananen 2017; Kananen & Kantola 2013; Kantola 2002; 2014; Luhtakallio & Heiskala 2006; Saarinen et al. 2014; see also Jokinen 2017). This scholarship maintains that from the 1980s onwards, the notion of competition has become increasingly important in construing the welfare state, which is now formulated in a framework of market logic, efficiency and accountability. Many scholars see that the depression of the early 1990s worked as a catalyst for these reformations in Finland, although the developments had already been in the making (see, e.g. Kantola & Kananen 2013; Kettunen 2008, 118–127).

This new rationality also works to reform citizenship along the notions of responsibility and self-sufficiency, emphasising the duties of the citizen towards the state and downplaying the meaning of universal rights (Blomberg & Kildal 2011; Julkunen 2017; Saarinen et al. 2014). The central metaphor in the reformulation is entrepreneurship, which in the context of welfare state denotes an ethos of proactivity and self-reliance. The rationale is that entrepreneurial ideal citizens upkeep the welfare state services for those that cannot participate in society in a proper manner, which implicitly works to reformulate welfare state institutions as cultivating and activating citizens towards proper, entrepreneurial citizenship (Blomberg & Kildal 2011; Kananen 2017; Korhonen 2012, 21; Saarinen et al. 2014, 615–616).

Anu Kantola and Johannes Kananen (2013) see that Finland, along with other Nordic countries, underwent a paradigmatic shift in the understanding of the welfare state. The universal model was gradually replaced by a form of the Schumpeterian competition state, which is characterised by market logic, demands for the efficiency of the public sector and the rationale of having technology and innovations at the core of competitiveness (Kananen & Kantola 2013; see also Alasuutari 2017; Kananen 2017; Saarinen et al. 2014). In particular, the last-mentioned idea was gradually filtered into public discourse over the course of the 1990s and became established as component of Finnish national competitiveness (Kantola 2014).

Thus, in the current political economy, entrepreneurship gains its meanings within this framework. My argument is that the idea of entrepreneurship as a competitive advantage in the global knowledge-based economy (Kantola & Kananen 2013; Marttila 2013; Perren & Jennings 2005) is entangled with the idea of entrepreneurship as an ethos of citizenship in the competition state (Kananen 2017; Harni & Pyykkönen 2018; Pyykkönen 2014), thus explaining both the ubiquity and the ambiguity of the meaning of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is a key concept in the production of citizenship: the purpose is not to produce entrepreneurs or entrepreneurship per se but to produce a *certain kind* of entrepreneur, understood as a subject that is ready to operate in the knowledge-based economy in a certain way (Moisio 2018; Moisio & Rossi 2020; Viren & Vähämäki 2015).

To summarise, I understand the knowledge-based economy as a flux of discourses that focus on the state's interest in economic growth and competitiveness, amalgamating entrepreneurship and new ventures, higher education (both in the sense of the *substance* of education and the *organisation* of higher education institutions [HEIs]) and the interests of various advocates of business life and institutionalised actors. It is within this nexus that the political and cultural construction of entrepreneurship becomes understandable.

In my view, startup entrepreneurship emerges from the recent developments of this nexus. Sami Moisio and Ugo Rossi (2020) conceptualise the political economy of the post-2008 recession era with the term 'the startup state', which they see as an 'ideologically intricate neoliberal project [–] that brings together people, firms, technologies, organizations and governmental technologies in the name of economic growth, innovation and national success' (2020, 534). As my analysis will show, this idea is visible in the agendas of the Finnish governments of the 2000s and 2010s that sought to link growth-seeking entrepreneurship, innovation capacity and economic growth. It can be argued, then, that startup entrepreneurship emerges as a new locus of meaning making in the construction of entrepreneurship in Finnish political discourse. However, the roots go deeper. After all, the influential *The Finnish Model of the Information Society* (Castells & Himanen 2001, 170–172) lamented that Finland's future success will be shadowed by the lack of new, high-expertise entrepreneurship in the vein of that of Silicon Valley.

2.3 Entrepreneurship in higher education

Higher education and HEIs have a pivotal role in the Finnish political economy in the twenty-first century. Higher education is seen as a part of the national competitiveness regime along with the state and industrial key players. Especially in the context of the knowledge-based economy, higher education is dominantly understood as a cog in the machine of national competitiveness (Moisio 2018; see also Rinne & Koivula 2005). Higher education thus increasingly gains its meaning through the ideas of serving societal interests, which in the recent decades have come to be defined primarily in terms of the economy and business life (Björn et al. 2017; Kankaanpää 2013; Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014; Rinne et al. 2014; see also Lemola 2020, 230–234, 238).

In Finland, an important notion regarding higher education and especially universities has traditionally been that of a *third mission*, which denotes the idea of education and research within universities that aims to affect the surrounding society. In the framework of the post-industrial knowledge economy illustrated above, the effect has primarily been conceptualised as economic, translating into an imperative for higher education to produce, firstly, employable subjects and, secondly,

societally relevant knowledge and innovations (Kankaanpää 2013; Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014, 30; Rinne et al. 2014). According to Sami Moisio (2018, 20), 'the discourses of the knowledge-based economy highlight the strategic role of higher education institutions,' which not only results in HEIs becoming a topic of economic-political interest but also in HEIs defining themselves through the notions of added value to the national economy and competitiveness.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these definitions utilise the notion of entrepreneurship. In the 2000s and 2010s, the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture released numerous reports that intensified the role of entrepreneurial practices in higher education. These included (but are not limited to) the creation and commercialisation of innovations, close-knit cooperation between HEIs and the business sector, interdisciplinary entrepreneurship education and the promotion of broader entrepreneurial culture within HEIs (Laalo 2020, 31–32; Ministry of Education and Culture 2005; 2015; 2016; see also Rinne & Koivula 2005). A strand of research has termed this tendency 'academic capitalism', emphasising the embeddedness of market logic and corporate practices in current higher education (Kankaanpää 2013; Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014; Slaughter & Rhoades 2004).

The strategic partnerships of HEIs, businesses and public sector actors have sparked new kinds of conceptualisations of learning and resulted in formulations of new methods and environments of learning in higher education. HEIs conceptualise their dual role as cultivators of entrepreneurial, creative individuals and as fosterers of innovations and competitiveness by creating new entrepreneurial sites in which education and business converge. Scholars have observed that in higher education, entrepreneurship is realised by formal and informal practices that range from standardised entrepreneurship education to informal gatherings of students and the faculty, as well as to the joint projects of HEIs, local partners and businesses (Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014; Parkkari 2019; Pittaway et al. 2010; Siivonen et al. 2019). Entrepreneurship as a notion, then, frames a considerable number of heterogeneous activities within and between HEIs.

Luke Pittaway et al. (2010; see also Siivonen et al. 2019) shape a continuum of entrepreneurial activities that ranges from formal entrepreneurship education to extracurricular entrepreneurial activities (for example, various entrepreneurial clubs and societies with variable degrees of formality) and to practices enhancing graduate entrepreneurship, such as workshops, financial support and pre-incubation for student-led businesses. The sites in which the last-mentioned kind of activity in particular takes place can be seen as 'interstitial organisations' that serve as a bridge between HEIs and the private sector (Kauppinen & Kaidesoja 2014). This trend works to overlap the discourses and practices of education and business. In the context of the knowledge-based economy, the environments in which entrepreneurship is constructed consist of informally organised spaces and meeting

points for students, teachers, entrepreneurs and business stakeholders alike. They can be, for example, entrepreneurial societies (Parkkari 2019; Siivonen et al. 2019), incubators for business ventures, workshops for business development (Moisio 2018) and so on.

In this research, I draw attention to the construction of entrepreneurship within these new sites of learning. In my view, such sites are located at two discursive intersections. Firstly, they illustrate the relationship of higher education and the surrounding society in the knowledge-based economy. HEIs labour to be recognised as relevant in the service of societal and economic interests through the formation of 'quasi-internal' organisations that obscure the boundaries between public and private – between education and business (Markman, Siegel & Wright 2008). Secondly, by amalgamating formal entrepreneurship education and broader entrepreneurial practices, the sites highlight the difficulty in defining entrepreneurship and pinpointing the activities that constitute, maintain and promote entrepreneurship within higher education.

Paralleling the creation of entrepreneurial sites, the role of formal entrepreneurship education has been fortified throughout the Finnish education system from the early 1990s onwards (see, e.g. Komulainen et al. 2010; Korhonen 2012). In the 2000s, entrepreneurship education became an integral part of national education policy, and various forms of entrepreneurship education have consequently been established at all levels of education. In part, this stems from supranational political organisations, such as the EU and the OECD, which have defined entrepreneurship as a key element of citizenship in the globalised world of the twenty-first century (European Commission 2003; Laalo & Heinonen 2016). In the discourses of entrepreneurship education, a distinction is drawn between outer and internal entrepreneurship. The former denotes activities in the labour market whereas the latter constructs entrepreneurship as a set of attitudes and mindsets that the individual can cultivate and apply in his or her everyday life. Scholars have noted that entrepreneurial pedagogy tends to focus more on seeing entrepreneurship as a set of attitudes and mindsets (Harni & Pyykkönen 2018; Laalo 2020; Komulainen et al. 2010; Korhonen 2012), thus focusing on the creation of *potential* entrepreneurship. In higher education, entrepreneurship education interlinks with the multiplicity of entrepreneurial practices described above. Furthermore, it explicitly relies on the rationale of the knowledge-based economy: in the 21st century, the mission of higher education is to produce citizens commensurate with the needs of the economy and competitiveness (Farny et al. 2016; Laalo 2020; Siivonen et al. 2019).

In critical, sociologically oriented studies, entrepreneurship education has been approached as a technique of governance that works to cultivate ideal entrepreneurial subjects (see, e.g. Komulainen et al. 2010; Korhonen 2012; Laalo 2020; Peters

2001). This discussion is integrally linked to the ideas of neoliberalism and the ubiquity of economic subjectivity, a thematic which was discussed briefly in the Introduction and which will be discussed more thoroughly in Section 3. According to Wendy Brown (2015), higher education in the twenty-first century is best understood as a machine that cultivates subjects who aim to develop and optimise their human capital. Such subjects are seen to serve the needs of the economy. The accumulation, management and adaptation of human capital requires the subject to internalise the ethos of an enterprising self, in other words, the ability to view oneself from a managerial viewpoint. Echoing this, Sami Moisio (2018, 87) suggests that HEIs can be viewed as 'political technologies through which the geopolitical subjects of the knowledge-based economy are educated.' In Finland and elsewhere, conceptualising higher education in economic terms has been seen as challenging the traditional academic values of intellectual freedom, knowledge production and critical thinking (Brown 2015; Laalo 2020; Rinne & Koivula 2005).

Indeed, research has noted that in higher education, entrepreneurship can develop into a totalising discourse that embeds other ideas and discourses into itself (Farny et al. 2016). Entrepreneurship as a self-evidently positive phenomenon is legitimised via affective vocabularies that associate entrepreneurship with self-actualisation, creativity and changing the world for the better (Moisio 2018; Parkkari 2019).

In fact, startup entrepreneurship in Finland has emerged in close connection with HEIs. The most prominent example of this is Aalto University (AU) (Mannevuo 2015; Moisio 2018; Moisio & Rossi 2020). AU was founded in 2010 by combining three different organisations: the Helsinki School of Economics, the University of Art and Design Helsinki, and Helsinki University of Technology. By way of combining economic, design and technological knowledge, fostering new innovations and high-expertise entrepreneurship was the founding idea of AU (Mannevuo 2015, 113; Moisio 2018, 103–105). AU became the home for many startup-related projects and activities, perhaps the most notable of which is Aaltoes, a student-led entrepreneurship society. In the 2010s, Aaltoes organised many public events and workshops promoting a new kind of entrepreneurial culture in Finnish society – all of which were widely covered in the media (Lehdonvirta 2013; Lemola 2020, 230; Moisio 2018). On their website, Aaltoes describes its role as 'the driving force in the Finnish startup scene' (Aaltoes 2021). It has served as a springboard for many aspiring and successful startup entrepreneurs, as well as for arranging the Slush event and developing it to its current magnitude (Vimma 2018).

Thus, startup entrepreneurship and higher education in Finland are in many ways intertwined, and higher education provides a beneficial context in which to analyse the shifting meanings of entrepreneurship. In my research, the entrepreneurial sites described above serve as contexts in which the construction of entrepreneurship is examined.

3 The theoretical framework: The ideal entrepreneurial subject

In this section, I present the theoretical framework of this research. The research draws on and contributes to three scholarships: (1) the scholarship on governmentality and the analytics of government, (2) the scholarship on post-industrial work, especially on therapeutic culture and on the knowledge-based economy, and finally, (3) the scholarship on global forms and domestication. The research examines the construction of entrepreneurship through the conceptualisations of governmentality. The examination takes place through the concept of the ideal entrepreneurial subject, which is developed in this section by drawing on the aforementioned scholarships. The ideal entrepreneurial subject functions as a prism though which the meanings of entrepreneurship are analysed in three contexts: Finnish political discourse, Finnish higher education and Finnish startup entrepreneurship literature.

The section unfolds as follows. Firstly, I discuss the framework of governmentality and explain its application in this research (Section 3.1). Secondly, I discuss the notion of neoliberalism from the viewpoint of the entrepreneurial ideal subject (Section 3.2). Next, I elaborate the idea through a discussion of post-industrial work, therapeutic culture and the knowledge economy (Section 3.3). Finally, I discuss the notion of global forms and their domestication (Section 3.4).

3.1 Governmentality

As discussed in Section 2, many studies of entrepreneurship in political economy and governance have shown that, from the late 1900s onwards, the notion of entrepreneurship has become ubiquitous, meaning that the term's connection to labour markets or even to the economy has become ambiguous (see, e.g. Bröckling 2016; Marttila 2013; Pilotta 2016). This conclusion has led to conceptualisations of entrepreneurship as an 'empty signifier'. Borrowing from the political scientists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, this means that entrepreneurship is effortlessly adapted to various contexts, and it can be 'filled' with meanings relevant to a given context (Laalo et al. 2019; Laclau & Mouffe 1985; Pyykkönen 2021). Similarly,

entrepreneurship can also be viewed as 'a chiffré,' meaning 'a point of projection and condensation of various meanings' (Marttila 2013, 6), which renders entrepreneurship conceptually open-ended. Therefore, entrepreneurship can be analysed as a historically contingent construction that reflects the ideals, discursive struggles and cultural meanings of given temporal conditions.

Many such studies argue that entrepreneurship is a hegemonic and normative notion defining people's self-understanding in various contexts. This kind of research of entrepreneurship owes a great deal to the thinking of French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault (1926–1984), whose theorisations have been used extensively in critical analysis of modern power (e.g. Bröckling 2016; Komulainen et al. 2010; Pyykkönen 2014; Scharff 2016). Foucault discussed entrepreneurial subjectivity in his lectures in the Collège de France in 1978 and 1979, which later formed the basis for his *Birth of Biopolitics* (1979/2008). In this seminal analysis of neoliberal thought and power, Foucalt argues that neoliberalism produces a subject that views the *self as an enterprise*, meaning that people should see themselves as entrepreneurs, but not in the sense of starting or managing a business. Rather, they should view their actions as if they themselves were businesses. This means that the self must be seen as an object in need of continuous re-evaluation, development and optimisation (Brown 2015; Bröckling 2016; Foucault 2008; Helén 2016; McNay 2009). Like these studies, my research draws on the literature of governmentality and its methodological application, often termed the 'analytics of government' (Dean 2009; Kaisto & Pyykkönen 2010; Hélen 2016). My focus is on the formation of the entrepreneurial subject in current Finnish political economy; more specifically, I am interested in describing the shape that this subject can be thought to assume.

Foucault conceives of power as a historically contingent, discursive process that cannot be reduced to single agents or wielders of power (such as the state, governmental bodies, heads of state or parliamentary organs). Instead of a straightforward top-down flow or diffusion, power is ubiquitous in that it is produced discursively in fluctuating communicative processes that are underpinned by knowledge production and institutionalised practices. Power is conceptualised as *governmentality*, a neologism that combines the words 'government' (or 'governance') and 'mentality'. Governmentality can be translated as the interplay and interaction between subjects (human beings) and their surrounding culture, institutions, and established institutional and social practices. Governance takes place though these myriad combinations of explicit governing and implicit self-governance. Power works through collectively produced, shared assumptions and truths concerning the nature of reality, which are then mobilised in the production of subjectivities. In this process, the power and power relations themselves produce and shape the subject. A central epistemic source in these processes is formed of the

established truths concerning what is morally good and desirable, which are produced by and formed within social practices by various facets of society, such as education, media, scientific knowledge and governmental organisations, to name but a few. All of these are involved in producing understandings of what it means to be 'good' in a given context, such as 'a good student', 'a good parent', 'a good worker' etc. (Dean 2009; Foucault 1991a; 1997; 2008; Kaisto & Pyykkönen 2010; Kelly 2013b; Miller & Rose 1989; 2008).

The governmentality approach highlights the *discursive* nature of power. As Mark Bevir (2011, 461) notes, in governmentality, power and power relations are 'less fixed objects than the constructs of particular discourses.' Modern power is situational and contingent, and it works towards the individualisation of subjects: people are expected to view themselves as self-governing individuals, and as such, subjectivity denotes the intersection of overt and covert power. Besides being repressive, power is understood as being productive: it operates through various means to produce ways of being and prompts subjects to reflect on and govern themselves (Dean 2009; Lawler 2014).

Studies of governmentality have focused on the ways in which power works through and within individuals. The methodological approach to the analytics of government has charted the various technologies of the self, that is, the ways in which power produces self-understandings in different contexts (Foucault 2008; Helén 2010; 2016, 157–160; Kaisto & Pyykkönen 2010, 10–19). According to Mitchell Dean (2009, 27), the 'analytics of government thus views practices of government in their complex and variable relations to the different ways in which "truth" is produced in social, cultural and political practices.' The approach operates with the concepts of rationalities, techniques, technologies and subjects in exposing these ways. Attention is paid to the historically constructed meanings that shape the self-understandings that are possible for human beings. The analytics of government are about unravelling the conditions required for forming subjectivity (Dean 2009; Kaisto & Pyykkönen 2010, 15–19). Thus, the analytics of government imply a methodological commitment in themselves: the approach is underpinned by the Foucauldian notion of productive power that I have described. This obviously has implications for the epistemology of this research, and I discuss this issue in Section 4.

Technologies of the self can be described as the ways in which it is possible to see oneself in a given situation or context – for example, as a parent, a worker or a consumer – and they denote the ways in which it is possible for a subject to become a subject (Foucault 1997, 223–225; Lawler 2014, 75–77). This understanding relies on the ontology of the self as ephemeral and shifting: 'For Foucault the self has no original or ultimate essence, but takes a number of forms that emerge in particular ways, in particular contexts, in relation to particular purposes' (Kelly 2013b, 152).

A ‘subject’ thus denotes the effect of various technologies, rationalities and discursive practices.

In his understanding of subjectivity, Foucault built on a structuralistic understanding of identities as being constructed by the surrounding culture and institutions. In this view, self-understandings are not fixed but shifting and situational, produced in communication in various facets of society. Therefore, language, symbols, signs and meanings are central in the production of subjectivities. Foucault turned the focus to subjectivation, that is, to the process of crafting subjectivities and thereby the means by which the subject ‘learns’ how to become a desirable subject. For Foucault, subjectivation takes place through discursive practices and technologies that reflect power relations and that are, importantly, historically and temporally specific. To become a subject involves, firstly, adherence to external, direct governance and, secondly, the inner self-governing work of the subject (Blackman et al. 2008; Foucault 1997, 223–228; Pyykkönen 2015, 194; Ronkainen 1999). In this light, we can think of entrepreneurship as a technology of citizenship (Cruikshank 1999). Wendy Brown (2016, 9) noted that the entrepreneurialisation of subjectivity ‘converts the worker, student, poor person, parent or consumer into one whose moral duty is to pursue savvy self-investment and entrepreneurial strategies of self-care’.

The idea of the entrepreneurial self has been further developed by many scholars, perhaps most notably by sociologist Nikolas Rose (1999; Miller & Rose 2008), who has emphasised the notion of freedom in forming entrepreneurial subjectivity. The view of the self is produced through the imperatives of freedom and free choice. This means that the subject is granted the responsibility to make choices in regard to creating and managing issues of personal well-being and success. People routinely face these kinds of practices in various everyday contexts, ranging from health care services and insurance schemes to education and work life (Foster 2016; Rose 1999; Kelly 2013b, 38–41, 93; see also Jokinen 2017, 53–54). Such techniques condition the subjects to lead their life in ‘advanced liberalism’, as Rose (see, e.g. 1993; see Collier 2009, 97; Helén 2016, 173) characterised current Western societies – an ideal subject is shaped as a free agent who is compelled to make choices; such conduct is dubbed ‘entrepreneurial’. The notion of entrepreneurship thus makes the orientation of the imagined free agent intelligible. This discussion illuminates the ubiquity of entrepreneurship in current society.

The understanding of the entrepreneurial self as an effect of productive power has been extensively utilised in critical accounts of the entrepreneurialisation of subjectivity. The formations of the entrepreneurial self have been analysed throughout the late 1990s and 2000s in various contexts ranging from precarious work to the services of the welfare state and education (see, e.g. Brunila & Mononen-Batista Costa 2010; Ikonen & Nikunen 2019; Komulainen, Korhonen & Räty 2012;

Korhonen 2012; Laalo & Heinonen 2016; Laalo 2020; Scharff 2016). In these studies, entrepreneurship is generally viewed as "technology", understood in the Foucaldian sense. For example, in their analysis on unemployed youth, Hanna-Mari Ikonen and Minna Nikunen (2019) shaped an entrepreneurial mindset which translates into an individual orientation towards being proactive, responsible and self-sufficient. Individuals interpret, negotiate and 'tune in' to this mindset in various ways (Ikonen & Nikunen 2019; see also Ikonen 2013; Laalo & Heinonen 2016). Many of these studies are underpinned by the idea of precarious labour markets and precarious experience (cf. Jokinen & Venäläinen 2015; see Section 2.1). In the studies, entrepreneurship is conceptualised as an all-encompassing and relatively obscure technology of governance. Therefore, in this research, I wish to present a more nuanced interpretation of the construction of entrepreneurial subjects that pays close attention to the context in which these subjects are constructed.

Suvi Ronkainen (1999, 36, 69–70) has stated that subjectivity is the lived experience of the subject assuming various identities and qualities, a process which takes place in the body of the subject. The research on the entrepreneurial self has focused on the ways of creating the entrepreneurial subject in various contexts. It is noteworthy that this approach often pays less attention to the active subject – the human being. The research design of such studies, including the research at hand, focuses less on the experience of individual subjects (for exceptions, see, e.g. Scarff 2016; Ikonen & Nikunen 2019). Rather, the focus is on identifying and interpreting the technologies of forming subjectivities. Likewise, my research does not aim to describe how individual subjects become subjects – that is, how they assume, negotiate and challenge the identities and subject positions that are available for them.

This remark relates to a well-known criticism of the governmentality approach. It has received criticism regarding it obscuring the ontology of power (see, e.g. Bevir 2011; Collier 2009; Pyykkönen 2015, 194). Power and governance are fluid, ephemeral and elusive as power is intimately related to the *practices* in which it occurs and which it shapes (Collier 2009; Kaisto & Pyykkönen 2010; Pyykkönen 2015, 194). This view makes it difficult to determine the exact ontology of power, and it easily leads to a conclusion that the individual (i.e. the agent or subject) has very little room to negotiate the terms of forming subjectivity. The framework of governmentality often implicates that people are the rather passive recipients of prompts stemming from their surrounding culture, possessing very limited agency. In the framework, the overt practices of governing (such as legislation, policies, police work etc.) blend into covert practices (such as the 'common sense' underpinning our day-to-day behaviour) (Bevir 2011, 462–463; Pyykkönen 2015; see also Alasuutari 2017, 25). However, the process does give the subject a chance

to think differently, to question and to resist governance or to find new ways of forming subjectivities (Pyykkönen 2015, 200, 209–212).

The limitations of the governmentality framework also affect this research. My primary interest is in the shape the entrepreneurial subject assumes, and so this research operates on a textual level, much like a considerable portion of similar research (see Helén 2010, 44–48; 2016, 10). This choice is justified by the research interest of explaining startup entrepreneurship as 'both a cultural and economic phenomenon' (Doody et al. 2016, 859) and fitting the phenomenon into a broader discursive context in Finland that has, as the previous section discussed, been characterised by the pervasiveness of entrepreneurship. The questions concerning the lived experience of startup entrepreneurship form a project for future research.

This research focuses on the shifts of the meanings of entrepreneurship as they are constructed in Finnish political economy and the ways in which these changes become intelligible in the context of higher education and startup entrepreneurship. The research deciphers the ideal entrepreneurial subject present in each context of the research – political discourse, higher education and startup literature. In the next two sections, I theorise about the ideal entrepreneurial subject by approaching the subject from the viewpoints of neoliberalism and post-industrial labour.

3.2 The neoliberal entrepreneurial subject

Neoliberalism is usually understood as an economic-political theory or dogma emphasising the primacy of markets and liberalisation that sprung up in the mid-1900s among various economic and political thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic and later developed into an influential economic-political doctrine that has radically shaped the current political climate and global labour markets (see, e.g. Löppönen 2017). The social-scientific scholarship on neoliberalism is vast and multifaceted, and it has been used in various fields for decades, resulting in many scholars questioning the explanatory power and the usefulness of the concept 'neoliberalism' altogether (Brown 2015, 20; Salmenniemi & Kangas 2016). Accordingly, its definition ranges from a set of certain economic practices and policies to a broad array of economic, cultural and political discourses (see, e.g. Harvey 2005; Helén 2016, 173; Löppönen 2017; Sparke 2013). On the one hand, neoliberalism is approached as a political agenda and a host of political practices that include, but are not limited to, economic and political reforms and managerial techniques, such as New Public Management and other programmes of marketisation and privatisation (Bevir 2011, 457–460; Harvey 2005; Pyykkönen 2014, 45–47). On the other hand, neoliberalism is approached from a wider perspective and viewed as an influential ideology and a political philosophy that cannot as such be returned to a certain political action or actor, but instead has a wider impact on the reasoning and

knowledge concerning social relations (see, e.g. Adkins 2017; Brown 2015; Kelly 2013b, 84–85).

Neoliberalism thus denotes both the specific practices of state regulation and an ideology that emphasises the market as a universal principle and a subjectivity-producing meaning system (Salmenniemi & Kangas 2016, 212). Following Foucalt (2008; see also Helén 2016) and Wendy Brown (2015; 2016), I regard neoliberalism as a political rationality that spreads market logic into all areas of social life. Steven Vallas (2012, 136) aptly calls this 'the cult of the marketplace': neoliberalism's central idea is that market logic is the most efficient way of organising all social action, be it global policies, third sector organisations, welfare state institutions or individual behaviour. To Wendy Brown, neoliberalism works as normalised common sense, 'an order of normative reason that, when it becomes ascendant, takes shape as a governing rationality extending a specific formulation of economic values, practices and metrics to every dimension of human life' (Brown 2015, 30). Ilpo Helén (2016, 176) notes that, under neoliberalism, there is no need to assume any other logic than that of the market.

This tendency results in the permeated nature of *homo economicus* as the ideal subject of the current era: social action is seen in terms of economics in all contexts (Bröckling 2016; Brown 2015; Gershon 2011; 2016; Helén 2016). Human beings are seen as rational calculators, and in every social setting, they are to regard themselves as economic subjects, maximising their interests and performing constant cost–benefit calculations. Furthermore, as Ilpo Helén (2016, 177) points out, they are required to be able to verbalise and articulate their needs, aspirations and goals. This view of human agency promoted by neoliberal rationality has worked to establish and legitimise neoliberal policies and practices in various facets of society (Gershon 2011; Harvey 2005; Jokinen 2017). The production of subjects is crucial to this interpretation of neoliberalism because, as Aihwa Ong (2007, 5) suggests, neoliberal logic works towards the 're-management of populations' by way of 'producing educated subjects' and 'fostering self-actualizing and self-enterprising subjects.'

Entrepreneurship is the notion on which this view relies, and this can be seen as the primary reason for the current ubiquity of entrepreneurship. The notion of entrepreneurship has been separated from the context of the labour market and spread to virtually all areas of social life. As discussed in Section 2, many conceptualisations of the post-industrial economy have worked to obscure the notion of entrepreneurship. One example is the concept of 'intrapreneurship', which essentially means the conduct of the worker wherein he or she acts as if he or she were an entrepreneur within a larger organisation. Coined by Gifford Pinchot in the late 1970s, intrapreneurship has become an influential management technique that guides employees through versatile incentives to demonstrate initiative, be

proactive, solve problems and take responsibility within the workplace (Doody et al. 2016, 861; Heinonen 2001; Pinchot 1986; Pyykkönen 2014). Entrepreneurship is thus an all-encompassing metaphor for an ideal existence.

Indeed, in many ways, the ideal entrepreneurial subject is the neoliberal subject par excellence. It implies rational choice, calculation and constant scrutiny of the self. To Foucault, the market subjectivity promoted by neoliberalism is conceptualised as interest maximisation: the subject invests in himself or herself through work, building up his or her interests[1] (Brown 2015, 80–81; Foucault 2008). The subjects are to view themselves as if they were enterprises, trimming excess here and acquiring new business there. Every activity and orientation is constantly under review and scrutinised regarding whether it serves 'the enterprise,' an ambiguous and ever-changing whole (Bröckling 2016; Foucault 2008; Kelly 2013b; McNay 2009). The project of the self is perpetual as there are always new skills to acquire, new qualities to develop, new competencies to learn and so on. In this sense, the subject is both the product and the producer of itself.

As subjectivity is encoded in bodies, it is necessary to reflect on the gender of the entrepreneurial ideal subject. In terms of gender, the entrepreneurial subject – in neoliberal governmentality and elsewhere – is implicitly masculine despite the fact that economic thought concerning *homo economicus* rarely discusses gender directly. The image of the neoliberal ideal subjectivity as a rational market actor is by default masculine as it idolises the stereotypically masculine qualities of rationality and self-interest. Moreover, it also presupposes a sexual division of labour in which women are responsible for (most often unpaid) care work, family work and other activities that the interest maximisation rationale has difficulty explaining (Brown 2015, 99–104; Jokinen 2017, 60). Similarly, the notion of entrepreneurship more generally is latently masculine: traditionally 'entrepreneurial' values – such as striving for success, calculation etc. – are stereotypically masculine characteristics, and these qualities are routinely associated with entrepreneurship in public discourse as well as in academia (Ahl 2002; Hasanen 2013, 25). Moreover, in terms of economic activity, women's entrepreneurship appears to be juxtaposed with male entrepreneurship, thus reinforcing 'women's entrepreneurship' as inherently different to men's (Ahl 2002). This is also reflected in the labour market division between male and female entrepreneurship (see, e.g. Komulainen & Sinisalo 2006).

[1] This idea underpins the concept of 'human capital' which, briefly explained, conceptualises peoples' skills, assets and qualities as capital that forms the value of the subject in markets (see, e.g. Becker 1964). Human capital can be cultivated and accumulated. The concept of human capital in its popular form is usually attributed to Chicago school economist Gary Becker, and this application of the term has contributed to a myriad of work, and organisation sciences and practices.

Stereotypically masculine qualities is thus a default setting in the constructions of entrepreneurship, as many feminist scholars have noted (Hasanen 2013, 25–29; see also Brown 2015). Gender presents one way with which to open up a possibility to inquire about the neoliberal subject critically, as many scholars (see, e.g. Scharff 2016) have done.

3.3 The post-industrial entrepreneurial subject

In my view, many critical accounts on the ideal entrepreneurial subject regard neoliberal governmentality as their point of departure. However, the idea is easily understood as all-encompassing; it works to interpret human agency – or the preconditions for forming and reflecting on agency – as entrepreneurial in every social setting and context. In this view, people are to fashion themselves as entrepreneurs everywhere (Brown 2015). Paralleling the broader criticism of governmentality, this is a rather totalising tenet for analysis, resulting in an analytical tendency to 'identify any program with neoliberal elements as essentially neoliberal' and to 'proceed as if this subsumption of the particular under a more general category provides sufficient account of its nature or explanation of its existence' (Rose et al. 2006, cited by Collier 2009, 97). That is to say that, in terms of the ideal entrepreneurial subject, the precision of neoliberal governmentality as an analytical framework is in danger of deteriorating and can produce totalising, monotonous analyses of governance (Helén 2016, 187–189).

In order to avoid this pitfall, I open up the ubiquity and ambiguity of entrepreneurship by theorising about it in a post-industrial framework. Sociologists Sean Doody, Victor Tan Chen and Jesse Goldstein (2016) have conceptualised entrepreneurship in the post-industrial era by dividing it into four discursive ideal types: Silicon Valley entrepreneurship, Main Street entrepreneurship, corporate entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial self-employment. All of these types are affected by specific discursive and contextual factors. Silicon Valley entrepreneurship denotes an understanding of entrepreneurship as high-risk, high-growth and innovative action conducted by ambitious, visionary creators. Main Street entrepreneurship signals a 'traditional', Mom-and-Pop type entrepreneurship, often associated with the ideas of craftsmanship and artisanship, and low levels of ambition – at least in comparison with Silicon Valley entrepreneurship. Corporate entrepreneurship denotes the meanings associated with intrapreneurship discussed earlier: notions of responsibility, creativeness and proactivity are central. Entrepreneurial self-employment refers to the expanding category of non-typical work (see Section 2.1), such as platform work, freelancing and various forms of self-employment. In the fourth category, entrepreneurship functions as a vague title

indicating free agency, whereby ‘freedom’ denotes a relative independency in terms of work time and organisation.

These ideal types – or ‘varieties of entrepreneurial capitalism’, as phrased by Doody et al. (2016) – vary according to contextual factors relevant to each type; for example, a person involved with entrepreneurial self-employment faces rather different discursive and social conditions than an employee of a large corporation being encouraged to be ‘more entrepreneurial’ in his or her day-to-day work. Silicon Valley entrepreneurship is characterised by the need to acquire external capital and secure product development with very limited means (Doody et al. 2016, 860; Hyrkäs 2016), shaping entrepreneurship through to the notion of visionary perseverance. However, all of these ideal types shape the entrepreneurial subject as autonomous, creative and self-actualising.

Of course, entrepreneurship has traditionally been routinely associated with notions of self-actualisation, passion, tenacity and enthusiasm to the extent that, to many, entrepreneurship equals such characteristics, and in business scholarship, there is an entire branch of research devoted to entrepreneurial passion (see, e.g. Ahl 2002; Cardon et al. 2013). From the perspective of post-industrial labour, however, the emphasis on passion in current work life is not limited to entrepreneurship but is rather a universal notion that frames the construction of labour (Farrugia 2021). To elaborate this, I draw on the scholarship of therapeutic culture (Cabanas & Illouz 2019; Davies 2015; 2016; Illouz 2008; Miller & Rose 2008). The term ‘therapeutic culture’ refers to the production of self-reflexive subjects in the post-industrial regime and the technologies that come into play in the said process. Therapeutic culture has been discussed in accordance with neoliberalisation (see, e.g. Brunila & Ylöstalo 2020; Brunila et al. 2021; Salmenniemi, Bergroth, Nurmi & Perheentupa 2020), and I draw on the scholarship to further inquire about the shape of the ideal entrepreneurial subject.

Scholars of therapeutic culture argue that the post-industrial era is permeated by discourses that revolve around feelings, emotions and issues of personal well-being and fulfilment – hence the term ‘therapeutic’. Central to this development is the institutionalisation of therapeutic sciences, professions and practices (psychology, therapists, coaches, self-help), which have diffused into all social spheres (Brunila et al. 2021; Davies 2015; Miller & Rose 2008; Rose 1999). In terms of governmentality, therapeutic culture is an important facet of modern governance as it provides the means and reasoning for crafting self-governing, reflexive subjects (Rose 1999). Therapeutic discourses are intertwined with capitalist production, thus forming what Eva Illouz (2008, 6) has called ‘a “transnational” language of selfhood.’ Within this regime, economic relations and emotions are interwoven and mutually reinforcing, forming the basis of individual agency (Illouz 2008, 60–61).

Scholarship has noted that post-industrial production implies a specific working subject who treats work as a place of self-actualisation and self-realisation (Durand 2019; Farrugia 2021; Illouz 2008; Julkunen 2008; Mannevuo 2015). As famously argued by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005), the transition from industrial to post-industrial capitalism entailed a change in the ethos of capitalism. According to them, post-industrial, networked and flexible production required a new kind of worker. The ideology that idolised a hard-working, capable and non-individualistic worker – suitable for the standardised and hierarchical industrial work process – was replaced by the construction of the ideal worker as flexible, individualistic and dedicated to his or her work in the sense of self-fulfilment: 'the individuals produce themselves in work' (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005, 115). Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello termed this ethos as 'the new spirit of capitalism', in contrast to Max Weber's concept of the spirit of industrial capitalism. Central to this new spirit is the idea that neoliberal capitalism has absorbed the critique of the dehumanising aspects of capitalism and incorporated that critique into itself, thus making work to be about the realisation of the self (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005; Foster 2016, 108).

To approach the idea from the viewpoint of labour control, in the industrial regime, the labour force was coerced through direct interventions and commands. This stems from the fact that the worker's personality was deemed irrelevant to the labour process. In the post-industrial regime, however, the worker's personality is increasingly important to the labour process, and so the labour force is controlled via notions of culture (of organisation, workplace, team etc.), that is, workers are coaxed to align their personal values and motivations with those of the organisation (du Gay 1996; Fleming 2018; Julkunen 2008; Vallas 2012).[2] In general, in the industrial regime, the subjectivity of the worker is separated from work, whereas in the post-industrial regime, the subjectivity of the worker is essential to production, meaning that workers are encouraged to self-actualise through work (Farrugia 2021, 34; Julkunen 2008; see also Jokinen 2016, 88). Post-industrial labour can be described as a process of the 'collapsing of the self into work' (Farrugia 2021, 19, 21), rendering the separation of work and non-work identities redundant.

The ideas of self-development inseparably tie the worker's subjectivity to work (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005; Davies 2015; Foster 2016; Illouz 2008; Varje et al.

[2] Of course, this does not mean that the direct control of and intervention with workers are a thing of the past; as many accounts of the sociology of work have described, the Tayloristic control of the worker's performance coexists with more obscure cultural control mechanisms, and in some cases, control has intensified through such techniques as strict access control, complex procedures for monitoring work time, using cameras on the workplace etc. (see, e.g. Julkunen 2008, 169–178). Furthermore, the imperative of efficiency in post-industrial managerial practices has resulted in the application of complex (and arguably inefficient) practices for reporting and auditing at the workplace level (Jokinen 2017, 62; Pyykkönen 2014, 45–47).

2013). The post-industrial workplace is viewed as an arena of self-actualisation, or as Edgar Cabanas and Eva Illouz (2019, 87–88) have argued, the *primary* arena of self-actualisation. Moreover, the worker's happiness, mental well-being and the possibility for self-expression are understood as requirements for better productivity in work. Passion and enthusiasm for one's work have been raised as central features of the ideal worker, rendering having passion and enthusiasm as the normative stance in work life (Cabanas & Illouz 2019; Davies 2015; Durand 2019; Farrugia 2021; Kantola 2014; see also Kelly 2013b, 144–149).[3]

As the linguistic aspect is an important facet of post-industrial capitalism (Fairclough 2002; Marazzi 2006), therapeutic vocabularies reinforce post-industrial capitalism: they provide the tools and the imperative for people to think of themselves as visionary, passionate creators. This is realised in services that provide people with the skills to find their 'authenticity' and 'story,' such as various self-branding coaches and workshops (see, e.g. Gershon 2016). Therapeutic vocabularies, then, work as a technology via which people are transformed into suitable subjects in post-industrial society (Rose 1999; Foster 2016).

This is crucial for understanding the construction of the ideal entrepreneurial subject. Tim Christiaens (2019) suggested that, besides the calculative practices that coerce subjects to accommodate themselves to the needs of the ever-elusive markets, the entrepreneurial subject can also be characterised by non-calculative practices: especially in the creative industries, there is an ethos of risk-taking and overcoming insecurity that is involved in the production of the ideal entrepreneurial subject. In this view, the ideal entrepreneurial subject is articulated in a Schumpeterian framework. For Schumpeter, the entrepreneur was a reformer and a non-conformist who strived to create new markets and innovations by reassembling existing resources – a process that involves creativity and the embracement of uncertainty. (Christiaens 2019; Pilotta 2016; Schumpeter 2010). In Schumpeter's economic theory, the markets are transformed through revolutions or 'creative destruction' initiated by novel discoveries by entrepreneurs who ultimately carry the torch of economic development (Christiaens 2019; Schumpeter 1987; 2010). Importantly, Schumpeter did not discuss entrepreneurship in terms of class or social groupings but viewed entrepreneurship as a 'function' performed by exceptional individuals (Christiaens 2019, 503; Ahl 2002, 38–41).

[3] However, therapeutic management as such is not a recent orientation in terms of work management. As Mona Mannevuo (2015, 52–60, 67–73, 207–208; see also Davies 2015) noted, the roots of therapeutic management are in the interwar United States, in the emergence of the so-called human relations school of management. Therefore, the therapeutic ethos in post-industrial work can be seen as a continuation of (rather than as inherently different to) the industrial ethos.

Therefore, the entrepreneurial subject in the Schumpeterian view is a visionary and a trailblazer who seeks success despite the odds (Christiaens 2019). Engaging with risk is self-evident in neoliberal rationality (see, e.g. Gershon 2011), but Christiaens (2019) argues that the subjects' risk management may not always appear as 'an inward turn,' that is, as the scrutiny and re-evaluation of one's human capital that are suggested by many scholars of entrepreneurial subjectivity (see, e.g. Lahikainen & Harni 2016). Of course, the ability to dismiss uncertainty is a prerequisite in many creative industries that are characterised by precarity and the uncertainty of working conditions (Scharff 2016). That is to say, the conditions and the context in which subjectivity is formed require examination in order to understand the form of the ideal subject. As my research will show, startup entrepreneurship is an example of a form of the entrepreneurial subject that cannot be reduced to mere interest maximisation; or at least the qualities of the ideal subject can be interpreted as consisting of more than interest maximisation.

Further theorisations can be drawn from the scholarship of the knowledge-based economy. In my view, the notion of entrepreneurship in the knowledge-based economy has two dimensions: entrepreneurship is entangled in discourses of growth, innovations and expertise, and it is also construed as a vaguely positive phenomenon, meaning that entrepreneurship is desirable and worthwhile in all imaginable contexts. For example, the European Commission has recently framed entrepreneurship as a way of tackling social problems (European Commission 2013; Laalo et al. 2019) following the widespread trend of social entrepreneurship, whereby entrepreneurial and market-oriented approaches are employed to address various kinds of social issues (see, e.g. Guo & Bielefeld 2014). This parallels the normalisation of economic subjectivity brought forth by neoliberal rationality. As every aspect of social life is to be treated as a market, entrepreneurial practices are the best approach in any context. I interpret social entrepreneurship as a symptom of the understanding of entrepreneurship as compatible with any endeavour, a tendency that is brought about by the prominence of entrepreneurship in the knowledge-based economy. Entrepreneurship is understood as being problem-solving: 'Successful entrepreneurs refine a discovery so the resulting product or service solves reals problems for their target audience' (Pilotta 2016, 51).

In terms of the ideal entrepreneurial subject, solving problems implies both technical expertise and creative vision. According to Judith Kohlenberger (2015), the ideal subject of knowledge-based capitalism is characterised by 'the tech entrepreneur': an inventive and savvy creator in the Schumpeterian sense. It is noteworthy that entrepreneurship in this construction does not primarily draw its meaning from business but instead draws it from creativity and ingenuity. Instead of a shrewd businessperson, the entrepreneur is a passionate and clever visionary. Passion for one's work is the ideal quality in post-industrial production more

generally (Farrugia 2021; Kelly 2013b, 144–149), and in the framework of the knowledge economy, it is amalgamated with entrepreneurship and technical expertise, resulting in an ideal subject that Sami Moisio (2018, 108–112) calls the 'global engineer', someone who combines technological, business and design knowledge. In post-industrial capitalism, the self is entangled in production, blurring the boundary between work and non-work identities. Therefore, the language of business is replaced by the affective language of passion, enthusiasm and personal meaningfulness (Leary 2018, 150). Entrepreneurship is equated with self-actualisation, passion and personal fulfilment.

Furthermore, particularly in the Finnish context, the rubric of knowledge-based capitalism works as the context that in part defines the ideal entrepreneurial subject. As Sami Moisio (2018, 32) remarked, 'the knowledge-based economy is [in part] a governmental technology which seeks to produce a particular type of human subject or capitalist labourer – information and knowledge workers – with specific skills and mindsets.' As my analysis will show, the entrepreneurial ideal subject emergent in my data sets fuses the neoliberal ideals of calculation, proactivity and self-surveillance; the innovativeness and savviness of the knowledge economy; and the therapeutic ethos of enthusiasm and passion.

This discussion elaborates the ubiquity of entrepreneurship, allowing one to theorise about the nuances of the ambiguous notion of entrepreneurship. I argue that there are various crystallisations of the often-vague figure of the entrepreneur that emerge from the political, economic and cultural discourses of today. As Tim Christiaens (2019, 507) noted, 'neoliberal subjectivation is not a monolithic advance of calculative rationality, but a network of diffuse and multifarious tactics in the production of subjectivity'. This resonates with the idea of neoliberalism as a migratory set of practices, as presented by Aihwa Ong (2007), the analysis of which requires the careful scrutiny of contextual factors and circumstances. This approach is needed to shed light on the ubiquity of entrepreneurship and to make sense of the variations of the ideal entrepreneurial subject.

3.4 Domesticating entrepreneurial subjects

The final theoretical thread in my research is the notion of global forms and their domestication. In the research, this discussion offers an insight into how entrepreneurial discourses are formed, mobilised and, above all, negotiated and fitted into local and specific contexts. As such, the discussion on global forms gives shape to startup entrepreneurship and the ways in which the phenomenon produces subjects. Numerous scholars have suggested that neoliberalism should be understood as situated, that is to say, it is adapted or contested varyingly depending on the context and institutional frameworks in a given locality (Gershon 2011; Ong 2007;

Salmenniemi & Kangas 2016; Stenning et al. 2010). Neoliberalism is not 'a tsunami' that sweeps over nations and locales unaltered, and it does not produce identical, predetermined results everywhere (Ong 2007, 4). Consequentially, as was discussed in the previous sections, entrepreneurial subjects produced by neoliberal rationality are not interchangeable or similar everywhere but vary and gain different meanings depending on the context. From the perspective of subjectivity, the neoliberal *homo economicus* is not the only possible version of the ideal entrepreneurial subject. As my research will show, startup entrepreneurship provides an example of this.

To elaborate this, I conceptualise startup entrepreneurship as a global form, the theoretical framework of which has its roots in the sociology of the global. Essentially, global form denotes practices and phenomena that are global in that their existence relies on an impersonal system of rules and principles that can exist, spread and develop regardless of context. Examples of such forms are science or scientific knowledge production, international standardisations of the creation of a given product and so on. Importantly, global forms are capable of de- and re-contextualising and becoming abstract notions that are not tied to a single temporal, spatial, cultural or social origin (Collier 2006; Collier & Ong 2005, 11–13).

As was discussed in the Introduction, the cultural jargon and terminology of startup entrepreneurship – such as 'scalability' and 'disruption' – have spread to and are widely circulated in mainstream media and popular culture. For example, Silicon Valley entrepreneurial practices have been influentially disseminated by the works of Eric Ries (2011; 2017) and Steve Blank (Blank & Dorf 2012), whose models of business management, the Lean Startup model and Customer Development Model, have become source material for management literature and business workshops, conferences and seminars all over the world (Egan-Wyer et al. 2018). 'Startup entrepreneurship', then, refers simultaneously to certain, specific practices and to ambiguous, widely circulated cultural meanings. As such, it can be understood as concurrently a special area of entrepreneurship with distinct qualities and practices, and as the universal traits of economic conduct (Hyrkäs 2016).

As a phenomenon, then, startup entrepreneurship is not returnable to certain temporal or spatial conditions – despite the fact that Silicon Valley has been formed as an emblem of startup entrepreneurship and startup culture (Maas & Ester 2016; Valaskivi 2012). It is useful to think of Silicon Valley as a metaphor for the ideal startup environment, and this metaphor is employed in constructing startup entrepreneurship and its related environments all over the globe. In fact, Rebecca Gill and Gregory Larson (2014) have approached Silicon Valley as a transcendent discourse, meaning that Silicon Valley surpasses time and place, and thus influences the construction of startup entrepreneurship everywhere. In Finland, for example, the Finnish 'Silicon Valley' has been suggested to be located in Otaniemi (Lemola 2020, 212–213; YLE 2015) or in the Oulu region (Kolehmainen 2005, 119–120).

Currently, countries from Europe to Asia and Africa are in the pursuit of building institutional frameworks that are suitable for early-stage, high-expertise entrepreneurship in the vein of Silicon Valley (see Atomico, 2019; Lemola 2020, 209; Moisio & Rossi 2020; Pollio 2020; World Economic Forum 2013; 2014). These environments can be dubbed 'siliconia' as it is typical that these regions attach the word 'silicon' to their names to signal a position as a vibrant startup environment (Gill & Larson 2014).

As discussed in Sections 2.2 and 3.3, these endeavours are intelligible in the light of the knowledge-based economy, wherein entrepreneurship is married to innovations in generating economic growth. The production of subjectivities is crucial in shedding light onto these activities. In this framework, startup entrepreneurship can be perceived as a global form that migrates to different environments and locations, adapting, transforming and gaining new meanings through discursive negotiations (Collier & Ong, 2005; Ong, 2007). To study these negotiations, I employ the concept of domestication. In this context, the concept refers to the process in which exogenous ideas or cultural meanings are interwoven into local cultural meaning systems. In this process, a reinterpretation of the exogenous phenomenon is conceived. As opposed to theories conceptualising global change as a diffusion of ideas and trends from one locality to another, domestication emphasises the continuous, fluctuating nature of the interaction between global and local (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014; Nash 2010, 59–63; Syväterä 2016).

Domestication is *processual*: phenomena are fitted to local contexts by making them appear familiar, that is to say, reinterpreting them from the local perspective and crafting them so that they seem to be natural and intelligible in the local setting. However, this is not unidirectional diffusion – in the process of domestication, meanings are interpreted and adapted, which involves both accepting and contesting the 'foreign' meanings. Domestication is a bidirectional process: domesticating a phenomenon means altering both the domestic culture and the phenomenon being domesticated (Alasuutari 2017, 26–27; Alasuutari & Qadir 2014; Syväterä 2016). In domestication, phenomena are actively fitted to local contexts by reinterpreting them. I perceive domestication as strategic action: the foreign phenomenon engages with a 'web of culturally and historically sedimented discursive practices' (Tiaynen-Qadir and Salmenniemi 2017, 383).

A similar way of conceptualising the travel of ideas and phenomena from one context to another has been discussed in so-called translation theory. This approach has particularly been developed in the fields of organisational sociology and science and technology studies (STS). Rooted in Bruno Latour's (1987) and Michel Callon's (1986) work on actor network theory, 'translation' refers to the circulation of ideas and phenomena between different contexts by means of a discursive process that ultimately results in novel, context-dependant versions of the translated

phenomenon. Especially in organisation studies, translation theory has focused on the research of translating forms of knowledge and practices, such as management ideas and concepts, international standards in business practices, educational degrees and pedagogic trends (Hultin et al. 2021; Wæraas & Nielsen 2016).

Similar to domestication, translation theory emphasises the interactive and interpretative nature of translation: as a phenomenon is translated into a new context, it is reconstructed and re-embedded. Importantly, the approach highlights the unpredictability inherent to this translation – the results of the translation are not known beforehand as 'a thing moved from one place to another cannot emerge unchanged: to set something in a new place or another point in time is to construct it anew' (Czarniawska & Sevón 2005, 8). Therefore, the translation of phenomena to local contexts is a unique process and results in the heterogenuity and variations of the translated phenomena. Lotta Hultin et al. (2021) have emphasised the embeddedness of translation in practices, which means that this translation is processual, situational and contingent.

This discussion is useful in considering the construction of entrepreneurial subjects. As discussed in the previous sections, there are variants to the ideal entrepreneurial subject that are emergent in neoliberal rationality, and similarly, Silicon Valley startup culture provides only one example of the entrepreneurial startup subject. In this research, I analyse startup entrepreneurship in the framework of global forms and domestication as well as in the framework of governmentality. Therefore, domestication functions as an analytical lens through which the construction of the ideal entrepreneurial subject is examined. Domestication provides an insight into the way governance works culturally.

4 Research design

4.1 The objectives of the research

This research charts and interprets the shift in the meanings of entrepreneurship as a cultural and political phenomenon in post-industrial Finland. The shifts are traced, firstly, through an analysis of Finnish political discourse regarding entrepreneurship and, secondly, through an analysis on the meanings of entrepreneurship in Finnish higher education and Finnish startup literature. In order to achieve this, the Introduction shaped startup entrepreneurship as a global form that adapts itself and is adapted to various geographical and socio-cultural settings in a societal context of ubiquitous entrepreneurship. Section 2 discussed the broader context of Finnish political economy and located startup entrepreneurship in the continuums of Finnish economic and political discourses via a discussion on knowledge-based economy and higher education.

Section 3 discussed the theoretical framework of governmentality and theorised about the ideal entrepreneurial subject, a central theoretical tool in this research. Through discussions of neoliberalism, post-industrial labour, therapeutic culture and knowledge-based economy, I suggested that analyses of post-industrial work would yield a more nuanced analysis of the meanings of entrepreneurship in varying contexts. I then discussed the notion of domesticating global forms and combined this with the theoretical framework of governmentality, thus forming the central idea underlying this research: through startup entrepreneurship, we can understand the shifting meanings of entrepreneurship in Finland more broadly. Startup entrepreneurship functions as a prism through which the broader changes of entrepreneurship are examined.

Thus, the main research question of this thesis is **'How have the meanings of entrepreneurship as a political and cultural construction shifted in Finland?'** As the research objective is, firstly, to locate the broader meanings of entrepreneurship in Finland as a cultural and political construction and, secondly, to interpret startup entrepreneurship within this framework, this main research question is divided into the following sub-questions:

1. How have the meanings of entrepreneurship shifted in Finnish political discourse?

2. How is the entrepreneurial ideal subject constructed in the discourse of Finnish higher education?
3. How is startup entrepreneurship constructed in relation to post-industrial work?
4. How is startup entrepreneurship domesticated in the Finnish context?

The relationship of and motivation for choosing the contexts of these research questions (political discourse, higher education and startup discourse) was discussed in the preceding Sections. Each of the Sub-questions is addressed in the original articles (I–IV) that comprise this research, and Section 5 summarises their findings. The means with which to answer the questions, namely the research data and methodology, are presented in the following sections.

4.2 Research data and methods

This research utilises three sets of data: Finnish government programmes from the 1970s to the 2010s (11 texts); the texts of entrepreneurship environments located in higher education (14 texts); and Finnish guidebooks and other non-fiction literature on startup entrepreneurship (7 texts). The overarching theme of the analyses is the inquiry into the ideal entrepreneurial subject that is taking shape in each of the data sets. The research design is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The research questions, data sets and analyses of the original articles.

	ARTICLE I	ARTICLE II	ARTICLE III	ARTICLE IV
RESEARCH QUESTION	How have the meanings of entrepreneurship changed in Finnish political discourse?	How is entrepreneurial subjectivity constructed in the entrepreneurial environments of Finnish higher education?	How is startup entrepreneurship constructed in relation to post-industrial work?	How is startup entrepreneurship domesticated in the Finnish context?
DATA SET	Finnish government programmes 1979–2015	Websites of the entrepreneurial environments of Finnish HEIs	Finnish guidebooks and other non-fiction literature on startup entrepreneurship	
ANALYSIS	Locating the various contexts of entrepreneurship and deciphering their meaning in these contexts	Charting the meanings of entrepreneurship by inquiring about the shape of the ideal entrepreneurial subject	Interpreting the ideal entrepreneurial subject through the lenses of post-industrial labour and therapeutic culture	Examining the ways in which cultural negotiation between Finnishness and startup entrepreneurship takes place; inquiring about the shape of the Finnish entrepreneurial startup subject

4.2.1 Data sets

The first data set is used to answer Sub-question 1. It consists of Finnish government programmes from 1979 to 2015 and comprises altogether 12 documents from 11 different governments. The programmes are strategic texts that dictate the political guidelines and main objectives of the government in question. Besides this, the programmes function as a demonstration of the cooperation between the different parties forming the government. As such, they both embody the political will of the government and point to the political compromises required to render the

government functional. Therefore, the programmes are suitable for analysing political problematisations and solutions (Saarinen et al. 2014). As tokens of political discourse, Finnish government programmes can be seen as concretisations of the objectives of the highest political authority in Finland. The programmes also serve a persuasive function: they are intended to explain the political decisions inscribed in them to the general populace. The examination of consecutive programmes allows the scrutiny of changes in political discourse and meaning making; shifts in political discourse tend to be gradual and new meanings are constructed on top of existing ones (Niemelä & Saarinen 2012).

The second data set is used to answer Sub-question 2. It consists of 14 websites of various entrepreneurial environments located within Finnish HEIs and it was formed over the course of the 2000s and 2010s (see Section 2.3). The selection criteria were, firstly, that the environments were part of the HEIs' organisation or that an HEI is defined as an important partner and, secondly, that the environment had a website that enabled textual analysis. There are three kinds of environments in the data: incubators, accelerators and entrepreneurship societies. The first two types are more focused on providing support and contacts for existing business ventures and serve as meeting grounds for aspiring entrepreneurs within the HEI's premises. The third type is more directly related to student activity, and their focus is on inspiring students to become entrepreneurs and to develop their own business ideas, while also providing beneficial contacts and support to boost students' employability (Parkkari 2019; Siivonen et al. 2019).

Regardless of their position in this categorisation, the sites in the data are located in the context of higher education and they involve student and faculty personnel activity to varying degrees. This includes (but is not limited to) workshops, teaching and courses to variable degrees. It is noteworthy that, in terms of discourse, the sites employ very similar rhetoric and vocabularies in describing their activities so the factual difference between different types of site is ambiguous. The websites that form the data set are viewed as texts, that is, as semi-permanent productions of social practices that have their maker and audience. As such, the meaning making, problematisations and values underlying the texts can be examined (Fairclough 2010; Perren & Jennings 2005). As texts, the websites are produced for certain purposes: they market the environment to potential members or customers (for example, to students who are interested in entrepreneurship, to startups aiming to locate their activities in the environment and so on), and they describe the activities and functions to outsiders more generally, thus legitimising their existence and making it intelligible. These functions are naturally reflected in the vocabularies and articulations employed on the websites.

The third data set is used to answer Sub-questions 3 and 4. It consists of seven Finnish guidebooks and other non-fiction books that discuss the notion of startup

entrepreneurship. I chose the books on the basis that they are aimed at a wide readership (not solely at, for example, academics or students) and they concentrate on startup entrepreneurship in Finland as a phenomenon rather than on a specific area of entrepreneurship, such as the financial or the judicial aspects of business management. In this process, seven books, published between 2013 and 2018, were selected as research material.

The books are written by former or current Finnish startup entrepreneurs (Järvilehto, 2018; Järvinen & Kari, 2017; Kormilainen, 2015; Kuusela, 2013; Saloranta, 2018) or people closely involved with the Finnish startup scene, such as people from the management of the Slush event (Helaniemi et al. 2018; Vimma 2018). Several books are also based on interviews with Finnish startup entrepreneurs or members of the business elite, and they variably engage in discussion with popular management literature. The readership of the books can be defined as everyone interested in the topic ('the layman'), but more specific audiences are also identified, such as aspiring entrepreneurs, investors and the business elite. The tone throughout the material is popular: terms and jargon are explained to an audience assumed to possess limited prior knowledge. In a global comparison, the books resemble popular startup literature, such as Eric Ries' *The Lean Startup* (2011), and they are comparable to popular management texts. As such, the books can be seen as simultaneously guiding the reader into the realm of startup entrepreneurship and constructing it.

Together, the data sets form a corpus that constructs entrepreneurship in three different contexts. In my analysis, I chart the meanings forming and relating to entrepreneurship across these contexts through the theoretical lens explained and elaborated in Sections 2 and 3. Discourses are known to form in a process of recontextualisation, that is, the elements of varying discourses in a given field can be utilised in meaning making in other fields (for example, the use of business discourse in the field of education) (Fairclough & Fairclough 2012, 83–84). I approach the data sets from this perspective. In the following, I present my methodology and the analytical tools I have employed in reaching the objectives of the research.

4.2.2 Methodology

Methodologically, the research is grounded on discourse analysis. I understand 'discourses' as relatively coherent and logical systems of meanings that can be analysed according to their contents, actors and interaction with other discourses (Hall 1997, 44–46; Jokinen, Juhila & Suoninen 2016, 32–36; Laclau & Mouffe 1985, 105–114). Importantly, discourses do not only express or reflect social reality, social relations and interaction – they also produce them as well: discourses prime action,

include and exclude actors and assign objects and actors meaning and potential. This reflects Foucault's view of discourse surpassing the linguistic level; for Foucault, discourse combines language and practice, thus enabling action to assume meaning (Foucault 1991b; Hall 1997, 44–56; see also Alasuutari 2017, 40). Semiosis or meaning making is viewed as an essential element of social reality, which is constructed, renegotiated and perpetuated in social practices (Chiapello & Fairclough 2010). Thus, discourse analysis is interested in the ways in which social reality is produced in social practices (Jokinen et al. 2016).

One of the foci of discourse analysis is on unravelling the power relations in a given society or context by analysing how social reality is produced, established and reproduced in language (Fairclough 2003; 2010). In particular, the school of critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses on power relations, which have a crucial role in defining which understandings in a given context are normalised, self-evident or hegemonic and which understandings are excluded or faded out as 'the world is such that some transformations are possible and others are not' (Fairclough 2010, 5). Texts, as tokens of discourses, are considered to reveal something beyond their immediate scope or context: they reflect power relations embedded in communication and social practices. Texts are seen as constructing reality by creating understandings of what is normal, right and acceptable (Fairclough 2003).

In order to reach the research objectives (to locate the broader meanings of entrepreneurship in Finland as a cultural and political construction and to interpret startup entrepreneurship within this framework), the broad focus of my analyses has been on the ways in which social reality with regard to entrepreneurship is organised and made intelligible in the data sets. Methodologically, I identify my analysis as thematic analysis inspired by Foucauldian discourse analysis (see, e.g. Alasuutari & Qadir 2019, 151–154): In practice, I have conducted the analyses in the manner of thematic analysis (see, e.g. Braun & Clarke 2012; Rivas 2012) by identifying the makings of the ideal entrepreneurial subject across the data. Thematic analysis is a 'method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set' (Braun & Clarke 2012, 57). The analysis was conducted by condensing the utterances regarding entrepreneurship that were found in the data and arranging them into categories and subcategories according to their content; these were then analysed and contrasted with the theoretical framework.

In my analysis, I have formulated my analytical questions in relation to the theoretical framework presented in the preceding sections. Firstly, the research draws on governmentality and the analytics of government (e.g. Dean 2009; Kaisto & Pyykkönen 2010; Miller & Rose 2008). In terms of conducting analysis, the questions asked from the data all involved a focus on the construction of the ideal entrepreneurial subject: What are the ideal qualities of the entrepreneur that are described in the texts? What is the entrepreneurial identity like, and what forms does

it take throughout the data? What elements, attitudes and stances are excluded from the entrepreneurial subject? Locating and parsing an ideal subject in a context (or data set) opens a possibility to examine the values, circumstances and normalisations underlying the formation of the ideal subject.

The ideal subject can be understood as a figure comparable to the figures in Mona Mannevuo's (2015) analysis of ideal workers in Finnish managerial texts of the early 2000s and other contexts. Mannevuo considers figures – such as the Fordist or post-Fordist worker – as condensations of material and semiotic processes that are produced in a given context and within given power relations. Figures are more than metaphorical tools; they have a productive aspect that generates identities and subject positions (Mannevuo 2015, 32–34; 207–210; see also Hall 1997, 55–56; Lawler 2014, 76–77). The discursive ideal types of entrepreneurship sketched by Doody et al. (2016; see Section 3.3) – the Silicon Valley entrepreneur, the Main Street entrepreneur, corporate entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial self-employed – are sketched as figures: they are the forms which the ideal entrepreneurial subject takes in different discursive contexts of entrepreneurship. Therefore, I have analysed the construction of entrepreneurial subjects in each of my research contexts, Finnish political discourse, higher education and Finnish startup discourse.

The second analytical tool in this research is the theory of domestication (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014; Tiyainen-Qadir & Salmenniemi 2017; Syväterä 2016), which I employ to study startup entrepreneurship in Finland. In my analysis, I unravel the domestication of startup culture by concentrating on the juxtapositions of startup entrepreneurship and Finnish society that the data set produces. The analysis focuses on the identification and analysis of the different modes of juxtaposition emergent in the data, thereby examining the domestication of startup entrepreneurship. I inquire about the entrepreneurial startup subject that emerges in this domestication process.

Through the analysis of the three data sets, this research deciphers the construction of the ideal entrepreneurial subject and interprets the subject in the light of the broader theorisations of political economy and post-industrial capitalism. As the *Helsingin Sanomat* article (Ala-Kivimäki 2015) referred to in the Introduction implied, entrepreneurship nowadays is personified by something other than what is represented by the elderly car salesperson. My analysis uncovers that 'something'. However, through the first research objective, the research questions the assumption that startup entrepreneurship is a novel form of entrepreneurship or economic activity. In fact, the analysis reveals that the construction of startup entrepreneurship draws from established understandings of entrepreneurial activity in Finnish political economy.

In terms of epistemology, the research is qualitative and is thereby defined by the principles underpinning that type of social research. The process of qualitative

research is cumulative: answers to the research questions are produced through recurring loops of analysis, interpretation and reflection. Each phase affects others: the research design and theoretical framework affect the selection of data and its analysis, analysis of the data affects the research design and questions, which in turn affect the interpretation of the analysis and so on. The data sets used in this research are typical of qualitative research in that they are complex and rich in meanings (multiple government programmes, websites and books), which allows for multiple approaches and interpretations (Alasuutari 2011, 83–89).

The results of this research, as in qualitative research more generally, are a justifiable interpretation of the research materials and based on the theoretical considerations and context formed by the researcher. Pertti Alasuutari (2011) has described this as solving a riddle or a puzzle: the interpretation is valid insofar as it can be seen to rely on the available clues and hints – that is, on the observations and thoughts produced by the analysis. In this sense, qualitative research is about explaining phenomena and making them intelligible. It produces interpretations that apply to the employed empirical data and, at the same time, can be argued to apply to society more generally. Central issues are the ways in which and the extent to which the results of a case are argued to have a broader meaning (Alasuutari 2011, 243–247). This relates to the general epistemology of discourse analysis. Discourses as such do not exist without their context; instead, they become visible and intelligible in social action and in their analysed context. The researcher is the agent who reveals discourses and defines their boundaries and is therefore embedded in his or her research materials (Juhila 2016a; Juhila & Suoninen 2016, 462–463).

This has implications for the research ethics. In qualitative research, the ethics involve an emphasis on transparency. Research relies on the assumption that the researcher makes their own relationship with the research, observations and interpretation visible to the audience and also to himself or herself. This stems from the idea that the researcher is embedded in his or her research materials and the meaning systems he or she attempts to decipher. Therefore, the ethics involved in producing knowledge emphasise an idea of accountability on the part of the researcher: he or she must be as transparent as possible, not only in terms of analysing data and producing observations and reporting them truthfully, but also in terms of acknowledging his or her assumptions, inherent beliefs and role in producing knowledge. Feminist research in particular has emphasised the intertwinement of ethics, methodologies and epistemologies in research, and the researcher should be aware of and reflexive towards his or her position and aims (Doucet & Mouthner 2002; Juhila 2016b). My own background is in the critical research of work and political economy, which naturally shape my research interests and lines of inquiry. As was discussed in Section 3.1, the theoretical framework of governmentality dictates the knowledge that this research can produce – generally,

it does not concentrate on the experiences of individual subjects but rather focuses on the way in which meanings can be interpreted as being formed in texts, whereby they have the potential to prime social action, produce self-understandings and affect social reality.

5 Results

5.1 How have the meanings of entrepreneurship shifted in Finnish political discourse? (Article I)

In the first article, co-authored by Arttu Saarinen, we inquire about the construction of entrepreneurship in Finnish political discourse, utilising Finnish government programmes from 1979 to 2015 as data. Methodologically, the article employs discourse analysis. In our analysis, we identify three key themes regarding the change in the meanings of entrepreneurship. The themes are intersecting and overlapping, but they shape the overall shift that entrepreneurship goes through in the time period.

Firstly, the context of entrepreneurship shifts gradually from industrial policy to entrepreneurship policy. That is to say, entrepreneurship begins to be seen as a specific area of political intervention, the focus of which is on the boosting and cultivation of entrepreneurship. Simultaneously, however, the contexts of entrepreneurship expand: besides economic and labour market policies, entrepreneurship begins to appear in multiple areas, including social policy, education policy and regional policies. This shift takes place gradually from the early 1990s onwards, and in the 2000s and 2010s, entrepreneurship is increasingly prominent in all areas of politics. We interpret that this shift testifies to the spreading of entrepreneurship – understood in terms of subject production – to all areas of life (see, e.g. Bröckling 2016; Harni & Pyykkönen 2018; Miller & Rose 2008).

Secondly, during the time period, entrepreneurship begins to be seen as an integral part of the welfare state. Entrepreneurship, especially from the 2000s onwards, is defined as enabling the welfare state services and as securing the financial foundations of the welfare state. Entrepreneurship is increasingly used together with the word ‘work’, even though in terms of the labour market, entrepreneurship differs from wage work and entrepreneurship is extremely heterogeneous in terms of work content, organisation, income and industry. We interpret that this shift is also related to the theme of entrepreneurship as subjectivity. Entrepreneurship begins to lose its attachments to the reality of the labour market; instead, it is employed metaphorically to describe ideal citizenship. In the dynamic of the welfare state and its citizens, the ideal citizen is active, effective and ensures

that for his or her part, the services of the welfare state can be maintained and offered to everybody. This resonates with the transformation of the universal welfare state into a competition state defined by the notions of competitiveness, efficiency and active citizenship (see, e.g. Blomberg & Kildal 2011; Kananen 2017; Kantola & Kananen 2013). Entrepreneurship is the central notion through which this new ideal is articulated.

Thirdly, entrepreneurship is increasingly associated with economic growth, innovations and expertise, especially from the late 1990s and 2000s onwards. This means that entrepreneurship loses its connection to the labour market and to the employment policies in which it had a crucial role in the first half of our examination period. New entrepreneurial activities and pioneering high-expertise industries – such as biotechnology, telecommunication and clean tech – are established as the areas in which entrepreneurship needs to be boosted. In the 2000s, entrepreneurship is increasingly coupled with innovations, and innovative businesses and international capital begin to take the centre stage in defining entrepreneurship. It is noteworthy that in this third shift, the meaning of entrepreneurship is further obscured: it is seen as a monolithic entity that forms the central axis of economic growth (see, e.g. Niska & Vesala 2011). In this discourse, entrepreneurship, individual entrepreneurs and the inherent heterogeneity of entrepreneurship as a labour market position remain on the sidelines.

In conclusion, we shape the ideal entrepreneur in the new millennium as a highly educated, innovative figure who acquires international capital and boosts national competitiveness, thus securing the services of the welfare state. The figure is in stark contrast with the majority of entrepreneurs in the labour market who primarily work in very traditional sectors of the economy. Rather than a concrete goal, the ideal entrepreneurial subject is therefore understood as being the aspirational state towards which individual citizens are to strive. This discursive shift is made possible by the simultaneous increase and expansion of the contexts in which entrepreneurship appears. The meaning of 'entrepreneurship' is growingly ambiguous and associated with citizens' conduct, which means that entrepreneurship is used in a metaphorical sense to describe ideal citizenship in a welfare state increasingly marked by competition (between individuals, organisations and nations alike) and the primacy of economic reasoning.

We conclude that entrepreneurship is aligned with both economic growth and employment policy, but it has differing roles in these areas. In the context of growth, the focus is on businesses with a high level of know-how and good innovative capabilities. This focus resonates poorly with the condition of entrepreneurship in the Finnish labour market. In the context of employment, rather than appearing as a call to become an entrepreneur, entrepreneurship resembles an ethos, and it is intertwined with the discourse of active entrepreneurial citizenship.

5.2 How is entrepreneurial subjectivity constructed in the entrepreneurial environments of Finnish higher education? (Article II)

In the second article, I am interested in the ideal entrepreneurial subject, brought about in the texts describing and defining various entrepreneurial sites within Finnish higher education. The data utilised is a collection of texts from 14 websites of business incubators, accelerators and entrepreneurship societies, located in 19 different HEIs. Many of these sites are co-managed by more than one institution, which explains the discrepancy. I position the sites as, firstly, part of the 'third mission' of higher education and the purpose of benefiting society under knowledge-based capitalism (Moisio 2018; see Section 2.3) and, secondly, as part of entrepreneurship education, seen in terms of cultivating entrepreneurial subjects (see, e.g. Komulainen et al. 2010; Laalo 2020). In my analysis, I identify two dimensions for the entrepreneurial subject: the construction of the individual subject and the subject as a part of an entrepreneurial community.

In the data, the entrepreneurial subject is shaped by an ethos of exceptionalism. He or she is envisioned as a passionate, self-reliant subject who seeks to fulfil his or her individual dreams and aspirations through entrepreneurship. Importantly, the entrepreneurial ethos is articulated through a language of passion, excitement and inventiveness instead of through business or management. This draws from the startup entrepreneurship discourse in which financial gains and profit are seldom articulated as the goals of an activity. Profit and wealth are something that might entail entrepreneurship, but self-development and personal fulfilment are more important (Kohlenberger 2015; Mannevuo 2015, 115). This stance is articulated through the notion of passion, the fulfilment of which is achieved through entrepreneurship. This implies the understanding of passion through economic interests and concepts. Entrepreneurship is equated with passion.

Another important feature of the subject is social consciousness. The coupling of passion and entrepreneurship results in entrepreneurship becoming a means to solve problems. The problems can relate to one's personal life or the surrounding society. For example, one of the incubators describes that their goal is to shape future professionals who are driven, self-confident professionals but also concerned citizens. In this way, the solving of social problems is paired with entrepreneurship, which reflects the tendency of entrepreneurship assuming the tasks that have traditionally belonged to the state and political decision-making (see, e.g. European Commission 2003; Laalo et al. 2019). I argue that through this kind of stance, the subject takes the shape of a socially conscious startup entrepreneur.

The second dimension, community, defines the ideal subject as a communicative, sociable team player and depicts entrepreneurship as a shared, cooperative effort. The sites invite the audience to join their atmosphere of fun and

relaxed but ambitious togetherness, evoking metaphors of team, tribe and family. In particular, the entrepreneurship societies shape their activity as a generational phenomenon that brings together young people who are dedicated to making Finland a better place.

Togetherness is articulated as, firstly, peer support and potential beneficial contacts and, secondly, as a shared ambition to achieve greatness through entrepreneurship. The community integrates ambition and dedication – notions traditionally associated with entrepreneurship – with playfulness and informality. A relaxed, encouraging and mutually reinforcing atmosphere is a central notion of startup culture, and this is achieved through low hierarchies and the affective rhetoric of a shared culture (Egan-Wyer et al. 208; Hyrkäs 2016; Mannevuo 2015). Of course, the community is also exclusive: there is very little space for alternative ways to define and practice entrepreneurship. The subject is assumed to be sociable in a certain way, and the ideal subjectivity is crystallised in a somewhat vague entrepreneurial positivity. Therefore, entrepreneurship is constructed in terms of self-understanding rather than in terms of business management.

I conclude that the figure taking shape in entrepreneurial sites amplifies the traditional virtues of the entrepreneurial self – such as autonomy, activity and reflexivity (see, e.g. Bröckling 2016) – and articulates them as an ethos of exceptionalism, passion, innovativeness and social consciousness. Importantly, the subject is built on the notion of community, which translates into positivity and togetherness, implying a capability to be enthusiastic together and to work in a team (see Jokinen 2015). Entrepreneurship is not lonesome work but inspirational cooperation. The ideal entrepreneurial subject is constructed as enthusiastic, passionate and sociable, adding such notions to the established understanding of the entrepreneurial self as a self-reflexive and calculative neoliberal subject.

5.3 How is startup entrepreneurship constructed in relation to post-industrial work? (Article III)

In the third article, I interpret startup entrepreneurship from the perspective of post-industrial work and locate the phenomenon within the broader continuums of Finnish labour. The data utilised in the study consists of seven Finnish startup guidebooks and other non-fiction books. The analysis draws on scholarship on therapeutic culture (e.g. Illouz 2008; Cabanas & Illouz 2019). In post-industrial capitalism, work is made intelligible through therapeutic conceptualisations and vocabularies, resulting in work transforming into an arena in which to manifest one's personality. In this way, work is about personal fulfilment and self-realisation, and at the same time, the individual's personality – desires, passions, aspirations, stances – are woven into the labour process, rendering the work and the worker inseparable (see,

e.g. Boltanski & Chiapello 2005; Davies 2015; Foster 2016). Similarly, post-industrial work and management are centred on teamwork and communication, understanding work through the management and utilisation of individuals' emotions and motivations. Successful social interaction is understood as a prerequisite for productive, meaningful work (see, e.g. Julkunen 2008; Kinnunen & Parviainen 2016; Varje et al. 2013). Building on the themes developed in the previous article, I interpret startup entrepreneurship in the light of post-industrial work and identify three key notions through which startup entrepreneurship is made understandable: passion, failure and teamwork.

Passion is a central discursive node defining the startup experience. Startup entrepreneurship is ultimately a project of the self, involving reflection in order to identify one's passion and values, and transform them into entrepreneurial action. Much like in the context of higher education, passion is articulated as problem solving: a startup entrepreneur is defined by his or her will to solve a problem, and entrepreneurship is the way through which the problem is solved and, consequently, passion is realised. Passion implies dedication to the solving process, and thus passion helps one to overcome the difficulties associated with entrepreneurship. Passion takes shape through the affective vocabulary of "finding one's call" and "realising one's potential", adding a moral obligation to entrepreneurship. As one book notes, 'if society, politicians and existing companies are not trying to solve an important problem, a startup entrepreneur asks himself or herself: *If not me, then who? If not now, when?*' (Helaniemi et al. 2018, 34, italics in the original; translated by H.K.). Thus, entrepreneurial passion has a double role: it is both a resource and an objective.

The second key theme is failure. In the data, failure is a self-evident part of startup entrepreneurship. Every entrepreneur needs to be prepared to fail, and failure is understood as a learning experience. Failures and hardships are part of the process of becoming successful, and through a therapeutic ethos, one can learn to cope with them and view them as necessary for personal refinement. Post-industrial work is permeated by therapeutic discourses that guide one to see adversities as possibilities (Cabanas & Illouz 2019). However, in order to cope with failure, one must develop a reflexive, humble attitude: it is essential to be able to admit that one cannot survive alone, and therefore, the capability to process and express one's feelings to co-workers and colleagues is emphasised. This reflects the simultaneous masculine and feminine discourses of post-industrial work: the post-industrial ethos amalgamates the notions of ambition and competition with cooperation and emotionality (see, e.g. Illouz 2008; Varje et al. 2013).

Because of this, teamwork is the third important dimension of startup entrepreneurship. A startup is a team comprised of experts and companions grouped around a shared vision. In startup entrepreneurship a team surpasses its individual

members. This unity is evoked with metaphors drawing from sports and musicians, painting work as simultaneously informal and relaxed, and disciplined and ambitious. Passion as a problem-solving emotion is employed to overcome the individuality of the team members: the startup has to conjure a vision – a solution to a problem – that every member can support. In order to ensure productivity and success, each member has to be reflexive and attentive towards herself or himself and to each other. This depicts the team as a resource that its members can utilise. A team is more efficient than its individual members as long as its members are willing to commit themselves to their work and their team. Of course, this is achieved through the vision of the startup. Teamwork in startup entrepreneurship implies sacrifices, such as long work hours at the expense of one's personal life, and therefore, the team also regulates the correct subjectivity and conduct.

In conclusion, startup entrepreneurship combines two constructions of the ideal post-industrial subject: the self-reflexive entrepreneurial self and the emotionally alert team player. The idea of the subject as self-reflexive and self-evaluative is constructed in tandem with notions of passion and self-actualisation by utilising therapeutic vocabularies. Entrepreneurship is shaped as the only way of both finding and manifesting one's true self and solving global and societal problems. Secondly, entrepreneurship is seen as inherently collaborative work which necessitates emotional intelligence and willingness to dedicate oneself to the team. Thus, instead of a novel phenomenon (see the Introduction), startup entrepreneurship is constructed via the notions associated with the ideal subject in post-industrial capitalism more generally. Through startup entrepreneurship, those qualities are crystallised and amplified. Hence, startup entrepreneurship intensifies and normalises the post-industrial spirit of capitalism (Boltanski & Chiapello 2005), and through the popular startup literature, it is offered to every and all individuals.

5.4 How is startup entrepreneurship domesticated in the Finnish context? (Article IV)

In the fourth article, I approach startup entrepreneurship as a cultural form and examine the ways in which it is made intelligible in the Finnish context. As data, I utilise seven Finnish startup guidebooks and other non-fiction books. By 'cultural form', I mean a host of discursive practices that migrate to different environments and locations, transforming and gaining new meanings through discursive negotiations (Collier & Ong, 2005; Ong, 2007; see Section 3.4). The migration involves domestication, whereby startup entrepreneurship is constructed dialogically with Finnish historical, local and situated discourses and cultural meaning systems. Foreign elements are intertwined in local meaning systems, employing local meanings and discursive practices (Salmenniemi & Adamson, 2015; Tiyainen-Qadir

& Salmenniemi, 2017). Therefore, I analyse the rhetoric, metaphors and imagery through which startup entrepreneurship is constructed and associated with Finnish culture and society.

In my analysis, I note that the dynamic between startup entrepreneurship and Finnish culture and society is constructed as antagonistic. The ideal subjectivity of startup entrepreneurship is assembled as a polar opposite to the traditional Finnish mentality, which in turn is constructed by utilising well-known stereotypes regarding Finland. For example, Finnish mentality is characterised by excessive modesty, humility and unsociability, which are antithetical to startup entrepreneurship. Therefore, the accommodation of startup entrepreneurship requires a recalibration of the Finnish cultural identity, which is exemplified by our cultural proneness to stigmatise failure. In startup entrepreneurship, failure is a positive learning experience, and therefore the Finnish identity should adopt a stance that embraces failure and risk taking.

Antagonisms are also found between startup entrepreneurship and Finnish institutions. For example, the financial public support and services for startups are inefficient and focus on irrelevant aspects of the business. This construction draws from the neoliberal mythology of an inefficient, rigid bureaucratic state. Moreover, the Finnish school system, despite its international acclaim, heavily directs people into wage work instead of entrepreneurship. However, as with the cultural identity, the institutions can also be recalibrated: the free and expansive education system provides people with ample skills to become startup entrepreneurs. The extensive welfare state provides a safety net for bankruptcy, which leaves room for experimentation and risk-taking. There are thus ambivalences in the antagonisms. Although startup entrepreneurship is seen as desirable in the data, it is implicitly associated with overt positivity, self-promotion and self-interest – qualities that in the Finnish context tend to have negative connotations. This obstacle is overcome by voicing a need for a 'Finnish' startup culture.

This culture is constructed through the ideal Finnish startup subject. The subject emerging from the data combines the notions of entrepreneurial passion and creativity (see Articles II and III) and Finnish nationalistic pride. The Finnish startup entrepreneur shaped in the texts is interested in the betterment of his or her community, which is articulated relying on the notion of *talkoot*, a tradition of communal voluntary work. The members of a community are expected to participate gratuitously in *talkoot*, and through this notion, startup entrepreneurs are constructed as benefactors who unselfishly seek to contribute to the surrounding society. This is done by associating the potential economic successes of startups with maintaining welfare state institutions, such as the extensive school system. The construction parallels that of the ideal citizen of the competition state (see Article I, Section 5.1).

I argue that Finnish startup entrepreneurship interweaves nationalism and patriotic sensibilities with the growth-seeking, Schumpeterian motivations of entrepreneurship. Startup entrepreneurship is domesticated by constructing it as nationalistic action, which places startup entrepreneurship in the continuum of 'everyday nationalism' that is typical of Finnish public discourse (Kettunen 2012). The willingness to preserve welfare institutions through startup entrepreneurship is a means of negotiating startup culture from the Finnish perspective: the welfare institutions, particularly the education system, have historically been held in high regard in Finnish public discourse (Kantola & Kuusela 2019, 238–243).

In conclusion, startup entrepreneurship is made understandable in the Finnish context by juxtaposing startup entrepreneurship and Finnish culture, constructing certain elements of Finnish culture as obstructive to and incompatible with startup entrepreneurship. Simultaneously, the books negotiate startup entrepreneurship in relation to Finnish historical meaning systems, which results in startup entrepreneurship's intertwinement with the discourses of Finnish innovation-led competitiveness, everyday nationalism and an appreciation of the welfare state. This produces startup entrepreneurship as necessary for Finland's survival in the turbulent, global capitalism. Finnish national identity is reworked to include notions of risk-taking, which in part functions as the domestication of neoliberal, entrepreneurial subjectivity.

6 Conclusions

> [The term] '**entrepreneur**' combines the pixie dust of **innovation**, the social conscience of the **stakeholder**, the versatile vagueness of **nimble**, and, with its French derivation, a touch of the glamour that 'businessman,' 'capitalist,' or 'manager' can never approach. (Leary 2018, 88)

In his book *Keywords: The New Language of Capitalism* (2018), John Patrick Leary discusses the lexicon of current capitalism and identifies a series of keywords that are especially important in understanding it. The above quotation describes the word 'entrepreneur', which dovetails with my research. In this research, I have asked how the meanings of entrepreneurship as a political and cultural construction have shifted in post-industrial Finland. The answer to this question has been provided through the examination of startup entrepreneurship, which has functioned as a prism through which the broader shifts in the meanings of entrepreneurship are viewed. The research objective of this thesis was twofold. The first objective was to locate the broader meanings of entrepreneurship in Finland as political and cultural constructions, and the second objective was to interpret the construction of startup entrepreneurship against this backdrop. The main research question was divided to four sub-questions:

1. How have the meanings of entrepreneurship shifted in Finnish political discourse?
2. How is the ideal entrepreneurial subject constructed in the discourse of Finnish higher education?
3. How is startup entrepreneurship constructed in relation to post-industrial work?
4. How is startup entrepreneurship domesticated in the Finnish context?

The empirical case studies (Articles I–IV) examined entrepreneurship as a discursive phenomenon in three contexts: Finnish political discourse, entrepreneurial sites in Finnish higher education and popular Finnish startup literature. Three data sets were utilised: Finnish government programmes from 1979 to 2015 (for sub-question 1), 14 websites of entrepreneurial environments located within Finnish HEIs and formed

over the course of the 2000s and 2010s (for sub-question 2) and 7 Finnish guidebooks and other non-fiction books that discuss the notion of startup entrepreneurship (for sub-questions 3 and 4). The data was analysed through discourse analysis in the manner of thematic analysis. The guidelines of the analysis were to find the ideal entrepreneurial subject in each data set and to examine the domestication of startup entrepreneurship. The theoretical framework of the research draws from three scholarships: firstly, the scholarship on Foucauldian studies on governmentality and the analytics of government; secondly, the scholarship on post-industrial work, especially on therapeutic culture and on the knowledge economy; and thirdly, on the scholarship of global forms and domestication.

The answer to Sub-question 1 is that – with the transition to the knowledge-based economy, starting from the late twentieth century – entrepreneurship in Finnish political discourse is increasingly understood in the context of innovations and economic growth instead of in the context of the labour market or labour policy. Thereby, entrepreneurship can be said to be constructed in a Schumpeterian framework. Simultaneously, however, entrepreneurship starts to denote the qualities of the ideal citizen, and the term is used metaphorically to characterise citizens' desired stance towards their personal well-being and livelihood. Thus, rather paradoxically, entrepreneurship is simultaneously increasingly vague and also increasingly linked to innovations, economic growth and competitiveness. Therefore, the ideal entrepreneurial subject is implied to be a growth-seeking expert who lures in international capital and maintains the services of the welfare state. This image is in contrast with the heterogeneous labour market reality of entrepreneurship. As for Sub-question 2, the ideal entrepreneurial subject in higher education reflects the qualities evident in the political discourse: entrepreneurship is depicted as individualistic self-realisation and as enthusiastic teamwork, thus constructing entrepreneurship in the framework of post-industrial labour.

An answer to Sub-question 3 is that startup entrepreneurship is constructed by drawing on the ideals of post-industrial labour, emphasising sociability and a reflexive, therapeutic mindset. Thereby, the ideal entrepreneurial subject combines the notions of the ideal individualistic neoliberal subject and the post-industrial team player. Entrepreneurship is constructed as a solution to both societal problems and the desire for individual meaningfulness. Therefore, startup entrepreneurship can be seen as the crystallisation of the ideals of the ideal post-industrial subject. As for Sub-question 4, startup entrepreneurship is domesticated by juxtaposing startup entrepreneurship with the 'traditional' Finnish mentality and by voicing a need for cultural change. However, it is also maintained that the unique Finnish culture should be utilised in constructing Finnish startup culture. In the process of making startup entrepreneurship intelligible in the Finnish context, the ideal neoliberal

entrepreneurial subject is domesticated by constructing startup entrepreneurship in a national frame.

Through startup entrepreneurship, then, entrepreneurship in post-industrial Finland is seen through the notions of innovation and progress, of enthusiasm and passion, and of social consciousness. With the ascendance of startup entrepreneurship, the notion of entrepreneurship denotes passion, enthusiasm and sociability, complimenting the traditional entrepreneurial qualities, such as perseverance, diligence and modest ambition. All of these discourses have been present in Finnish political economy for decades, and therefore, startup entrepreneurship is placed in a discursive continuum.

There are two central dimensions that characterise the ideal entrepreneurial startup subject. Firstly, the subject embodies entrepreneurial passion. Passion helps the entrepreneur to persevere, and it is – rather paradoxically – both the motivator and the goal of entrepreneurial action. However, passion in entrepreneurship is only realised insofar as it can be turned into a product, and in this way, passion fits individual aspirations into the capitalist production process. As such, passion in startup entrepreneurship echoes the all-encompassing nature of economic subjectivity in neoliberal governmentality as well as the post-industrial imperative to self-actualise through work.

Secondly, the subject exhibits communal spirit. This is articulated, firstly, as sociability and team spiritedness. Eeva Jokinen (2015) has termed this '*tohkeisuus*', which, in the absence of a compact translation, denotes a sense of shared enthusiasm and excitement. In startup entrepreneurship, this mutual excitement is a prerequisite for productivity, which epitomises the therapeutic ethos of post-industrial labour. Secondly, 'communal spirit' denotes a sense of togetherness in 'the community' (which, depending on the context, can mean 'the startup team', 'the company's markets or customers' or 'the framework in which a startup is embedded') of the nation state. I argue that in the Finnish startup discourse, the community presents itself as the nation state, meaning that startup entrepreneurship is essentially produced in a framework of national interest. Therefore, the ethos of patriotism produced by this national frame is not simply rhetorical, but a part of identity construction in startup entrepreneurship (cf. Egan-Wyer et al. 2018, 68–70).

It can be concluded that startup entrepreneurship crystallises a shift in the broader understanding of entrepreneurship in Finland. In Finnish political discourse, texts of higher education and startup literature, the ideal entrepreneurial subject is constructed by drawing from the discursive continuums of Finnish political economy: from the late twentieth century onwards, Finland has transformed into having a knowledge-based economy, and entrepreneurship in that context has a central position in the dynamics of economic growth. This trend has intensified in the 2000s and 2010s, and startup entrepreneurship can be read as the culmination of

that trajectory. Antti Hyrkäs (2016, 20) suggests that startup entrepreneurship can be seen as 'the spectacular apex of entrepreneurship' in the context of the pervasiveness of entrepreneurship. In Finland in particular, startup entrepreneurship is often constructed as a revolutionary stance towards work in its emphasis on passion and love for work (Mannevuo 2015, 114–119; Lehdonvirta 2013), implying that startup entrepreneurship is a unique phenomenon in this regard.

My research shows that startup entrepreneurship draws from existing and well-charted discourses that highlight the notions of passion, creativity and self-realisation in post-industrial capitalism that equates enthusiasm, personal meaningfulness and productivity. Contrary to the rhetoric of novelty and cultural reformation, startup entrepreneurship is made understandable through discourses already present and hegemonic in Finnish political economy, such as high expertise, knowledge, innovations and so on. Startup entrepreneurship is a product of knowledge-based capitalism fused with the ideal subject of post-industrial labour. Therefore, instead of an abrupt change or fracture, startup entrepreneurship represents a shift, that is, a transformation or fluctuation. New meanings of entrepreneurship in Finland have been constructed on top of existing ones, drawing from established understandings of what Finland is as a culture and as a society.

Therefore, as I have shown, there is a contradiction in the construction of startup entrepreneurship and the rhetoric of change associated with it. I conclude that the rhetoric of change is a means of domesticating startup entrepreneurship in Finland and making it intelligible in the Finnish context. Nationalism can be perceived as a legitimation strategy for startup entrepreneurship – a means to overcome the 'foreignness' of the phenomenon – but it also resonates with the traditional Finnish understanding of work as an individual duty in the frame of the nation state (see, e.g. Alasuutari 2017, 110, 129, 156) and with the more recent concern of 'our competitiveness' in the globalised world (Kettunen 2008, 210, 216–220). Anu Kantola and Hanna Kuusela (2019, 134–151) note that entrepreneurs in the Finnish economic elite understand their entrepreneurship as a combination of the Schumpeterian view of the entrepreneur as an exceptional individual and the Protestant work ethic of work having value in itself. This is also evident in my analysis of Finnish startup entrepreneurship, and this discussion illustrates how the cultural negotiation of entrepreneurship takes place.

Moreover, the rhetoric of change in Finland can be seen as relying on the broader traditional understanding of Finland as a nation. The idea of the Finnish nation has been strongly built on the notion that Finns need to be civilised in order to be more comfortable among older and more sophisticated European cultures. The idea of Finns as *metsäläinen* – that is, as primitive country bumpkins with limited social skills and poor emotional control – is still widely shared by Finns today and can clearly be seen in Finnish culture. Therefore, Finnish collective self-understanding

can be seen to be based on a certain feeling of inferiority. (Alasuutari 2017; Apo 1996; Peltonen 1988.) By tapping into the tradition of seeing Finland through its faults or shortcomings, startup entrepreneurship also takes shape as a vanguard in the sense of bringing Finland into closer connection with an imagined civilised world. Thus, there are many sides to using national identity as a legitimation strategy for startup entrepreneurship. These remarks resemble observations made by Lilly Irani (2019) regarding startup and technology entrepreneurship taking shape as a nationalistic project in the context of post-colonial India, which suggests that startup entrepreneurship as a global form might have certain ways of overlapping with local meaning systems.

By examining startup entrepreneurship as a crystallisation of the shifting meanings of entrepreneurship in Finland, this research gives startup entrepreneurship a sociological context and views startup entrepreneurship as a part of a broader economic transformation. By theorising about startup entrepreneurship as a variant of entrepreneurial capitalism (Doody et al. 2016) and examining the ideal subjects it produces, the research has attempted to elaborate the ability of the analytics of government to explain and produce knowledge on the creation of entrepreneurial subjects in the twenty-first century.

In a sense, the ideal entrepreneurial subject emergent in my analysis resonates with the idea of 'sacrificial citizenship' developed by Wendy Brown (2015; 2016). Brown argues that neoliberal rationality transforms citizens into human capital, not just for themselves (i.e. not just into the targets of individual self-monitoring, aiming to enhance personal human capital) but for other entities as well: people are human capital for companies, states and international constellations alike, and as such, they are replaceable and expendable in the service of a greater whole. The modelling of every organisation as an accountable business venture entails the perception of citizens as employees and team members that are to work for the common goal of growth, putting aside possible conflicts and differing mutual interests. As Brown (2016, 9) states, 'active citizenship is slimmed to tending oneself as responsibilized human capital, while sacrificial citizenship expands to include anything related to the health of a firm or a nation, or again, the health of the nation as firm'. A conclusion can be drawn that '[a]s human capital, we are self-investors – responsible for our success of failure, condemned for dependency or expectation of entitlements – and we are also a national resource' (ibid, 10).

In this framework, entrepreneurship in general and startup entrepreneurship in particular are handed the torch of producing economic growth and maintaining the welfare state. High-expertise startup activities, conducted by entrepreneurial startup subjects, are constructed as forming the model of new, effective, desirable economic activity. I interpret this as hinting at an emergent narrative of startup Finland that can be summarised as follows: in the current world, characterised by economic

instability and expanding globalism, new, high-expertise entrepreneurship and stout individual action are needed to replace the 'old giants' (Moisio 2018, 102; 106) that once dominated the Finnish economy in order to achieve new national success. This resonates with the paradigmatic shift in the welfare state rationale, illustrated by Anu Kantola and Johannes Kananen (2013; see also Kantola 2002; 2014): the 1990s depression in part worked as a legitimiser for the new rationale of national competitiveness that had already emerged in the language of governance in the preceding decade. Similarly, the 2008 financial crisis and the diminishing of Nokia in the early 2010s seem, in part, to have worked as legitimisers of the enhancement of startup activities – at least in the context of Finnish startup literature (Koskinen 2021).

In this light, the notion of entrepreneurship in post-industrial Finland translates into a twofold imperative to save the welfare state. Entrepreneurship denotes the ideal citizen and the desire for knowledge-intensive, innovative entrepreneurship. Everyone is prompted to be entrepreneurial, but not everyone is actually called an entrepreneur. In other words, although an entrepreneurial attitude can and should be cultivated in everyone, only certain individuals are asked to harness their entrepreneurial potential in actual ventures and de facto entrepreneurship.

This double-ended entrepreneurial imperative works to misrecognise the majority of the entrepreneurial populace – those working in the labour market position of 'entrepreneur'. In political discourse, the minutiae of entrepreneurs' everyday work are scarcely touched on, while the call to transform oneself to an entrepreneur of the self prevails (see Section 5.1). In higher education, the entrepreneurial subject is envisioned as an innovative, passionate exceptional individual, and the focus is on the cultivation of such attitude instead of on the everyday tasks of managing a business (see Section 5.2). In startup literature, passion and team-spiritedness – the ideals of post-industrial work – are amalgamated to form a subject that embraces self-exploitation in order to see problems solved and passion become a reality (see Section 5.3). Other types of entrepreneurship are not only misrecognised but used as points of departure in making the startup subject intelligible – the traditional entrepreneur is something that the startup subject derides and wishes not to become (see Section 5.4; see also Doody et al. 2016, 860).

A similar argument on startup entrepreneurship has been made by Lilly Irani (2019). According to Irani, the global project of innovative startup entrepreneurship requires its 'others', both symbolically and materially. Entrepreneurial innovators need their audience – consumers, employees, citizens, that is, the people that benefit from the advances generated by entrepreneurship and against whom entrepreneurs can be presented as benefactors and philanthropists. This brings us back to the *Helsingin Sanomat* article introduced at the very beginning (Ala-Kivimäki 2015). The notion of entrepreneurship indeed signifies something other than what is

represented by Timo Tuomi, the elderly car salesman – that is, it signifies an ethos of having an innovative, risk-taking, passionate and sociable entrepreneurial attitude that is harnessed to the service of the Finnish knowledge-based economy. By implication, the entrepreneurship represented by the salesman is rendered redundant. While Timo Tuomi is as much an entrepreneur as the startup entrepreneurs in the article, he is cast in the role of 'the other' and constructed as the antithesis of the desirable entrepreneurship in the startup context.

This echoes the varieties of the discursive ideals of entrepreneurship sketched by Sean Doody et al. (2016): the Silicon Valley variant of entrepreneurship, I argue, is in the process of becoming the hegemonic variety of entrepreneurship in Finnish political economy, giving the content of the notion of entrepreneurship – despite startup entrepreneurship's marginality in the economy (Maliranta et al. 2018). Tarmo Lemola (2020, 199–203, 236–240) notes that, despite increasing efforts and public spending to boost high-growth business creation in the 2000s, Finland's international success is still predominantly caused by large corporations. Therefore, the ideal entrepreneurial subject outlined in this research denotes a symbolic struggle rather than an economic one.

On a critical note, this research its limitations, and some of them relate to the form of a thesis that is comprised of research articles. Peer-reviewed research articles are relatively independent studies that have fixed research questions, theoretical frameworks, data and conclusions, and to form a thesis, these are then combined in a summarising report that encapsulates the central findings of the articles. This limits the ability to draw new conclusions or reinterpret the findings in the summarising report as the empirical results and theoretical approaches are tied to the published articles. Moreover, the research articles themselves are produced at a certain time and under certain conditions that affect their construction. This all results in a somewhat fragmentary nature, and looking back, it is obvious that these circumstances affected this thesis, especially the summary. The focus of the research articles varies between entrepreneurship more generally and startup entrepreneurship in particular, which dictates the scope of the thesis.

Perhaps the somewhat fragmentary nature of this research could have been avoided or downplayed by focusing more strictly on startup entrepreneurship as an empirical phenomenon and by discussing startup entrepreneurship in all of the research articles. For example, to fulfil the research objective, I could have chosen data (such as media articles, selected political documents, management literature etc.) that solely discussed startup entrepreneurship. In this way, it might have been possible to produce a more nuanced analysis of the construction of the Finnish variant of startup entrepreneurship and thus contribute to the scholarship on the ambiguities and ambivalences inherent in startup entrepreneurship (see, e.g. Cockayne 2019). In addition, the domestication of startup entrepreneurship could

have been examined via a more comparative analysis by selecting data from various Nordic countries and examining the relationship of startup entrepreneurship and the Nordic welfare state more thoroughly.

Furthermore, in this research, the shifting meanings of entrepreneurship have been analysed from a relatively broad perspective, which sets limitations to the scope of the analysis and the precision of the observations. The apparent heterogeneity of entrepreneurship both in the context of the labour market (see, e.g. Pärnänen & Sutela 2014; 2018) and as a cultural and political construction (Christiaens 2019; Doody et al. 2016) could have been addressed more thoroughly by complementing the analysis of startup texts with analyses that discuss the different social and material contexts of entrepreneurship, such as guidebook literature on SMEs or political documents and reports that discuss the SME-sector in Finland in more detail (see, e.g. Vesala & Vihinen 2011).

These reflections considered, there are several possible orientations for future research that the research at hand brings about and with which its limitations could be overcome. I identify three of them here. Firstly, there is the question of the lived experience of the ideal entrepreneurial subject. How are the subject positions illustrated here assumed, negotiated and contested in the everyday work of entrepreneurs and in higher education, for example (see, e.g. Laalo 2020)? This question might also address the critique of governmentality research: in emphasising power's embeddedness in social practices, it tends to disregard individual subjects (Alasuutari 2017, 25; Pyykkönen 2015). In particular, it would be interesting to conduct this kind of research among startup entrepreneurs and in the environments and social settings that facilitate and establish startup activities, such as the incubators and accelerators described in Article II. In particular, the role of gender should be focused on in these accounts as this would open a new line of inquiry into the complexity of startup entrepreneurship (on the gendered nature of startup entrepreneurship, see Chang 2018; Pöllänen 2021).

The question of startup environments brings me to the second possible strand of research: the governance of startup entrepreneurship. Due to its underpinning theoretical framework, the analysis of this research has examined discourses from a governmentality perspective on a textual level, thereby circumnavigating their usage and interpretation in specific, material contexts. As Mark Bevir (2011, 463) notes, the scholarships on governance and governmentality could be combined to form a research agenda with a 'concern for situated agency with a historicist awareness of the contingent contexts of such agency.' Therefore, future research might inquire about the administration, knowledge production and agents of Finnish startup entrepreneurship – in other words, it could research startup entrepreneurship as an epistemic community (see, e.g. Adler & Haas 1992).

Thirdly, further research should concentrate on the narrative of startup-Finland sketched here: How is it associated with the Nordic welfare state that has traditionally been characterised by a large public sector, considerable public spending and a relatively strong governmental role in the regulation of the economy (see, e.g. Alasuutari 2017; Kettunen 2008)? This thematic was touched on in this research (especially in Articles I and IV), but a thorough analysis would yield a more nuanced understanding of the nature of the welfare state permeated by neoliberal, Schumpeterian notions of competitiveness (Kantola & Kananen 2013) and workfare (Blomberg & Kildal 2011), and therefore contribute to the understanding of the direction of the Nordic welfare state.

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