# To both/and, either/or, in-between, and beyond!

## Queering the normative construction of entrepreneurship for the inclusion of queer entrepreneurs.

by

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# Abstract

The alleged universality of entrepreneurship as a neutral, meritocratic, and accessible means through which individuals are free to realise their socioeconomic potential has been challenged. The entrepreneurship literature is dominated by a narrow stereotype of the entrepreneur (white, neoliberal, Western, male, heteronormative) but the interest in entrepreneurship as a mechanism for economic and social value creation is driving demand for more inclusive, diverse, and pluralist knowledge on entrepreneurship that is representative of marginalised populations' lived experiences. Many have already introduced alternative constructions of entrepreneurship; however, the literature on LGBT and queer entrepreneurs is still limited. This paper aims to help address this gap by queering entrepreneurship through a 'de- and re-construction' of the norm. Drawing from both post-structural feminism and queer theory, this study problematises 'normativity' both in entrepreneurship and in the methodologies used to study it. This study asked seven self-identified queer entrepreneurs in South Africa to develop and explain a queer-inclusive construction of entrepreneurship through collage. Collages were analysed through a visual grounded theory methodology and supplemented with interview data analysed through a constructivist grounded theory methodology. The findings confirm the pervasiveness of a normative construction of entrepreneurship and indicate the need to queer it by both including queer individuals and destabilising normative identities and methodologies in the entrepreneurship field. This study contributes to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse by illuminating specifically the lived experience of queer African entrepreneurs, highlighting the pressure they face to conform to both a Western stereotype of the entrepreneur and to being the 'right' kind of queer as a product of queernormativity. This research also illustrates how fresh ontologies can inject the entrepreneurship literature with new perspectives that challenge normative, positivist hierarchies. Recommendations for practical interventions for inclusivity are discussed and future directions for research are suggested.

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# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **ABM** | Arts-based methods |
| **GT** | Grounded theory |
| **LGBTQ+** | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning plus |
| **VGTM** | Visual grounded theory methodology |

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“You're more than just neither, honey. There's other ways to be than either-or. It's not so simple. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many people who don't fit.— Leslie Feinberg, Stone Butch Blues (2003, p. 218).

# Chapter I: Introduction

## 1.1. Context

Entrepreneurship has historically been positioned as a neutral, meritocratic, and accessible means through which individuals are free to realise their socioeconomic potential, without any formal entry barriers or institutional constraints. This alleged universality has been challenged: the entrepreneurship literature is dominated by a narrow stereotype of the entrepreneur that is rooted in a white, neoliberal, Western, male, and heteronormative construction that subordinates and excludes those outside of it (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017; Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe, Aluthgama-Baduge, & Mulholland, 2021). Given the growing interest in entrepreneurship as a mechanism for both economic development (Donnellon et al., 2014; Fuller et al., 2018; Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014; Karabey, 2012; Thomas & Mueller, 2000) and social value creation (Calás, Smircich, & Bourne, 2009; Esfandiar, Sharifi-Tehrani, Pratt, & Altinay, 2019; Marlow & McAdam, 2015; Steyaert & Katz, 2004), there is demand for alternative, more inclusive constructions thereof (Calás et al., 2009; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Galloway et al., 2015; Rajasinghe et al., 2021; Welter et al., 2017). Further, calls are increasing for more inclusive, diverse, and pluralist knowledge on entrepreneurship that is consistent with marginalised populations' lived experiences (Leitch, Hill, & Harrison, 2010; Rajasinghe et al., 2021). Many have already introduced alternative constructions of entrepreneurship to address this need; however, the literature on LGBT and queer entrepreneurs is still limited (Galloway, 2011; Köllen, Bendl, & Steinbacher, 2012; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019; Schindehutte, Morris, & Allen, 2005).

## 1.2. Problem statement

Entrepreneurship is not as equally accessible to as many people as often claimed in the research. The entrepreneurship scholarship has traditionally suggested that entrepreneurship is a manifestation of the self, and that differences in entrepreneurship are shaped by intrinsic individual differences (Block, 2018; Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Marlow, 2020; Steyaert, 2007). Entrepreneurship has thus been positioned as a neutral and accessible means through which individuals are free to realise their socioeconomic potential, free of any formal entry barriers or institutional constraints, such that anyone

is able to discover and act on their own entrepreneurial capability through effort and determination (Dy, 2020; Marlow & McAdam, 2015).

However, the alleged universality of entrepreneurship as an accessible pursuit regardless of individuals' contexts and social ascriptions has been challenged (Dy, 2020). The entrepreneurship discourse has been dominated by a narrow stereotype of the entrepreneur that subordinates and others those outside of it (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017; Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe et al., 2021). This stereotype has been described as:

- Western-centric and culturally biased, producing a narrow idealisation of success rooted in neoliberalism, focused on individualisation, self-centred subjectivity, and the pursuit of self-interest (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Block, 2018; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Marlow, 2020).
- Male, masculine, and heteronormative, such that it subordinates feminine characteristics and reproduces a male/female binary (Bendell, Sullivan, & Marvel, 2019; Berglund, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2017; Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2017; Galloway et al., 2015; Marlow, 2020; Marlow, Greene, & Coad, 2018).
- White, and vastly under-representative of racial and ethnic minorities (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Holvino, 2010; Marlow, 2014).

There is increasing acknowledgement that entrepreneurship has been defined to the exclusion of various societal groups and must examine othered social ascriptions and pillars of inequality to be valid (Harrison, Leitch, & McAdam, 2015; Knight, 2016; Ogbor, 2000). The sustainability and scope for impact of entrepreneurship as a means of socioeconomic progress, particularly for marginalised groups, is therefore limited (Harrison et al., 2015; Knight, 2016; OECD, 2019; Ogbor, 2000).

A key means to addressing such barriers is more inclusive, diverse, and pluralist knowledge on entrepreneurship that aligns to such populations' lived experiences (Leitch et al., 2010; Rajasinghe et al., 2021). More minorities, including those from the Black, migrant, disabled, and LGBTQ+ communities, are engaging in entrepreneurship and small business ownership (Wood, Davidson, & Fielden, 2012). Enhancing our understanding of the characteristics, motivations and obstacles faced by minority entrepreneurs can facilitate help us better understand how to provide the necessary structures and processes to help them maximise their potential (Schindehutte et al., 2005; Wood et al., 2012). Additionally, such studies contribute to richer understanding of and more robust theory generation for entrepreneurship in general (Schindehutte et al., 2005; Wood et al., 2012).

Many authors have introduced alternative constructions of entrepreneurship to challenge the stereotype, introducing different perspectives and exploring new variables and theoretical perspectives

(Dyer, 2015; Thornton, 1999; Welter et al., 2017; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). In a seminal work that dramatically transformed the entrepreneurship literature thereafter, Ahl (2006) noted that entrepreneurship theory needed 'new directions' in how we explore and understand it. Many have taken up this venture (Ahl & Nelson, 2010; Baker & Welter, 2017; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Rindova, Barry, & Ketchen, 2009; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Welter, 2011; Welter et al., 2017).

However, LGBTQ+ entrepreneurship literature in general is limited (Galloway, 2011; Köllen et al., 2012; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019; Schindehutte et al., 2005) with even less research, to my knowledge, on those entrepreneurs who identify as queer outside of the mainstream sexual and gender binaries. When gender *has* been explored as a situated practice in the entrepreneurship literature, rather than as a variable, it is done so theoretically rather than through direct engagement with those who identify outside of the binary (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2004a; Henry, Foss, & Ahl, 2016).

## 1.3. Research questions & objectives

Given the above, this paper seeks to contribute to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse by understanding how queer entrepreneurs experience entrepreneurship by addressing the following questions:

- **Do queer entrepreneurs experience a normative construction of an entrepreneur?** If so, how and to what extent?
- **Do they feel the need to conform to a normative stereotype of entrepreneurship?** If so, how, to what extent, and to what end?
- **Do they have an 'ideal construction' of entrepreneurship that is more queer-inclusive?** If so, how, to what extent, and to what end?

This research aims to address these questions in generating a more inclusive entrepreneurial discourse by queering the normative construction of entrepreneurship.

'Queer' has typically been mobilised in two broad ways: as a "conceptual resource for queering heteronormativity" (Rumens, de Souza, & Brewis, 2019, p. 598) based on how it constitutes queer people as 'other' in the workplace, and as a practice that disturbs what is normal and hegemonic, such as certain economic theories of capitalism (Rumens et al., 2019). The practice of queering in this study seeks to do both.

1.3.1. This research aims to include queer people more explicitly in the entrepreneurship research, and add to the insights already generated by various authors including Schindehutte et al. (2005), Galloway (2007, 2011), Marlow et al. (2018), Rumens and Ozturk (2019), and Chin (2021). Incorporating LGBT and queer perspectives and issues is valuable to a queering exercise in a field where such representation is limited (Love, 2014; Rumens, 2016b). This will be achieved by engaging directly with entrepreneurs who identify as queer in terms of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation to understand their experiences, perceptions, and aspirations for entrepreneurship.

1.3.2. This research also aims to queer entrepreneurship by destabilising the normative boundaries that currently define entrepreneurship, as 'queer' cannot and should not be reduced simply to sex, gender or sexuality (Parker, 2002; Pullen, Thanem, Tyler, & Wallenberg, 2016b). This paper seeks to queer entrepreneurship by challenging directly the normative binaries and boundaries inherent to much of the entrepreneurship literature (Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Rumens, 2016a; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019) and refusing the academic impulse for 'disciplinary coherence' through the application of new paradigms and methodologies to a field that has historically been predominantly positivist and functionalist (Galloway et al., 2015; Goss, Jones, Betta, & Latham, 2011; Halberstam, 1998; Rindova et al., 2009; Rumens, 2018b).

## 1.4. Research approach

To contribute to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse, I have committed to being a 'rhizomatic researcher'. Informed by Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) metaphor and subsequent philosophy of the rhizome, I have actively sought within the entrepreneurship field to adopt break the habits of normalised assumptions and stretch beyond binaries (Linstead & Pullen, 2006; Ogbor, 2000). In so doing, I have developed an approach that interferes with the normativities of traditional research practice (Honan & Bright, 2016). This is aligned to and supportive of a queering exercise.

There are no prescribed methods or approaches to queering; the existence of such is antithetical to queer theory (McCann, 2016). However, queering is informed by an attitude of ongoing disruptiveness and critique, committed to engaging with difference and deconstructing normative assumptions and categories (McDonald, 2017; Parker, 2002; Pullen et al., 2016a). As such, an arts-based visual

grounded theory methodology has been used to address the research questions and objectives, the details of which are unpacked later in this paper.

My approach has been informed by the principles of Charmaz's (1996, 2006) constructivist grounded theory which acknowledges and includes contextual influences on social phenomena to better understand and explain them (Kushner & Morrow, 2003; Mruck & Mey, 2019), thus rejecting assumptions of an objective external reality or a neutral, passive researcher (Belgrave & Seide, 2019). Constructivist grounded theory is also relevant to a queering of entrepreneurship, because it invites the exploration of both old and new concepts to produce new theory that is unencumbered by pre-existing hypotheses, constructs, theories, or assumptions (Charmaz, 1996, 2006; Dougherty, 2005; Glaser, 2010; Kushner & Morrow, 2003; Thornberg & Dunne, 2019). In particular, I adopted Mey and Dietrich's (2017) visual grounded theory methodology (VGTM), understanding that visual methods are beneficial to uncovering of various perspectives and layers of meaning (Mey & Dietrich, 2017), discussing difficult topics (Pain, 2012), and empowering participants by centring their role in the research process (Hicks, 2018; Pain, 2012).

Data for the VGTM were generated through arts-based methods, specifically collage. Arts-based methods were chosen because they offer an unconventional and flexible approach to revealing, understanding and examining social phenomena beyond the experiences of individuals, to enhance our understanding of the human condition (Finley, 2008). Arts-based research is relevant to queering entrepreneurship because it is uniquely positioned for "radical, ethical, and revolutionary research that is futuristic, socially responsible, and useful in addressing social inequities" (Finley, 2008, p. 71). To produce data, I asked each participant to create a collage that reflected a queer-inclusive construction of entrepreneurship. Collage is valuable to the queering exercise, because it avoids linear and binary modes of thought and language (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Culshaw, 2019; Vaughan, 2005; Yuen, 2016) and creates open spaces for participation without instruction for fixed techniques (Dutton et al., 2019). It allows participants to intertwine different layers of knowledge and experiences, to uncover previously-hidden insights, and to better articulate linkages in ways that verbal language might not allow (Chilton & Scotti, 2014; Culshaw, 2019; Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999). Such an approach to data collection allowed for the exploration of social phenomena within entrepreneurship without being constrained by the strictures of positivist ontology (Leitch et al., 2010).

In addition to adopting an approach that confronts more traditional, linear thinking, effectively queering entrepreneurship necessitates the application of theoretical perspectives that challenge their inherent normativities. Poststructural feminism, and queer theory have informed this study.

Poststructural feminism challenges heteropatriarchal norms, and deconstructs the binaries on which they are based, rejecting essentialist notions of gender (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2004b; Calás et al., 2009). It also enables us to understand the notion of performativity, how gender is achieved through the repetition of social norms (Bruni et al., 2004b, 2004a; Butler, 2002; de Souza, 2017) and thus can be done, undone and redone (Butler, 2002). This mode of thinking applied to entrepreneurship positions it as a process, a set of repeated actions and behaviours within a given context in which the entrepreneur is not an objective reality (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Calás et al., 2009; Galloway et al., 2015; Steyaert, 2007).

Similarly, queer theory offers a way to destabilise normative categories and assumptions (Rumens et al., 2019; Wilchins, 2004) by focusing on how power is asymmetrically distributed among and within identity categories (de Souza, 2017; Rumens et al., 2019). Queer theory is fundamental to queering, as it offers a constructionist understanding of sexuality and gender (Brontsema, 2004), but it has also has been mobilised further as a deconstructive practice (Rumens et al., 2019). Queer theory is valuable to a queering of entrepreneurship because of this: it critiques the construction of identities and power and how they are understood and used (de Souza, 2017; Kelemen & Rumens, 2011). It demands fluidity, multiplicity, and experimentation, actively rejects binaries, and refuses to be absolutely defined (Browne & Nash, 2010; de Souza, 2017; Sedgwick, 1994). In so doing, queer theory facilitates the freedom to make connections across theoretical domains (Kelemen & Rumens, 2011).

## 1.5. Definitions

The word ‘queer’ appears frequently throughout this study. A polysemic term, queer has been understood and used in several ways: (i) as a noun (e.g. to describe someone as queer or to refer to an individual’s queerness); (ii) as an adjective (e.g. describing a way of thinking or doing as queer); and (iii) as a verb (e.g. to queer, to engage in queering) (Rumens et al., 2019). Often, queer is used as an umbrella term for all non-normative sexual and gender identities within the LGBTQ+ community (Love, 2014). Queer may also reflect a sexual orientation (i.e. an individual may identify specifically as queer and not some categorical sexuality) or gender identity (i.e. an individual may identify as queer instead of a normative gender identity such as ‘man’) (GLAAD, n.d.). For many, queer may refer to a general resistance to categorisation (GLAAD, n.d.). With various other definitions and understandings in popular culture, the reality is that there is no single way to define ‘queer’.

However, to make this paper easier to navigate, I will clarify how it has been used. I understand that queer is still a slur for some, given its historical and even current pejorative and oppressive associations

(Walks, 2014). The intention in this paper is not to perpetuate harm, but rather to reclaim queerness as a way to confront categorisation and conformity, and as a source of identity, solidarity, and pride (Brontsema, 2004; de Souza, 2017; Walks, 2014).

In this paper, queer has been used as a descriptor for individuals whose expressions of identity stretch beyond the heteronormative matrix (Rasmussen, 2017), i.e. heterosexual and cisgender. Using queer as a descriptor is "both nonspecific and totally defining" (Morrish & O'Mara, 2011, p. 982) in that it avoids the reproduction of essentialist notions of gender or sexuality to give participants the freedom to show up as queer, however that looks for each of them (de Souza, Brewis, & Rumens, 2016; Pullen et al., 2016b) while still offering some kind of all-encompassing (yet still anticategorical thereafter) umbrella term for those with nonnormative identities (McDonald, 2017; Morrish & O'Mara, 2011; Renn, 2010). Queer may also refer to the broader community to which these individuals belong, unified by such identities. It also, by extension, is used as an adjective or verb to describe these individuals' behaviours, attitudes, perspectives, and approaches to doing business. In some respects, queer has also been used as a theoretical analytic to refer more broadly to the scrutinisation and destabilisation of deeply-engrained normative constructs (Rasmussen, 2017) to reveal and promulgate alternative interpretations of discourse, illuminating parts of history that have been ignored, silenced, and/or erased to generate new discursive possibilities (Love, 2014; Rasmussen, 2017). The irony of using queer as a category to reflect a variety of identities, actions, and outlooks is not lost on me, but unfortunately is necessary to understanding throughout this paper.

## 1.6. Structure of this paper

This paper is structured as follows. **Chapter II** presents a review of the current literature on entrepreneurship. This chapter that is divided into three parts, each with a distinct discussion of the relevant literature: (1) An introduction to entrepreneurship that briefly unpacks who the entrepreneur is, how and why people engage in entrepreneurship, what entrepreneurship is, and the role of the stereotype as heuristic; (2) the normative construction of entrepreneurship; and (3) alternative constructions of entrepreneurship. **Chapter III** discusses the theoretical perspectives that were applied in understanding how queer entrepreneurs experience and respond to the normative construction of entrepreneurship, namely poststructural feminism, and queer theory. **Chapter IV** discusses the methodology used in this research, including data collection, ethical considerations, and analysis. **Chapter V** contains the findings of the research, including their relationships and potential contributions to the extant literature. The chapter discusses (1) queer entrepreneurs' experiences of the

normative construction and ‘queer construction’ of entrepreneurship; and (2) ingredients, impediments, and implications & interventions for realising this queer construction. **Chapter VI** presents the discussion of these findings and conclusions, including the contribution of this study to the literature, its limitations, and implications for future research.

# Chapter II: Literature review

This chapter unpacks the key theories, arguments, and recommendations in the literature that are relevant to understanding how entrepreneurship is constructed, experienced, and studied. This is to support my endeavour to understand how queer entrepreneurs experience entrepreneurship to contribute to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse.

This review develops an understanding of key themes across three sections: (1) Briefly introducing entrepreneurship; (2) Establishing the normative construction of entrepreneurship and the challenges raised against it; (3) Discussing alternative constructions of entrepreneurship that aim to address these challenges.

## 2.1. An introduction to entrepreneurship

Historically, the entrepreneurship scholarship was driven by a desire to understand and promote entrepreneurship's role as an engine for growth and wealth creation – and much of the recent literature still emphasises the economic value of entrepreneurship in today's social systems (Donnellon et al., 2014; Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014; Karabey, 2012). The products of such research are varied, with papers exploring a broad range of topics within entrepreneurship, including entrepreneurial characteristics, behaviours, and intentions; leadership; identity; and the relationship between gender and entrepreneurship (Bird & Brush, 2002; Donnellon et al., 2014; Esfandiar et al., 2019; Foss, 2010; Fuller et al., 2018; Galloway et al., 2015; Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014; Karabey, 2012; Langowitz & Minniti, 2007). The scholarship has demonstrated the value of entrepreneurship. It is however faced with the simultaneous challenge (and, as discussed later in this chapter, opportunity) of lacking a singular, universal understanding of what comprises entrepreneurship.

There is a variety of definitions and conceptualisations of entrepreneurship in the literature; this is perhaps the greatest challenge to the study of entrepreneurship (Bird & Brush, 2002; Bruni et al., 2004b; Galloway et al., 2015; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009; Ogbor, 2000; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Welter et al., 2017). To simplify navigation, I have grouped these definitions and conceptualisations into the following categories: (1) Who is the entrepreneur; (2) how and why people engage in entrepreneurship; (3) what entrepreneurship is; and (4) how these conceptualisations become the norm.

### 2.1.1. WHO IS THE ENTREPRENEUR?

The entrepreneur is typically characterised as someone with initiative, authority, or foresight (Schumpeter, 1934) who is able to see into and predict the future and act on those predictions (Ogbor, 2000). This is an individual with a capacity for creativity and/or innovation, who notices gaps to create new markets and develop new goods and services, ways of organising, markets, processes, and using raw materials in ways that didn't exist in the past (Bird & Brush, 2002; Bruni et al., 2004a; de Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2006; McAdam & Marlow, 2007). The entrepreneur challenges the institutional norm, identifies information asymmetries or opportunities, and takes advantage of them in ways that others may not (de Bruin et al., 2006; Hashi & Krasniqi, 2011; Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; McAdam & Marlow, 2007; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Thomas & Mueller, 2000). They are able to perceive and execute on what is believed as improbable; they pursue opportunities despite the awareness of obstacles, risks, or setbacks (Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). To some, this entrepreneur – belonging to a distinct social class (Bird & Brush, 2002) – is an individual bestowed with superior intellect and the determination to deliver on it (Bruni et al., 2004a).

It is broadly accepted that these individuals play a critical role in fostering economic growth and job creation (Fuller et al., 2018) due to their ability to respond quickly to market shocks, such as changes in demand, technology, demography, regulations, or the business environment (Hashi & Krasniqi, 2011). While some argue that an entrepreneur is anyone who creates or owns a business, and/or increases its productive capacity (McClelland, 2016 [1961]) in this regard, others including Schumpeter (1934) and Kirzner (1973) have argued that the entrepreneur is distinct from the 'capitalist', industrialist, financier, or hired manager.

Various critiques have emerged in relation to the above, which are discussed in more depth in Sections 2.2 and 2.3. Such critiques are focused primarily on the continual "methodological individualism" (Steyaert, 2007, p. 456) of such thinking that is perpetuated through functionalist and positivist ontologies (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Calás et al., 2009; Packard, 2017).

### 2.1.2. HOW AND WHY DO PEOPLE ENGAGE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

It has been widely agreed that entrepreneurship is driven by a growth orientation and profit maximisation incentive that encourages the creation of new businesses (Bird & Brush, 2002; Galloway et al., 2015; Shinnar, Giacomin, & Janssen, 2012). The entrepreneurial process has been understood as strategically and competitively focused, based on belief in the value of resources, efficiencies related to the pursuit of some opportunities over others, and economic successes based on taking advantage

of said opportunities (Bird & Brush, 2002; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Shinnar et al., 2012). It is widely accepted that entrepreneurial pursuits are informed primarily by 'rational' economic motivations, where wealth creation is understood to be the ultimate goal of entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006; Galloway et al., 2015; Rindova et al., 2009; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

Many authors have challenged such perspectives, however, noting that a narrow focus on purely economic motivations does not reflect the social and contextual dynamics of entrepreneurship and the value that it creates beyond profit (Calás et al., 2009; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Galloway et al., 2015; Rajasinghe et al., 2021; Welter et al., 2017). These critiques are discussed in more detail in the following sub-section, as well as Sections 2.2 and 2.3.

### 2.1.3. What is entrepreneurship?

Research has long recognised entrepreneurship as a critical driver of job creation, income generation, and economic growth (Baker & Welter, 2017; Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Karabey, 2012; Thomas & Mueller, 2000). However, some scholars believe that *how* these objectives are achieved has varied over time; there are many forms of entrepreneurial activities and economic contexts that shape the process (Cavallo, Ghezzi, & Balocco, 2019; Welter, 2011; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019).

The most common and longstanding understanding of entrepreneurship relates to business creation and commercial growth (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Bruni et al., 2004b; Galloway et al., 2015). Entrepreneurship is believed to stimulate the formation and expansion of new or existing firms, and can also pertain to business ownership (Galloway et al., 2015; Thomas & Mueller, 2000). It has however been noted that entrepreneurship does not necessarily have to involve the creation of *new* organisations, but can also take place within *existing* organisations (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). With this understanding, entrepreneurship involves allocating resources to efficient and profitable opportunities, organising business routines and operations, and resource planning to create goods and services (Baker & Welter, 2020; Piano, 2020). Based on the above arguments, entrepreneurship has traditionally been positioned as an economic phenomenon (Calás et al., 2009; Rindova et al., 2009).

Entrepreneurship has also been characterised as a process through which new (economic) value is created through innovation and creativity (Esfandiar et al., 2019; Rindova et al., 2009). Innovation is typically a core component of entrepreneurship; in some cases, innovation is recognised as *the* defining feature of entrepreneurial activity (Bruni et al., 2004a; Thomas & Mueller, 2000). This is most often attributed to Schumpeter's seminal publications on the matter (Hashi & Krasniqi, 2011; Ogbor, 2000;

Rindova et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial innovation entails the creation of value not by creating something new *ab initio*, but rather by introducing product combinations and features, processes, arrangements, or markets in ways that have not previously existed (Hashi & Krasniqi, 2011; Ogbor, 2000). Steyaert and Katz (2004) describe this as, "reorganising the established and crafting the new across a broad range of settings and spaces" (p.182). Entrepreneurship, in this case, is a means through which to enhance productivity, stimulate market diversification, and promote economic development through innovation (Esfandiar et al., 2019).

There are many more interpretations of and approaches to understanding entrepreneurship in the literature. This "hodgepodge" (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 217) represents "the desire to identify with precision something whose presence is undoubtedly sensed, but which lends itself superficially only to vague definition" (Kirzner, 1973, p. 31). In fact, for some, there is no such thing as a single entrepreneurship field, but rather a vast and unknown topography yet to be explored (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017; Guercini & Cova, 2018; Johannisson, 2011).

An underlying principle of many of these interpretations is that entrepreneurship is a facilitator of "opportunistic individualism" (Ahl & Marlow, 2012, p. 544) through which people are able to realise their individual entrepreneurial potential. In much of the literature, entrepreneurship is characterised as an open and inclusive pursuit, free from entry barriers and institutional constraints, such that anyone is able to discover and act on their own entrepreneurial capability through effort and determination (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). It is positioned as a neutral and accessible means through which individuals are free to realise their socioeconomic potential (Marlow & McAdam, 2015). Due to this emancipatory characteristic (Marlow & McAdam, 2015; Rindova et al., 2009), entrepreneurship is often celebrated as a way to foster greater social welfare and equality as it enables individuals to overcome the structural inequalities they face in the employment market (Esfandiar et al., 2019; Galloway et al., 2015). As such, entrepreneurship is recognised for its contributions not only to economic growth, but also to social development (Steyaert & Katz, 2004).

Several authors have contested this 'neutral' accessibility of entrepreneurship for failing to account for individuals' contexts and social ascriptions, such as race, class, or gender (Bruni et al., 2004b; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019). Critiques have also emerged around how entrepreneurship is understood as a particular event, outcome, or series of events, rather than as a complex, socially emergent and ongoing process that is a product of the various sociocultural environments and contexts in which it is embedded (Baker & Welter, 2017; Brush, Edelman, Manolova, & Welter, 2019; Díaz-García & Welter, 2011a; Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe et al., 2021; Welter, 2011; Welter et al., 2017; Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016). Such concerns are unpacked further in Sections 2.2 and 2.3.

### 2.1.4. How these conceptualisations become the norm

While there appears to be a 'generally accepted' understanding of who the entrepreneur is, how and why entrepreneurship is pursued, and what entrepreneurship comprises, many have questioned such conceptualisations for a variety of reasons. These challenges are addressed in detail in the sections that follow. It is however valuable to discuss *why* such 'generally accepted' conceptualisations may have become so widely adopted in the mainstream. Doing so enables us to understand how to address them more effectively to promote a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurship discourse.

It has been argued that entrepreneurship theory has become narrow and individualised, focused on isolated occurrences and outcomes rather than processes (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017; Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe et al., 2021). This has been attributed by several authors to the "methodological individualism" (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017, p. 268) and the dominance of positivist, functionalist, and objectivist paradigms within entrepreneurship research (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017; Javadian, Dobratz, Gupta, Gupta, & Martin, 2020; Marlow, 2020; Packard, 2017). This approach has been criticised for limiting entrepreneurship to finite variables through a focus on the generalisability and codification of theories, models, methods, and measures (Leitch et al., 2010; Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe et al., 2021). Certain definitions, methodologies, and research problems are thus normalised over others (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009; Ogbor, 2000).

As a result, much of the historical literature has perpetuated a stereotypical characterisation of the entrepreneur (Wood et al., 2012) that is also then reinforced in mainstream media representations (Anderson & Warren, 2011; Aparicio, Urbano, & Stenholm, 2021; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2019). It has been well-documented that these stereotypes of the entrepreneur have come to dominate the academic and popular discourse such that what is understood and 'expected' about entrepreneurs continues to be based largely on a narrow set of individuals, traits, attributes, and activities (Down, 2006; Gupta, Turban, Wasti, & Sikdar, 2009; Harrison et al., 2015; Henry, Foss, Fayolle, Walker, & Duffy, 2015; Kašperová & Kitching, 2014; Marlow & McAdam, 2012; Ogbor, 2000; Werthes, Mauer, & Brettel, 2018; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017).

## 2.2. The normative construction of entrepreneurship

In this paper, I will refer to the stereotypical characterisation of the entrepreneur as the 'normative construction'. The normative construction of entrepreneurship and the challenges raised against it have typically been unpacked through three key dimensions. These dimensions are unpacked in the sections that follow as: (1) a Western, neoliberal idealisation; (2) pervasive masculinity and heteronormativity;

(3) an elevation of whiteness that fails to account for the variety and intersections of social identity markers. The implications of such dimensions are also discussed.

### 2.2.1. A Western, neoliberal idealisation

Entrepreneurship has often been characterised as the ideal embodiment of a neoliberal ideology: it enables individuals to realise their potential for innovation and pursue freedom, self-interest, autonomy and agency, self-invention, personal improvement, and independence from organisational and institutional constraints (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Block, 2018; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Marlow, 2020). As a result of this "instrumental rationality" (Guercini & Cova, 2018, p. 388) that has dominated the global economic discourse for decades (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Marlow, 2020), the entrepreneurship field has historically focused on understanding the individual entrepreneur (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

The entrepreneurship scholarship accordingly maintains a "methodological individualism" (Steyaert, 2007, p. 456), perpetuating the assumption that entrepreneurs exist *a priori* and can be identified through their behaviours and the actions they take (Calás et al., 2009; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Through this lens, entrepreneurship is posited as a critical manifestation of the self, where differences in entrepreneurship are shaped by intrinsic individual differences (Block, 2018; Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Marlow, 2020; Steyaert, 2007). Such differences include a higher capacity for innovation (Bruni et al., 2004a), reduced susceptibility to inaction and decision inertia (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), greater self-efficacy and a high need for achievement (Lewis et al., 2016), and a more positive attitude towards risk and change (McAdam & Marlow, 2007). Significant resources have been dedicated to investigating this entrepreneurial profile – intentions, motivations, identities, characteristics, behaviours – and thus, to distinguishing entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs (Fuller et al., 2018; Hsu et al., 2019; Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Ripsas, 1998; Schumpeter, 1934; Shinnar et al., 2014; Smallbone & Welter, 2006; Thomas & Mueller, 2000; Thornton, 1999; Ulhøi, 2005).

It has been argued that this focus on individualism, rooted in neoliberal ideology, has produced a construction of the entrepreneur in which their role is fundamentally to create new economic value (Block, 2018; Kirzner, 1973; Marlow, 2020) and where entrepreneurial success is measured based on profit-maximisation and individual wealth creation (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Block, 2018; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Marlow, 2020). Some authors have suggested that this has translated to research that is predisposed towards high-tech, highly innovative, high-growth entrepreneurial ventures to the exclusion of other sectors and individuals (Calás et al., 2009; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Foss, 2010;

Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Welter et al., 2017). Further, this idealisation of entrepreneurship as an individualistic pursuit is said to reflect a culture of achievement that is celebrated in Western societies, where work and productivity are perceived as core to social life (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2005; Hwang & Powell, 2005; Thomas & Mueller, 2000). As a result, the vast majority of entrepreneurship research is Western-centric (Brush & Cooper, 2012).

Several issues have been raised against this construction. Firstly, some have criticised it as "individualist reductionism" (Steyaert, 2007, p. 472) that limits entrepreneurship to narrow representations of entrepreneurs, and overestimates the role of individuals' internal factors on their entrepreneurial capabilities (Welter, 2011; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). A second criticism arises as a result. Some argue that this characterisation of entrepreneurship is limits entrepreneurship to narrow definitions of success and what does or doesn't constitute entrepreneurship based on Western constructs that give precedence to economic value creation (Welter, 2011; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). Such a construction conceals the contextual dynamics and range of value that it may create for individuals and communities beyond economics (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009; Thomas & Mueller, 2000; Waddock, 2020). Thirdly, the current construction of entrepreneurship – typically presented as universal and neutral – is faulted for its lack of representation of the knowledge and experience of those who live outside of hegemonic Western institutions, thus reinforcing Western scholars' own bases of privilege (Calás et al., 2009; Dy, 2020; Galloway et al., 2015; Maalaoui et al., 2020; Rindova et al., 2009; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). The claim that entrepreneurship is an accessible and inclusive field of opportunity for all is thus challenged due to the culturally biased narrative from which it arises (Dy, 2020; Marlow, 2020).

Authors have consequently called for a move away from the assumption of entrepreneurship as a property of the individual to ensure its applicability and relevance in society (Galloway et al., 2015; Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe et al., 2021). Many have advocated for, and made alternative suggestions to, a paradigm shift within entrepreneurship that explicitly decolonises the construct to focus on developing theories of entrepreneurship based on and tailored to the Global South and non-Western entrepreneurial contexts (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019). Facilitating this shift helps evolve of the normative construction of entrepreneurship in service of greater inclusivity, as it requires engagement with those that fall outside of the neoliberal norm (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019).

### 2.2.2. PERVASIVE MASCULINITY & HETERONORMATIVITY

The dominance of a Western construction of entrepreneurship has also generated theory that is gendered (Ahl, 2006; Henry et al., 2016; Marlow, 2020). The entrepreneurial discourse has been described as "fundamentally masculine" (Ahl & Marlow, 2012, p. 544): the normative entrepreneur is male and masculine characteristics are consistently elevated over femininity (Bendell et al., 2019; Berglund et al., 2017; Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2017; Galloway et al., 2015; Marlow, 2020). This has been observed in the entrepreneur being characterised as heroic, assertive, risk-taking, and high-achieving – traits described as typically masculine, as opposed to feminine traits such as 'kind', 'gentle' or 'shy' (Laguía, García-Ael, Wach, & Moriano, 2019; Marlow, 2014, 2020).

Some have suggested that this masculinisation of entrepreneurship is simply a product of the cultural norm in which masculine traits have historically been privileged over those that are considered feminine (Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2017; Ogbor, 2000). Others have argued that, while true, this gender order and related gender role stereotypes are actively reproduced in organisational contexts (Galloway et al., 2015; Marlow, 2020; Ogbor, 2000; Orser, Elliott, & Leck, 2011). In some cases, researchers have even ventured to intertwine entrepreneurship with patriarchy, suggesting that entrepreneurship is simply an expansion of male power from the domestic realm into the productive one (Bruni et al., 2004a). The consequence of such is that women have been 'encouraged' to reproduce certain 'gender-neutral' behaviours and traits to gain entrepreneurial legitimacy (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Bendell et al., 2019). However, many authors have acknowledged that such 'neutrality' is effectively a duplication of male behaviours and traits (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Bruni et al., 2004a; Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Marlow & McAdam, 2015), because, historically, entrepreneurship has been understood by studying male entrepreneurs using male-gendered measuring instruments, assuming that their female counterparts comprise a minority (Henry et al., 2016; Marlow, 2020).

Even though both masculine and feminine traits are recognised as critical to commercially viable entrepreneurial pursuits, many have argued that the latter appear to have been disregarded in the literature (Bird & Brush, 2002). Alternatives to the idealised masculine construction of entrepreneurship have often been described as 'other' (Galloway et al., 2015; Marlow, 2020; Marlow et al., 2018). This gendering of entrepreneurship is consistently reproduced through the use of a qualifier – 'women entrepreneurs' – while men are simply referred to as entrepreneurs (Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). These stereotypes have been found to adversely affect the development of women in entrepreneurship, as they are presumed to be deficient or weak, and so require 'fixing' (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Marlow, 2020). Additionally, these stereotypes appear to limit women's ability to access the economic capital required to become successful entrepreneurs (Shinnar et al., 2012). Such

stereotypes may even inhibit women's entrepreneurial intentions and entry into the field, as they perceive the environment to be unsuitable, full of insurmountable economic and social barriers (Bruni et al., 2004b; Gupta, Turban, & Bhawe, 2008; Mirchandani, 1999; Shinnar et al., 2012). Consequently, women have not featured within the normative construction of the entrepreneur or entrepreneurship – which continues to perpetuate the gendered ordering in which women are subordinate to men (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Foss, 2010).

Another subordinating challenge that is pervasive in the historical literature is that of heteronormativity (Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Marlow & McAdam, 2012). Heteronormativity reflects patriarchal hierarchies of power and assumptions of male privilege (Rasmussen, 2017), the challenges of which are described above. Alongside this, despite the growing recognition of the complexity of gender, heteronormativity dominates the entrepreneurship discourse such that when gender *is* examined, it is treated as coterminous with femininity or women (Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018). Further still, heteronormativity prescribes 'acceptable' sexualities (Rasmussen, 2017). The pervasiveness of heteronormativity in the entrepreneurship literature thus legitimatises and entrenches heterosexuality and the proliferation of a gender binary as 'normal', to the extent that they have rarely been acknowledged within entrepreneurship research (Giddings & Pringle, 2011; Kerpen & Marston, 2019; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019). In so doing, heteronormativity positions other sexual orientations and gender identities as 'abnormal' or in deficit relative to the masculine norm (Rumens, 2016a; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019) and thus arguably maintains and reproduces prejudice against those that do not 'fit' into the heteronormative binary (Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Rumens, 2016a; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019). This translates to entrepreneurship in practice, where it has been understood to manifest in homophobic investors, unfair discrimination by customers and suppliers, and overall societal prejudice towards LGBT and queer entrepreneurs (Rumens & Ozturk, 2019). Heteronormativity has thus been acknowledged as a key contributor to the current gap in research on LGBT+ entrepreneurship (Marlow et al., 2018; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019).

The existing literature largely reinforces the established male/female dichotomy in which masculinity is favoured and heteronormativity assumed, such that heterosexual men and masculinity are positioned as core to the normative construction of entrepreneurship (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Marlow & McAdam, 2012; Ogbor, 2000). This reinforces patriarchal 'competitive advantage' and hegemonic masculinity to the disadvantage of those outside of it (Bruni et al., 2005; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017), including queer entrepreneurs. Queering the normative construction of entrepreneurship so that it is more inclusive of queer entrepreneurs thus requires that the underlying assumptions of masculinity and heteronormativity within entrepreneurship are challenged. Feminist and queer modes of analysis

enable this (Marlow, 2020; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019) and will be discussed further in Chapter III: Theoretical framing.

### 2.2.3. THE SUPREMACY OF WHITENESS

The application of feminism and queer theory to the entrepreneurship field has generated valuable insights into the prevalence of gendered, and, to a lesser extent, sexual hierarchies within entrepreneurship (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019). However, many have observed that power dynamics beyond these have largely been left unexamined, such that there is an 'invisible' assumption within the literature that the entrepreneur is white (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Holvino, 2010; Marlow, 2014).

This assumption of whiteness is not exclusive to the entrepreneurship field but is a problem within broader economic sociological theorising (Garbes & Hirschman, 2020). The modern global economy, dominated by neoliberalism and affirmations of meritocracy and individual agency (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019), is "a fundamentally racialised institution" (Garbes & Hirschman, 2020, p. 1). With racism fundamentally sewn in our socioeconomic institutions, whiteness serves as a 'credential' in the labour market more generally and thus in entrepreneurship (Dy, 2020; Garbes & Hirschman, 2020). As such, the normative construction of the entrepreneur is not only Western, male, and straight, but also white (Dy, 2020).

Whiteness is so embedded in the normative construction of entrepreneurship that racial and ethnic minorities continue to be underrepresented, even in research that accounts for [heteronormative] gender bias (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Minniti, 2009). This has been described as a "whitewash dilemma" (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1995, p. 24) in which white middle-class women are used as the normative mould in gendered analyses of entrepreneurship, with their experiences being extrapolated to all women (Ahl, 2002; Holvino, 2010; Marlow, 2014). As such, recognition of and theorising about the contributions of women of colour to entrepreneurship have been limited (Holvino, 2010). Additionally, research shoes that white women who have pursued entrepreneurial opportunities have been able to do so to the disadvantage of the women who have looked after their homes and children – typically, women of colour (Holvino, 2010). This, among many other reasons, contributes to the reality that racialised non-white women are consistently among the most economically, socially, and politically disadvantaged groups globally (Dy, 2020).

The tendency to build theory from white, Western experiences maintains the hegemonic assumptions of hierarchy, meritocracy, and individualism that reproduce the norm to the exclusion of anyone that

exists outside of it (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Holvino, 2010; Scott et al., 2012; Westhead & Solesvik, 2016). Such normalisation demands the interrogation and critique of the assumption that all entrepreneurs have equal access to resources, participation, support, and opportunities to succeed (Maalaoui et al., 2020). Scholars are thus increasingly advocating for intersectionality, diversity, and representation to address the inequality within entrepreneurship theory (Harrison et al., 2015; Knight, 2016). This has direct implications for the queering of normative construction of entrepreneurship. A queering of entrepreneurship must challenge and deconstruct assumptions of whiteness and account for the imposition of white, Western stereotypes on non-white, non-Western individuals (Langevang, Gough, Yankson, Owusu, & Osei, 2015; Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015; Risman, 2004).

### 2.2.4. The normative construction: Summary & implications

The normative construction of the entrepreneur, and by extension entrepreneurship, has been characterised above as being dominated by a Western neoliberal ideology as well maleness, masculinity, heteronormativity, and whiteness. These 'attributes' of the entrepreneur have been widely acknowledged – and criticised – as perpetuating a norm that is not representative of most entrepreneurs (Dyer, 2015; Thornton, 1999; Welter et al., 2017; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). Any investigations into the entrepreneur as a homogenous character, while providing a platform for statistical analysis, are thus limited in their explanatory value as they fail to address embedded structures of inequality such as race, ethnicity, class, and income (Down, 2006; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015; Welter et al., 2017). Many have agreed that the normative construction undermines the legitimacy of entrepreneurship research and the role entrepreneurship can play as a force for economic and social development (Ahl & Nelson, 2010; Calás et al., 2009; Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014; Shinnar et al., 2012; Thomas & Mueller, 2000), and therefore is not adequate or appropriate for developing inclusive policy, education, or research (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Marlow, 2020; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019)

As such, many have argued for the expansion of the normative construction of entrepreneurship in the literature to account for non-normative attributes and a diversity of cultures, contexts, and nuances (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Welter et al., 2017). This means generating research that seeks to include and understand those that are typically excluded from the norm, including gay, bisexual, and trans entrepreneurs (Rumens & Ozturk, 2019), people of colour (Dy, 2020; Martinez Dy et al., 2018) and other "disadvantaged entrepreneurs" (Maalaoui et al., 2020, p. 663). However, such a research exercise must not only acknowledge the challenges faced by these entrepreneurs, including economic,

sociocultural, cognitive, and physical and emotional challenges, but also offer pathways to addressing them (Maalaoui et al., 2020; Marlow, 2020). Further, it must challenge outdated, irrelevant and/or exclusionary ideologies, assumptions, and stereotypes and incorporate paradigms that advance debates and theory development (Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe et al., 2021; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019). It is the aim of this study to do so, by understanding the multidimensional perspectives and experiences of queer entrepreneurs.

## 2.3. Re-constructing entrepreneurship

A broader appreciation of entrepreneurship has emerged to challenge the normative construction of entrepreneurship that has emerged as a product of realist ontologies and positivist epistemologies (Galloway et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2016; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). Interpretivism and social constructionism are increasingly suggested as means by which to shift the study of entrepreneurship from one of almost exclusively economic interest based on privileged and exclusionary assumptions, to one that considers broader social influences and implications (Calás et al., 2009; Galloway et al., 2015; Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe et al., 2021; Welter et al., 2017; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). Through these approaches, entrepreneurship is understood as a chorus of diverse activities and behaviours, unpacked through the lenses of psychology, sociology, anthropology, politics, economics, and management (Calás et al., 2009; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Ulhøi, 2005; Welter et al., 2017).

Understanding entrepreneurship as a "heterogeneous, blooming, messy, and a sometimes glorious" (Welter et al., 2017, p. 316) range of entrepreneurships, various authors have offered expansive constructions of entrepreneurship beyond the norm. It is impossible to know of, let alone absorb and apply, the vast expanse of alternative approaches to understanding entrepreneurship. For the purposes of this project, I have delineated three groupings below that I believe are valuable to answering the research questions due to their respective challenge to the normative construction of entrepreneurship, the details of which are discussed in Table 1.

### 2.3.1. A socially situated practice

Schumpeter's (1934) seminal work on entrepreneurship has formed the basis for much entrepreneurship research, achieving an 'orthodoxy' status as a result (Dodd, 2002; Goss, 2005; Ripsas, 1998). However, most of the scholarly attention has been focused on Schumpeter's discussion of profits, technological innovation, and the value of individual will in performing creative destruction

– with little attention paid to his sociological theorising (Anderson & Warren, 2011). Authors have argued that re-reading Schumpeter's work through this lens can expand our understanding of entrepreneurship so that it isn't focused solely on individual will, but also accounts for how an individual's will is shaped within a certain social context (Goss, 2005):

> It is society that shapes the particular desires we observe; that wants must be taken with reference to the group which the individual thinks of when deciding his course of action (Schumpeter, 1934, p. 123).

An appreciation of context has largely been missing from the historical literature (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017). There is however growing appreciation that entrepreneurship is a socially situated practice: a unique sequence of events, reflections and characteristics produced from the various social, institutional, and spatial contexts in which it is embedded (Cavallo et al., 2019; Welter, 2011; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019). This perspective has shifted how entrepreneurship is studied from the dominant approach focused on scientifically replicable, acontextual or super-contextual 'general laws', to an approach that recognises that entrepreneurial projects are performed by individuals – in their singular or collective capacity – as a response to and product of their environments (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Fletcher, 2011; Hjorth et al., 2008; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019). Just as new business ventures or entrepreneurial innovations may emerge from their contexts, the lack thereof is also contextually emergent (Baker & Welter, 2017; Smallbone & Welter, 2006).

Social context accounts for individual identities, experiences, and circumstances, and considers the ways in which the feasibility, accessibility, or social appeal of entrepreneurship are affected (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Welter et al., 2017; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019). This invites the discovery and exploration of a vast range of entrepreneurships beyond the narrow norm (Welter et al., 2017). A society's norms, which includes its inherent cultural values and expectations (Esfandiar et al., 2019), can have can influence the desirability of entrepreneurship and the propensity of individuals to pursue it, through differences in social attitudes to risk-taking, uncertainty and rewards (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Antonacopoulou & Fuller, 2019; Cavallo et al., 2019; Esfandiar et al., 2019). With social norms differing across and even within cultures, it is plausible to expect that such desirability and propensity may vary based on different contexts (Esfandiar et al., 2019) which can stimulate entrepreneurship or inhibit it (Maalaoui et al., 2020; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial activities are thus products of an entrepreneurship ecosystem comprising multiple mutually-reinforcing elements, and are reliant on environments that nourish the basic foundations of entrepreneurship (Brush et al., 2019; Cavallo et al., 2019). Crucially, this highlights that, contrary to

what has been postulated in much of the historical research, entrepreneurship is not a product of the individual but rather of the society in which the individual lives (Davidsson, 2016, 2017). Context thus helps explain that non-entrepreneurs are not necessarily lacking in entrepreneurial proclivity, but rather that the contexts in which they are embedded simply may not foster entrepreneurship (Baker & Welter, 2017; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Smallbone & Welter, 2006; Welter et al., 2017).

This is why acknowledging context is important: it fosters appreciation of complex social dynamics in the present and mitigates the proliferation of the exclusionary dynamics that are intrinsic to the normative construction (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Welter, 2011). Context is thus crucial to answering the research questions, as it frames how and why individuals who don't 'fit' into the normative construction of entrepreneurship may generate their own entrepreneurships.

Yet, the extant literature "has been remarkably unable to speak about context" (Hjorth et al., 2008, p. 81). Historically this may not have been conscious due to the legacy of academia, but a continued lack of accounting for the role of context in entrepreneurship is arguably a reinforcement of the barriers to inclusion of and access for those that may not fit into the normative construction of entrepreneurship by those in whose interests it is to keep the field closed (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). More recently, researchers have hinted at the inclusion of contextual factors and their influence over entrepreneurship, but such inclusion has been criticised for being superficial, symbolic, and nebulous, undermining the very knowledge construction it seeks to achieve (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Hjorth et al., 2008). The contextualisation of entrepreneurship is essential to queering entrepreneurship to be more inclusive of queer entrepreneurs, as it expands entrepreneurship to account for marginalised identities and experiences (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019).

However, the historical entrepreneurship literature is not only criticised for not accounting meaningfully for context as a *variable* – looking at the structural and positional characteristics of the individual entrepreneur, such as race, gender, class, and physical (dis)ability – but also for the contingent and contestable nature of entrepreneurship itself within its varying contexts (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Hjorth et al., 2008; Ulhøi, 2005; Welter, 2011). A critical shift in the entrepreneurship field has considered context as a *lens* through which to view the field of entrepreneurship (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017).

Unpacking context as a lens ensures that we are actively and acutely aware of the context-dependent nature of entrepreneurship, as well as the knowledge thereof and the methods used to generate such knowledge (Hjorth et al., 2008; Welter, 2011). It invites researchers to understand the perceptions and experiences of entrepreneurship beyond the normative construction – such as queer entrepreneurship

– acknowledges the inherent social situatedness of entrepreneurship, and prompts critical discussion around it and the methods we use to assess it (Fletcher, 2011). It forces researchers to challenge the homogeneity of entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon as well as that of entrepreneurship research – and so confront the reinforcement of homogenous knowledge structures and methodologies (Baker & Welter, 2017; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017).

Incorporating context as both a variable within and a lens through which to understand entrepreneurship facilitates the democratisation of entrepreneurship as an all-inclusive social activity so that it isn't owned narrowly by economics, but by society (Hjorth et al., 2008). It enhances our broader understanding of the richness and variety of entrepreneurship within and across contexts and conditions, while also demonstrating the influence of different structural factors on entrepreneurship at the micro-level (Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019). Understanding that entrepreneurship is socially situated enables practitioners and researchers to identify and address embedded structures of inequality such as race, ethnicity, class, and income (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Dy, 2020; Maalaoui et al., 2020; Welter et al., 2017) and lean into the capacity of entrepreneurship to fundamentally transform the context from which it has emerged as a force for economic and social development (Ahl & Nelson, 2010; Calás et al., 2009; Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014; Shinnar et al., 2012; Thomas & Mueller, 2000). This is valuable to answering the research questions, as it promotes an awareness and understanding of the various layers of context that may have shaped participants' experiences as queer entrepreneurs – and thus provides a foundation on which to queer entrepreneurship.

### 2.3.2. A PROCESS

In a challenge to the normative construction, entrepreneurship has also been understood as a process that emerges from interactions between prospective entrepreneurs and their contexts (Hjorth, Holt, & Steyaert, 2015). The processual nature of entrepreneurship has been explored by various authors (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Calás et al., 2009; Galloway et al., 2015; Garcia-Lorenzo, Donnelly, Sell-Trujillo, & Imas, 2018; Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert, 2007; Thompson, Verduijn, & Gartner, 2020) and has been characterised as "boundary work" (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009, p. 29). This comprises the identification, questioning, and even destruction of institutional structures and norms in such a way that it simultaneously belongs to and deviates from established expectations of entrepreneurship within a given setting (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009). Such a perspective is valuable to the queering of the normative construction of entrepreneurship.

Understanding entrepreneurship as a process requires a brief discussion of process studies sans the entrepreneurship lens. Process thinking, philosophically speaking, offers a way to think about individuals, organisations, and institutions in terms of ongoing transformation and emergence (Hjorth et al., 2015; Nayak & Chia, 2011). It asserts that individuals are not discrete entities that are spatially isolated from the contexts in which they are embedded; rather, every individual is "a socio-cultural nexus of historically shaped relationships" (Nayak & Chia, 2011, p. 283); people are acted on by social processes rather than acting (Goss, 2005). Process philosophy thus rejects the assumption that processes themselves are secondary processes of primary objects (Nayak & Chia, 2011). Instead, processes are understood as both drivers of and emergent from patterns of change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). From this perspective, becoming, difference, and time and temporality take primacy over being, self-identity, and simple spatial location, respectively (Nayak & Chia, 2011; Steyaert, 2007), and change is accepted as a normal condition of life (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Processes thus recognise and celebrate ceaseless change, contingency, complexity, creativity, and emergence as fundamental to organisational life (Nayak & Chia, 2011; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002): "[T]o study processually is to consider the world as restless, something underway, becoming and perishing, without end" (Hjorth et al., 2015, p. 599).

Firms and, by extension, entrepreneurship can be understood within this paradigm. Just as

> people grow, develop and decay; products emerge through the transformation of various materials, and in use are exposed to wear and tear; initiatives become programmes and then anachronisms; markets are animated encounters of face-to-face or algorithm-to-algorithm exchange (Hjorth et al., 2015, p. 602)

so does entrepreneurship exist as something continually changing, and so must be studied as in process (Hjorth et al., 2015). This necessitates the ongoing incorporation of novel perspectives, experiences, identities, and practices – such as those of queer entrepreneurs – in shaping change (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Hjorth et al., 2015).

The entrepreneurial process has historically been described using metaphors of evolution: time and moments; the flowing of a river; the running of a vehicle; or heroic journeys or conquests (Ahl, 2007; Down & Warren, 2008; Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert, 1997, 2007). Such metaphors have been critiqued for being limited to a sequential, linear characterisation that is dependent on a distinct start and end point (Downing, 2005; Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert, 2007). In some cases, theorising around the entrepreneurial process has been based on stochastic models that strive to break these conventional conceptualisations (Steyaert, 2007), yet these models still presuppose that entities within the process

– people, places, technologies – exist independently of the processes to which they are privy and yet whose activities are dependent on a key instigating moment (Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert, 2007). The introduction of complexity science to the field of entrepreneurship has helped to address these issues.

Complexity is "a science concerned with nonlinear dynamics and open, dissipative systems" (Fuller & Moran, 2000, p. 51) – the specifics of which I will not get into, given the scope of this paper. Complexity science, particularly the study of complex adaptive systems, is valuable to the study of entrepreneurial ventures because it focuses less on the attributes of individuals and more on the creation of networks and conditions that allow innovation to emerge from interactions between semi-autonomous actors (Goldstein, Hazy, & Silberstang, 2008). Complex phenomena *may* be disassembled into various constituent parts to study specific properties and interactions, but they cannot simply be assessed as the sum of these elementary components (Bonifati, 2010; Phelan, 2016). Such thinking applied to entrepreneurship indicates that the process of entrepreneurship is not sequential, but rather a reflexive, creative, or generative process that emerges in non-linear and interdependent ways (Fuller & Moran, 2000; Steyaert, 2007); it is a complex adaptive system (Anderson, Dodd, & Jack, 2012). The entrepreneurial process is thus understood to examine "things in transformation" (Hjorth et al., 2015, p. 602) without circumscribing them to a fixed, predictable way of being; they acknowledge and celebrate the natural, flowing state of reality (Hjorth et al., 2015; Steyaert, 2007; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Through this perspective, organisational phenomena, such as the entrepreneurial process, are understood as enactments: they are unfolding processes based on iterative choices made in inevitably variable environments, initiated by curiosity, and organised spontaneously (Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

The processual nature of entrepreneurship should not be conflated with *the entrepreneurship process*, however. The entrepreneurship process refers to the codified, linear entrepreneurial process that details procedures, methods, techniques, or formulae for new venture creation or organisational development (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Hjorth et al., 2015), as discussed by many including Hmieleski and Baron (2009), Lewis et al. (2016), Shane and Venkataraman (2000), Sullivan and Meek (2012), and Zacharakis (2012). *Entrepreneurship as a process* however encompasses a range of change-oriented and creative organisational activities (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018), characterised not by the methodological individualism within entrepreneurship studies that focuses on 'fixing' entities to a specific framework, but rather by a relational stance that "inscribes entrepreneurship into a social ontology of becoming" (Steyaert, 2007, p. 453). Such thinking reinforces the understanding that entrepreneurship is enacted or performed within a broader context, rather than the property of an individual (Bruni et al., 2004b; Galloway et al., 2015; Steyaert, 2007). Such an perspective is

fundamental to the queering of the normative construction of entrepreneurship, as it challenges the notion of a 'fixed' entrepreneurship (Hjorth et al., 2015) and invites constant creative engagement with institutional and cultural constraints to accommodate and invite new entrepreneurial identities and practices (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018).

### *Entrepreneuring*

To this end, authors have made a distinction between entrepreneurship and *entrepreneuring* (Champenois, Lefebvre, & Ronteau, 2020; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Johannisson, 2011; Nayak & Chia, 2011; Rindova et al., 2009; Steyaert, 2007; Thompson et al., 2020). Appreciating the processual nature of entrepreneurial phenomena ensures that entrepreneuring is understood *not* as the creation of new organisations, but rather as the creation of new organisational forms, purposes, and ways of being (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Hjorth et al., 2015; Johannisson, 2011). Entrepreneuring is an act, a becoming, a disruption of the status quo (Goss et al., 2011; Johannisson, 2011; Verduyn, 2015). It encompasses various initiatives and efforts to bring about social, economic, institutional, and environmental change through entrepreneurial ventures (Champenois et al., 2020; Rindova et al., 2009). True to the process philosophical mode of thinking, entrepreneuring is a dynamic and messy process of ongoing learning and creative organising that disturbs, interrupts, and unsettles the comfortable continuity of established norms to make way for the emergence of something new (Champenois et al., 2020; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Hjorth, 2013; Johannisson, 2011; Verduyn, 2015). A travelling concept, entrepreneuring creates the space for theorising, experimentation, continuous learning, and wayfinding where fledgling ideas can spread their wings over time through both action and interaction, shaped by coincidence and convenience (Champenois et al., 2020).

This thinking has changed how researchers frame entrepreneurial activities, from understanding them in terms of nouns (entrepreneurship) to understanding them in terms of verbs (entrepreneuring) (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Goss et al., 2011). Transforming the entrepreneurial construct into a verb provides a clearer lens through which to assess it as a socially constructed 'doing' within a complex fuddle of intertwined socioeconomic activities and subjective behaviours (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Galloway et al., 2015). Entrepreneuring is thus increasingly accepted as a culturally-situated process through which entrepreneurial exchanges transpire across boundaries, settings, and spaces (Welter, 2011; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019). As a result, we have seen increasing visibility of entrepreneuring in such 'unexpected' sites as healthcare, education, ecology, and arts and culture (Steyaert & Katz, 2004). Importantly, however, there is no one 'doing' or processual theory that is universally applicable to all forms of entrepreneuring (Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert, 2007) since, "[i]f organisational change is viewed as a *fait accompli*, its dynamic, unfolding, emergent qualities (in short: its potential) are

devalued, even lost from view" (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). To suggest or subscribe to a single formula for 'doing entrepreneuring' is to undermine the subjective experience of individuals engaging in entrepreneurial activity, as well as its potential as an inclusive endeavour for any and all individuals (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert, 2007).

Such thinking is critical to answering the research questions, as it challenges the assumption that entrepreneurship is unique to an individual behaviour, state, or occurrence that can be specified *a priori,* observed consistently, and theorised homogeneously through a narrow normative construction (Thompson et al., 2020). Understanding entrepreneurship as a process, as *entrepreneuring*, encourages engagement with the in-between spaces, identities, and ideas that shape the impetus, role, and impact of entrepreneurship (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018) on and by queer entrepreneurs.

### *Everyday entrepreneurship as process*

Entrepreneurship as a process – entrepreneuring – is a "political intervention" (Hjorth et al., 2015, p. 608) that challenges the normative, positivist assumption that there must be some 'big event' that triggers or inspires entrepreneurship among individuals (Baker & Welter, 2017; Calás et al., 2009; Welter et al., 2017). Instead, it involves the ongoing intruding in, emerging from, altering, and seizing of everyday routines (Antonacopoulou & Fuller, 2019; Hjorth et al., 2015). This is referred to by some as prosaic entrepreneurship (Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007) or everyday entrepreneurship (Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Welter et al., 2017).

Everyday entrepreneurship is characterised by the ordinary, familiar, frequent, and even unremarkable events of daily life (Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). Everyday entrepreneurship reflects entrepreneurship as a process through the ongoing performance of everyday, materially accomplished and ordered practices (Thompson et al., 2020). As Steyaert (2004) put it, "the everydayness of entrepreneurship refers as much to a mundane, and—why not—even a boring posture as to a literary connotation where a prosaics—as in the novel— addresses the actuality of becoming, its ongoing becoming effected through conversational processes" (p. 9). While this ongoing everydayness may not always contribute substantially to economic growth, it is increasingly acknowledged as an important driver of societal change that serves broader social objectives (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Welter et al., 2017).

This recognition of the everyday mundanity of entrepreneurship is critical to queering the normative construction of entrepreneurship, as it transforms how we research and understand entrepreneurship (Welter et al., 2017). By acknowledging that there are many kinds of entrepreneurship, rather than just one 'right' type (Johannisson & Olaison, 2007), we stretch the meaning of entrepreneurship away from

a singular, rigid, and sometimes exclusionary concept, to one that wholly embraces the everyday presence and heterogeneity of entrepreneurship and is intentional about creating equal opportunities and levelling the playing field for all entrepreneurs (Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Kingma & Shaheen, 2013; Welter et al., 2017). Such thinking helps answer the research questions as it explicitly discards the idea of a single norm, inviting requiring new constructions that are dynamic, flexible, and contextually relevant (Champenois et al., 2020; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Hjorth, 2013; Johannisson, 2011; Verduyn, 2015).

### 2.3.3. AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Much of the extant literature has examined entrepreneurship as an exclusively economic phenomenon through which to create new economic activity, generate economic value, and maximise profits success is based on profit-maximisation, and wealth creation (Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Block, 2018; Davidsson, 2017; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Marlow, 2020). As discussed in Section 2.3.1, the construction of entrepreneurship has been expanded somewhat, understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon (Welter, 2011; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship as a "sociological enterprise" (Reynolds, 1991, p. 47) reflects the interdependence of various social actors and institutions such that it cannot, and should not, be limited to a single field of study, especially not economics (Reynolds, 1991) – especially because the link between economic growth and entrepreneurship is tenuous (Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019).

This is not about polarising the economic and social roles of entrepreneurship, but rather about affirming the value of entrepreneurship inclusive of and beyond commerce, with the implicit assumption that all economic activity is socially embedded (Hjorth, 2013; Zahra & Wright, 2016). Entrepreneurship has thus been distinguished as a means to facilitates the institutionalisation of (new) social values and symbols and through which to organise norms and pursue myriad goals beyond commerce and economic profits (Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Welter et al., 2017). This is useful to answering the research questions, as such a conceptualisation of entrepreneurship inherently invites the queering of the normative construction. However, understanding entrepreneurship as an instrument of social change requires the adoption of novel theoretical constructs and methodologies that more effectively accommodate the contextual dynamics inherent to entrepreneurship (Calás et al., 2009; Welter, 2011; Welter, Brush, & de Bruin, 2014) – thus challenging, adapting, and expanding the normative construction. It also requires that entrepreneurship

is assessed not only in terms of economic value, but also in terms of social impact (Zahra & Wright, 2016).

### *As social multiplier*

It is well-established that entrepreneurship plays an influential role in creating and sustaining financial wealth and driving economic recovery (Thomas & Mueller, 2000; Zahra & Wright, 2016); it is particularly valuable in doing so in conditions of significant risk and uncertainty (Irene, 2017). Entrepreneurship is thus a crucial determinant of sustainable individual, national, and global economic growth and prosperity (Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2017). However, researchers appreciate that the growth associated with entrepreneurship is not limited exclusively to economics (Zahra & Wright, 2016).

Entrepreneurship has been understood to operate by economic, technological, and social forces (Hjorth, 2013; Welter et al., 2017; Zahra & Wright, 2016). Its construction has thus been expanded such that it is not simply a means by which to sustain capital growth, but is also an influential social mechanism, particularly in developing economies, that stimulates social growth through improved equality and quality of life (Galloway et al., 2015; Hjorth, 2013; Zahra & Wright, 2016). This is achieved through, for example, the provision of food, addressing water shortages, maintaining environmental stability or even reducing pollutions, and promoting economic, social, and environmental sustainability through new ventures and technologies (Gurău & Dana, 2018; Zahra & Wright, 2016). Thus, it is acknowledged that entrepreneurship may not always be economically profitable, but that this does not limit its value (Chin, 2021; Irene, 2017; Zahra & Wright, 2016).

When entrepreneurial activities stimulate the creation of social value, entrepreneurship may be described as a social multiplier (Zahra & Wright, 2016) – this is one of the core perspectives that informs entrepreneurship as social change. This multiplier perspective understands entrepreneurship as a means through which to uncover multiple opportunities to explore and harness human, social, and financial resources to establish and grow ventures that offer both economic and social value-creation (Gurău & Dana, 2018; Zahra & Wright, 2016). As a social multiplier, entrepreneurship is a widely-available "social technology" (Welter et al., 2017, p. 317) that shapes social and economic equity simultaneously, addressing structural inequality and inspiring empowerment and emancipation (Welter et al., 2017). Understanding entrepreneurship as a social multiplier facilitates the queering of entrepreneurship, and thus helps answer the research questions, by framing entrepreneurship as a way to include more people in the pursuit of justice and equity.

### *As emancipation*

Entrepreneurship as emancipation extends the notion of entrepreneurship as a social change mechanism. Entrepreneurship is discussed in more recent literature as a way for individuals, through entrepreneurial activities, to question and challenge their realities – sometimes shifting their position in the social order in which they are embedded, and sometimes even the social order itself (Rindova et al., 2009). Entrepreneurship as emancipation enables the pursuit of freedom and autonomy by enabling individuals and communities to confront or even break existing social structures and perceived constraints (Martinez Dy et al., 2018; Rindova et al., 2009). These constraints may not only be economic; they can also be intellectual, social, institutional, or cultural (Baker & Welter, 2017; Rindova et al., 2009). Entrepreneurship thus serves as a means to overcome exclusion – such as that based on gender identity, sexual identity, migrant status, or economic class – in order to claim social independence, power, status, and even self-actualisation (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Kantor, 2002; Marlow, 2020; Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018; Welter et al., 2014). Entrepreneurship as emancipation affords individuals the ability to act independently of structural systems to which they do not have access or with which they do not conform (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018).

Through this lens, entrepreneurship has been examined as a means through which to organise ideas, people, and processes that address and counter the (re)production of unequal power dynamics, and establish new power relations among individuals and institutions to drive individual and social change (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011). Research has thus evolved to understand entrepreneurship not simply as the pursuit of opportunities to create new economic value, but also as a way to address the barriers to social participation to create new social, institutional, and environmental value (Baker & Welter, 2017; Martinez Dy et al., 2018; Rindova et al., 2009). This perspective is fundamental to queering entrepreneurship to be more inclusive of queer entrepreneurs, as it expands the role of entrepreneurship to be a means by which to overcome or circumvent marginalisation.

This is not necessarily at odds with the normative construction of entrepreneurship. Research has repeatedly emphasised innovation in the normative construction of entrepreneurship, though this has typically been limited to innovation in commercial or economic terms (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009). Understanding entrepreneurship as emancipation also centres innovation; however, the innovation is not limited to economic newness, but applies to the creation of new institutions, markets, and possibilities – for growth, individual emancipation, and the stimulation of positive social change (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009). As such, entrepreneurship as emancipation helps queer entrepreneurship by inviting ‘innovation’ around the

normative construction of entrepreneurship and help marginalised individuals – in this case, queer entrepreneurs – overcome barriers to inclusion.

Understanding entrepreneurship in this way has led to a more critical analysis of entrepreneurship that accommodates reflexivity and complexity, such that entrepreneurship is not treated as an object, but as a set of complex, dynamic social activities and processes that are unlikely – perhaps even impossible – to be a neatly-packaged whole (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011). For some, this has resulted in mobilising the entrepreneurship discourse to think about the nature and the practice of entrepreneurship within the broader discursive practices of the media, businesses, policymakers, academia, and entrepreneurs themselves to critique the normative construction's constraints on entrepreneurial activity (Bruni et al., 2004b; Calás et al., 2009; Zahra & Wright, 2016). Such questioning is valuable to queering the normative construction of entrepreneurship, as it invites new perspectives, including those of queer entrepreneurs.

### *As social creativity*

The relationship between creativity and entrepreneurship has been explored by to scholars (Ward, 2004) but this has historically been within the framework of Schumpeter's creative destruction (Warren & Anderson, 2009). Entrepreneurship as social creativity however leans into understanding entrepreneurship as a set of change actions, describing entrepreneurship as an attitude that is driven to transform current circumstances – *not* by destroying them, but by actively embracing and reconstructing them (Beyes, 2009). It emphasises that those who undertake entrepreneurship push themselves beyond the rigid, generic social reality in which they exist to create new arenas of opportunity for themselves and others to thrive (Hjorth et al., 2008; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007). It could be argued that this, too, is entrepreneurship as emancipation. Individuals and communities practising entrepreneurship as social creativity find inventive ways to navigate and overcome the institutional and cultural constraints faced in daily life, and in so doing also provoke more creative conceptualisations of entrepreneurship (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Hjorth et al., 2008; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007). Entrepreneurship in this sense is a creative activity that "assembles, dis-assembles and re-assembles" (Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009, p. 196) realities in refreshing ways. Entrepreneurship as social creativity can thus be described not as Schumpeter's destructive bull in the china shop so to speak, but as rather grabbing said bull by the horns regardless of challenging circumstances.

This social creativity has been contrasted with the normative construction of entrepreneurship (Hjorth et al., 2008). The prevailing norms in entrepreneurship are characterised by 'scientific' structures, and are therefore criticised for stifling new creativity through the imposition of inflexible parameters and

definitions that have become increasingly fossilised as a result of their continued proliferation (Hjorth et al., 2008; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007). Entrepreneurship as social creativity, in contrast, is an ability within individuals and their communities to experiment with the interactions between coincidence and chance to shape for themselves new social realities (Hjorth et al., 2008; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007). It is inherently curious, inventive, progressive, and even disruptive; it questions the often unquestioned stereotype of entrepreneurship with new "rhythmic constellations" (Hjorth et al., 2015, p. 608) of creativity (Hjorth et al., 2015, 2008). This is crucial to queering the normative construction of entrepreneurship, as it invites new ways of seeing the world – beyond a narrow stereotype – in an additive, rather than destructive, way.

This conceptualisation has direct implications for how entrepreneurship is further explored and adapted for the inclusion of queer perspectives. It implies a revolt against rigid normative hierarchies of rigour and 'science' in favour of dynamic patterns of "planning, reviewing, adapting, managing, analysing, and revealing" (Sullivan, 2005, cited in Guillet de Monthoux, 2009, p. 85) that give life to the flux between entrepreneurship, play and creativity (Hjorth, Strati, & Dodd, 2015). It transforms how we currently *construct* entrepreneurship, understanding it as an interplay of generative endeavours alive with varying levels of inventiveness and exploration (Ward, 2004). Entrepreneurship is thus evolved from being a somewhat linear process of creative destruction to being a multidimensional "science of the imagination" (Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009, p. 194) that shapes new identities and worlds (Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Gartner, 2007; Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009) – and so requires a creative approach to how entrepreneurship is studied. Understanding entrepreneurship as participation in these dynamic processes of world-making, requires that the study of entrepreneurship is an act of creation rather than an attempt at discovering universal truth (Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009).

Such an understanding is useful in queering entrepreneurship, as it invites new ways of understanding entrepreneurship that build on, rather than destroy, the normative construction (Beyes, 2009). It allows a creative evolution of the current construction so that it continues to include those that fit into the norm, while replacing its inherently exclusionary dynamics with an openness to the perspectives and experiences of those previously excluded.

### 2.3.4. Re-constructing entrepreneurship: Summary & implications

Entrepreneurship has historically been defined to the implicit (and sometimes explicit) exclusion of various societal groups (Ogbor, 2000). The above reconstructions of entrepreneurship argue for a different approach to how we study it but also aim to advance creative and contextualised research that

addresses the persistent yet often unacknowledged biases therein (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Hjorth et al., 2008). These reconstructions offer different ways to understand and study entrepreneurship so that the normative construction thereof can be adapted to be more inclusive of marginalised groups, including queer entrepreneurs. By constructing entrepreneurship as a colourful, flourishing social phenomenon and tool, these reconstructions present ways through which academia, business, and policymakers can expand entrepreneurship to serve wider society (Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Welter et al., 2017). These perspectives also facilitate a more robust appreciation of the inherent nature of entrepreneuring in everyday life, of entrepreneurial agency, and of how it facilitates the expression of personal values, autonomous desires, and socially-driven change-making (Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009) because "[t]ransforming the everyday is what entrepreneuring accomplishes" (Verduyn, 2015, p. 645). Table 1 notes a summary of these reconstructions and their respective relevance to this research.

*Table 1: Summary of reconstructions, how they differ from the normative construction, and their value to this research (author's own).*

| *What characterises this approach to reconstruction?* | *What does the normative construction say?* | *Relevance of this reconstruction to the study* |
|---|---|---|
| **Entrepreneurship as a socially situated practice** | | |
| This acknowledges that entrepreneurial activities are performed by individuals – in their singular or collective capacity – as a response to and product of their environments, an ecosystem comprising multiple mutually-reinforcing elements.<br><br>The desirability of and propensity towards entrepreneurship may therefore vary based on different contexts which can stimulate and | An appreciation of context has largely been missing from the literature, with the dominant approach therein focused on scientifically replicable, acontextual or super-contextual 'general laws'. As such, the entrepreneurship scholarship has maintained "methodological individualism" (Steyaert, 2007, p. 456), such that entrepreneurship is understood as a manifestation of the self, and that differences in entrepreneurship are shaped | • Appreciates complex social dynamics and structural factors and their influence over entrepreneurship.<br>• Avoids perpetuating invisible barriers and exclusionary dynamics intrinsic to the normative construction.<br>• Challenges the homogeneity of entrepreneurship.<br>• Confronts the reinforcement of homogenous knowledge.<br>• Facilitates the democratisation of |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| facilitate or constrain and inhibit entrepreneurship. | by intrinsic individual differences. | entrepreneurship as an all-inclusive social activity.<br>• Opens up entrepreneurship more broadly to various marginalised identities and experiences. |
| *Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Brush et al., 2019; Cavallo et al., 2019; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Esfandiar et al., 2019; Fletcher, 2011; Hjorth et al., 2008; Maalaoui et al., 2020; Welter, 2011; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019.* | *Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Block, 2018; Davidsson, 2016; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Hjorth et al., 2008; Marlow, 2020; Steyaert, 2007.* | *Calás et al., 2009; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Goss et al., 2011; Hjorth et al., 2008; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017; Rindova et al., 2009; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Welter, 2011; Welter et al., 2017; Wigren-Kristofersen et al., 2019.* |
| **Entrepreneurship as a process** | | |
| This postulates that entrepreneurship is enacted or performed in a way that is continually changing, adapting and responding to, and evolving with the ongoing transformation and emergence of individuals, organisations, and institutions.<br>Entrepreneurship as process, or *entrepreneuring*, is not a linear progression of business activity, but rather a range of change-oriented and creative activities that emerge from interactions between prospective entrepreneurs and their contexts to identify, question, and disrupt | The normative construction understands entrepreneurship as a sequential, linear progression of activity with a clear start and end point, made up of various details procedures, methods, techniques, or formulae for new venture creation or organisational development.<br>The normative construction treats individuals as discrete entities that can be isolated from the contexts in which they are embedded and 'fixes' them to a specific framework. | • Describes entrepreneuring as a reflexive, creative, generative process that emerges in non-linear and interdependent ways – it is not fixed.<br>• Shows that entrepreneuring examines "things in transformation" (Hjorth et al., 2015, p. 602) – which could include queer identities and experiences.<br>• Describes entrepreneuring as the creation of new organisational forms, purposes, and ways of being; a disruption of the status quo – so doesn't have |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| institutional structures and norms.<br><br>This challenges the normative, positivist assumption that there must be some 'big event' that triggers or inspires entrepreneurship among individuals. Entrepreneuring involves the ongoing intruding in, emerging from, altering, and seizing existing everyday routines, 'everyday entrepreneurship'. | | to follow a set of rules or norms to be 'acceptable'.<br>• Shows that entrepreneuring can arise "nearly anywhere, at nearly anytime by nearly anyone" (Steyaert & Katz, 2004, p. 190) – doesn't have to be only by a certain set of individuals.<br>• Acknowledges that there are many kinds of entrepreneurship, rather than just one 'right' type.<br>• Embraces the everyday presence and heterogeneity of entrepreneurship, creating equal opportunities and levelling the playing field for all entrepreneurs |
| *Antonacopoulou & Fuller, 2019; Baker & Welter, 2017; Calás et al., 2009; Galloway et al., 2015; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Hjorth et al., 2015; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009; Nayak & Chia, 2011; Steyaert, 2007; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Thompson et al., 2020; Welter et al., 2017.* | *Ahl, 2007; Down & Warren, 2008; Downing, 2005; Hmieleski & Baron, 2009; Johannisson, 2011; Lewis et al., 2016; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Steyaert, 1997, 2007; Sullivan & Meek, 2012; Zacharakis, 2012.* | *Fuller & Moran, 2000; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Goss et al., 2011; Hjorth et al., 2015; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Johannisson, 2011; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Kingma & Shaheen, 2013; Steyaert, 2007; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Verduyn, 2015; Welter et al., 2017.* |
| **Entrepreneurship as social change** | | |
| Entrepreneurship as a "sociological enterprise" | Entrepreneurship has historically been understood as | • Invites new ways of seeing the world beyond a narrow |

| | | |
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| (Reynolds, 1991, p. 47) is an influential social mechanism that reflects the interdependence of various social actors and institutions and affirms the value of entrepreneurship inclusive of and beyond commerce.<br><br>As a social multiplier, a means of emancipation, and a social creativity, entrepreneurship facilitates the institutionalisation of (new) social values and symbols, and proffers a means through which to organise norms and pursue goals beyond commerce and economic profits, such as improved equality and quality of life. | an exclusively economic phenomenon through which to create new economic activity and generate economic value, where success is based on profit-maximisation, and wealth creation. | stereotype in an additive, rather than destructive, way.<br>• Facilitates the institutionalisation of (new) social values and symbols.<br>• Understands entrepreneurship as a way to shape social and economic equity.<br>• Addresses structural inequality and inspires empowerment and emancipation.<br>• Shows how entrepreneurship can be a means to overcome or remove perceived barriers to social participation<br>• Questions the stereotype, invites the creation of new institutions, markets, and possibilities, and provokes more creative constructions of entrepreneurship. |
| *Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Chin, 2021; Galloway et al., 2015; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Hjorth, 2013; Irene, 2017; Reynolds, 1991; Welter et al., 2017; Zahra & Wright, 2016.* | *Ahl & Marlow, 2021; Block, 2018; Davidsson, 2017; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Marlow, 2020; Thomas & Mueller, 2000; Zahra & Wright, 2016.* | *Anderson & Ronteau, 2017; Baker & Welter, 2017; Beyes, 2009; Calás et al., 2009; Garcia-Lorenzo et al., 2018; Goss et al., 2011; Hjorth et al., 2008, 2015; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Martinez Dy et al., 2018; Rindova et al., 2009; Welter et al., 2017.* |

Importantly, these reconstructions of entrepreneurship seek to reframe not just the research but the construct itself, particularly regarding the neoliberal claim that entrepreneurship is an open, accessible, and meritocratic endeavour (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). In so doing, the scope of entrepreneurship theorising has been broadened to offer a more comprehensive and inclusive range of organising processes that break down the prevailing boundaries and boundary-setting processes of entrepreneurship, enabling sustainable social change (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Welter et al., 2017). These perspectives are valuable to this research exercise, as they create the space and provide the tools for an queering of the normative construction of entrepreneurship. Ultimately, they challenge the existence of an entrepreneurial stereotype by demonstrating that there is no single entrepreneurship at all, but rather a vast and unknown topography, yet to be explored, mapped, and 'mashed up' (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017; Guercini & Cova, 2018; Johannisson, 2011). They thus invite the queering of the constructed norm through an ongoing identification, questioning, and even destruction of institutional structures (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009).

However, understanding that entrepreneurship can be characterised as an unknown landscape to be explored rather than a single field to be cultivated (Steyaert & Katz, 2004) means that this research may not offer a definitive, universal solution to all of the challenges presented in this review so far. This research can however offer a new lens through which to critique the embedded structures of power and inequality that affect queer entrepreneurs and shape new discourse that is more inclusive of queer entrepreneurs. In terms of the methodology, the above exploration of alternative constructions suggests that the methods used to study entrepreneurship should seek to incorporate multiple dimensions of creative exploration that account for various perspectives, promoting enquiry in terms of verbs rather than nouns (Bruni et al., 2004b; Galloway et al., 2015; Goss et al., 2011; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Rindova et al., 2009). This invites the adoption, or even conception, of methods that stimulate ongoing learning and creativity and disturb the comfort of accepted norms to encourage something new to emerge.

# Chapter III: Theoretical framing

This research aims to contribute to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse by understanding how queer entrepreneurs experience entrepreneurship. This chapter presents an overview of the theory that enables such, namely post-structural feminism and queer theory.

## 3.1. POST-STRUCTURAL FEMINISM

### *What is post-structural feminism?*

Post-structural feminism is a philosophical theory that challenges traditional constructions of gender where male and female are positioned as alternative categories so that belonging to the one necessitates non-belonging to the other (Linstead & Pullen, 2006). Instead, gender is understood as a set of constructed and reinforced individual acts and embodied social practices and representations associated with femininity or masculinity (Díaz-García & Welter, 2011a; Henry et al., 2016; McCann, 2016; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2019): it is performative (Butler, 2002, 2004; Galloway et al., 2015). Critically, performativity is not performance; the latter implies conscious action, while the former is a process that regulates compliance with – or resistance to – social norms (Bruni et al., 2004b, 2004a; Butler, 2002; de Souza, 2017). Repetition of such norms is not performed by the individual gender; it is the repetition that enables and produces it (de Souza, 2017). Post-structural feminism thus argues that gender is not something binary and fixed that individuals *are,* but rather something that individuals continually *do* (Bruni et al., 2004a; Butler, 2002; Díaz-García & Welter, 2011a; West & Zimmerman, 1987). This theory contends that individuals will produce and reproduce a stable, gendered self that aligns to the institutionalised, normalised, stereotypical characterisations of gender within prevailing social structures (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; de Souza, 2017).

However, the thinking within post-structural feminism also allows for the understanding that, as much as gender can be done, it can also be undone and redone (Butler, 2002), resulting in "change to the normative conceptions to which members of particular sex categories are held accountable" (West & Zimmerman, 2009, p. 118). Through such a lens, gender is appreciated as fluid rather than stable, comprised of complex dynamic intersections with other social categories (Foss, 2010; Linstead & Thomas, 2002). Post-structural feminism thus unsettles normative conceptualisations of gender,

allowing for the representation of gender as a dynamic, processual, symbolic, and fragmented multiplicity, a product of individual subjectivities that are socially and culturally constructed (Bruni et al., 2004b; Calás et al., 2009; Galloway et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2016; Linstead & Thomas, 2002).

### *Application to the entrepreneurship literature and this study*

This mode of thinking can be applied beyond gender studies to entrepreneurship (Galloway et al., 2015). A post-structural feminist critique of entrepreneurship was introduced by Ahl (2006) in which the alleged gender neutrality of the existing discourse interrogated and challenged (Marlow, 2014). With much of the historical entrepreneurship research focused on unpacking the differences between male and female entrepreneurs (Welter et al., 2014), feminist critique was introduced to the field to expose the masculinity in which entrepreneurship theory is embedded by revealing, assessing, and illuminating the understanding of entrepreneurship from women's perspectives and affording such greater legitimacy and belonging within the field (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). The application of post-structural feminism to entrepreneurship theory extended this critique – not just by questioning heteropatriarchal norms, but also by deconstructing and destabilising the very binaries on which they are based (Bruni et al., 2004b; Calás et al., 2009).

Through the perspective of post-structural feminism, entrepreneurship may be understood not as a property of the individual, but rather something that is enacted – aligning with the arguments for process theories of entrepreneurship (Bruni et al., 2004a; Galloway et al., 2015; Goss et al., 2011; Hjorth et al., 2015, 2008; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004).

In the context of this research exercise, post-structural feminism is valuable to the queering of the normative construction of entrepreneurship because it invites us to challenge the alleged universality and gender neutrality of the current construction and critically assess the performativity of 'entrepreneurship' within a normative construction thereof. It facilitates queering by destabilising the binaries that permeate the normative entrepreneurship construct and associated literature, particularly as they relate to masculinity and heteronormativity.

Post-structural feminism also facilitates queering insofar as it also acknowledges that all forms of knowledge produced will naturally advance the interests of some over others (Calás et al., 2009). It advocates for questioning the alleged atheoretical nature of knowledge in terms of entrepreneurship, facilitating deeper analysis of how gendered power relations are constituted, reinforced, and disputed (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2019). By conceptualising both gender and entrepreneurship as a becoming, we are compelled to reflexivity in the application thereof.

Critically, feminism is often critiqued for presenting an almost exclusively white, Western perspective to the neglect of various transnational feminisms (McCann, 2016); this same narrow white and Western idealisation is noted within the entrepreneurship discourse (Brush & Cooper, 2012; Galloway et al., 2015; Ogbor, 2000; Rindova et al., 2009). Both feminism and entrepreneurship are additionally believed to be embedded still within the established social order that privileges masculinity (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; McCann, 2016), and both continue to attach to binaries, thus undermining the desired fluidity contained within the experience of gender or, in this case, entrepreneuring (Linstead & Pullen, 2006; McCann, 2016). The sustainability of the social change promised within both feminism and entrepreneuring is therefore dependent on the accommodation of other axes of identity beyond gender or entrepreneurial identity, such as race, sexual orientation and class (Jagose, 2009).

Despite carrying some of its own inherent challenges, post-structural feminist analysis is promoted as a way of engaging a more reflexive, theoretically informed approach to the construction of entrepreneurship and entrepreneuring that more effectively accounts for its implicit biases. It seeks to reveal, challenge, and transform the normative construction of entrepreneurship that perpetuates gender bias and reinforces prevailing heteronormative assumptions, not just in the literature but also in methods of analysis (Ahl, 2006; Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Bruni et al., 2004b, 2004a; Ogbor, 2000).

Because post-structural feminism typically accommodates the processual and performative concepts defined within the theory (Henry et al., 2016), it necessitates the acknowledgement of the presence of individuals and their personal reflections on their experiences and activities, and not simply second party assessment (Foss, 2010). As such, the rigid quantitative methodologies that dominate entrepreneurship research are inappropriate and require alternative, often qualitative, research questions and perspectives (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Henry et al., 2016). A post-structural feminist approach thus implies recognition of the flaws and limitations of existing approaches, but also includes critique and change in itself to facilitate an epistemological shift towards how we understand and construct identity (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Henry et al., 2016).

## 3.2. QUEER THEORY

### *What is 'queer'?*

To understand how to apply queer theory, it is important to first understand *queer*. The word *queer* is polysemic, showing up in discourses as a noun, viz. *queerness*, an adjective – queer politics, for instance – or a verb, *to queer* or *queering* (Rumens et al., 2019). Queering is particularly pertinent to

this paper as it presents a means through which to destabilise normative binaries and hierarchies with the intent of inciting engaging social and political analysis (Rumens et al., 2019; Wilchins, 2004). This is inherent to the word itself: "'queer' means across—it comes from the Indo-European root *-twerkw*, which also yields the German *quer* (transverse), Latin *torquere* (to twist), English *athwart*" (Sedgwick, 1994, p. viii). The word's history has a colourful past beyond twisting and transversing.

*Queer* was once commonly understood to denote something odd, strange, unusual, or abnormal (Brontsema, 2004; Halperin, 2003). It wasn't linked to 'deviant' sexuality until fairly late in its linguistic history, at which point it became associated almost exclusively with non-normative sexuality, even until today (Brontsema, 2004). For some, the term still raises eyebrows, owing to its historical and even current confrontational, pejorative, and oppressive associations (Walks, 2014). Due to a number of social factors that won't be unpacked here, *queer* experienced a reawakening in the 1990s, resulting in a public reclamation by many as a source of identity, solidarity, and pride, although not without debate (Brontsema, 2004; Walks, 2014) – the term has been both vocally opposed and supported due to its historical pejoration (Brontsema, 2004). The reclamation of *queer* served, and still serves, to confront directly the historical homophobia with which it was imbued, to make a more explicit distinction from 'gay' and 'lesbian', perceived by some to be exclusionary and assimilationist, and to understand identities as social and political phenomena (Brontsema, 2004; de Souza, 2017).

## *What is queer theory?*

Queer theory thus emerged in the 1980s as a school of thought that questions normative understanding of social identities, with roots in various fields, including feminism, poststructuralism, sociology, and gay and lesbian studies (de Souza, 2017; Kelemen & Rumens, 2011; Wilchins, 2004).

Queer theory enables us to re-examine our claims to and understanding of identity categories (Kelemen & Rumens, 2011), understanding identity not as "a bunch of little cubbyholes stuffed respectively with intellect, sex, race, class, vocation, gender" (Anzaldua, 2009, p. 166) but as something that is fluid, various, and even paradoxical (de Souza, 2017; de Souza et al., 2016); the lack of definitive boundaries or binaries is "continuously, creatively, joyfully queer" (Heckert, 2010, p. 48). Queer theory also interrogates and destabilises power relations by focusing how power is asymmetrically distributed among and within them (de Souza, 2017; Rumens et al., 2019). It analyses the cultural construction of sexuality, and how sexuality, as a category of knowledge, also functions as an instrument of power (Kelemen & Rumens, 2011).

This is especially true of its interrogation of heteronormativity in everyday life, and the questioning of oppressive structures imposed on and possibilities available to individuals to build meaningful

identities beyond the norm (McCann, 2016; Rumens, 2016b) – achieved through the explicit transformation of what is considered valid and legitimate in terms of identity (McCann, 2016). With heteronormativity being so pervasive across social institutions, queer plays a greater role than to increase tolerance, but to directly confront these institutions (de Souza, 2017). This is seen within the extant literature on queering the business school, which applies queer theory to destabilise and problematise heteronormativity and its impact on the hierarchy of relationships and identities within organisations, particularly as it affects LGBT individuals (Rumens, 2016a; Rumens et al., 2019).

Crucially, queer theory is not simply about defining the opposite of heteronormativity; its impetus is on challenging normativity more broadly (Rumens, 2016b; Sedgwick, 1990, 1994). Queer theory is dedicated to mobilising against binary logics, problematising that which is taken for granted within social life and modes of socialising, and questioning and transforming social norms and their respective relations of power (Brontsema, 2004; de Souza, 2017; Kelemen & Rumens, 2011; Rumens et al., 2019; Sedgwick, 1990). However, while queer theory has become central to much of the literature on sexual and gender identities and their related power dynamics, as well as other minority identities such as women or Black people, the study of minorities does not automatically qualify research as queer (de Souza, 2017).

That being said, there isn't a coherent set of 'rules' that governs queer theory in terms of the subjects to which it applies or how it is practised (Bendl, Fleischmann, & Walenta, 2008; Jagose, 2015; Pullen et al., 2016b). There is however a common commitment to disrupting binaries, deconstructing categories, challenging taken-for-granted assumptions, and taking up issues that have meaning only in their shared contrast to whatever is considered 'normal' (Bendl et al., 2008; McCann, 2016; McDonald, 2017; Pullen et al., 2016a; Rumens et al., 2019).

A such, queer theory both demands and offers a new kind of approach to the critique and creation of knowledge that subverts and challenges taken-for-granted stabilities within existing research methodologies (Browne & Nash, 2010; McCann, 2016). Because queering is an orientation to research, there is no single method that is better than another to generate knowledge that helps queer theory or that is inherently queer (McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b); there is no "neat and tidy clearing up and sorting out of knowledges and practices" (Parker, 2002, p. 153). In fact, queer theory promotes non-mainstream practices that resist assimilation to those of dominant groups (McDonald, 2017). Any methodology can be queer insofar as it disrupts the methodological norms that govern how research within a given field or institution has been and 'ought to be' conducted (Rumens, 2018b) and produces research that challenges the status quo to enable a different understanding of the field (McDonald, 2017).

However, there is no standard mechanism for how this can be achieved (that would be antithetical to queering); the most effective way to queer something is to patch together different ideas and concepts (McCann, 2016). Halberstam (2011), endorsed by Rumens (2018a), proposes *forgetting*, which involves resisting the norm, inviting contradictions into our academic lives, and reinventing "identities, selves, subjectivities, relationships, ways of organising and organisations anew" (Rumens, 2018a, p. 73) by shaping new narratives that are liberated from memory, tradition, and generational 'logic'. Halberstam (2011) also advocates for *failure* as a mode of queering: a refusal to conform to heteronormative logics or to be confined within binary formulations of sexuality and gender (Halberstam, 2011; Rumens, 2018a). Parker (2002, 2016) encourages anti-institutional thinking such that, "whatever is known must be doubted, whatever seems full must be emptied, whatever is obvious must be secreted away" (p. 148). For McDonald (2017) this includes the celebration of research topics and approaches that are considered taboo. Kelemen and Rumens (2011) further suggest incorporating positionality into queering, such that it is "reliant on and exists in tension with normativity" (p. 106) rather than reduced to a single subject or descriptor. This is especially important because, to date, there hasn't been much attention paid to how queer is reworked and reconfigured regularly even within the space of a single institution (Browne & Nash, 2010).

Another related and crucial consideration in ensuring that queer theory remains queer is to acknowledge various geographies and their influence on normativity, since much of queer theory's work has been generated within the Global North, resulting in the reduction of its applicability through the ironic perpetuation of rigidifying dogmas (Browne & Nash, 2010). Such reflexivity and acknowledgement of positionality is challenging yet can be achieved through the use of multi- and inter-disciplinary research methodologies (Browne & Nash, 2010; Halberstam, 1998; McCann, 2016).

Core to this approach is the incorporation of subjectivity, as it encourages the understanding, and subsequent breakdown, of underpinning assumptions and norms (de Souza, 2017; McCann, 2016). This is critical given that queer theory has been described as insufficient for the considered erosion and transformation of norms (Butler, 2004; Kelemen & Rumens, 2011). To this end, this project must offer more direct, active social instigations and interventions in its approach to and analysis of the research. Further still, understanding that queer theory, at its most expansive, reflects a variety of differences and social exclusions (Love, 2014), this project must incorporate principles of intersectionality to address criticisms of queer theory's narrow applications and to more accurately reflect the role of identity in social hierarchies (Bendl et al., 2008; de Souza et al., 2016). This implies accounting for the intersections between different social influences including race and class and how these might interact individually, institutionally, and concurrently to produce matrices of disadvantage

and privilege (Anthias, 2013; Chasserio et al., 2014; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015; Thomas & Mueller, 2000).

### *Application to the entrepreneurship literature and this study*

The increased adoption of a queer theoretical approach enhances academics' understanding of current LGBT and queer issues such that queer individuals are better able to interrogate and integrate their professional and personal identities (Bowring & Brewis, 2009; Renn, 2010; Rumens, 2016a). The queer analysis of apparently non-queer topics has also been useful beyond the study of explicitly LGBT matters in how it, (1) problematises and transcends normative, and potentially harmful, binaries such as leader/follower or research/ practice (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014; Renn, 2010; Rumens et al., 2019); (2) helps progress discussions of persistent social issues such as access, equity, and diversity (Bendl et al., 2008; Renn, 2010); (3) destabilises the hegemony of established theories of economics and organisation, enhancing critical reflexivity within the business school (Bendl et al., 2008; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014; Parker, 2001, 2002; Rumens, 2016b; Rumens et al., 2019; Vitry, 2020); and, in so doing, (4) transforms the roles and contributions of organisations (de Souza et al., 2016; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014; Parker, 2002; Rumens, 2013). Queer theory has therefore been applied increasingly to various subjects, including entrepreneurship (Cox, 2019; Köllen et al., 2012; Marlow et al., 2018; Parker, 2002; Rumens, 2018b), and is valuable to this research endeavour as well.

In challenging normative assumptions and modes of knowledge, queer theory must be given the freedom disregard traditional boundaries and 'rules of engagement' to traverse theoretical domains (Browne & Nash, 2010; Halberstam, 2011; Kelemen & Rumens, 2011; Rumens, 2018a). This relates well to the process theory of entrepreneuring, which demands the identification, questioning, and destruction of normative structures so that it both belongs to and deviates from established expectations of entrepreneurship (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009); this aligns to queer theory's charge to "focus on the idea of the subject as both contingent and indefinite" (McCann, 2016, p. 232). The existing alternative constructions of entrepreneurship discussed earlier posit that the subject itself is problematic and requires new mechanisms and methodologies; queer theory is therefore a useful means through which to achieve this, as queer is understood not as an identity category nor a fixed concept, but a problematisation of the normative subject (Butler, 2007; Pullen et al., 2016b; Rumens et al., 2019). Importantly, queer theory is effective at challenging existing norms within the academy, and so has the ability to rethink not just the existing knowledge around entrepreneurship, but also how it is created and understood (Kelemen & Rumens, 2011).

However, a challenge in using queer theory as a lens to examine entrepreneurship is in promoting academic legitimacy and appreciation thereof, while still destabilising established academic norms (Browne & Nash, 2010). This is to avoid academic self-enclosure (Kelemen & Rumens, 2011); to avoid the risk of assimilation, canonisation, and ultimately, reduction, into largely heteronormative institutions of knowledge and 'queer orthodoxy' (Browne & Nash, 2010; Halperin, 2003); to nurture critical dialogue within queer theory itself to challenge its own biases and assumptions and stay true to its anti-assimilationist roots (Halperin, 2003; McCann, 2016; Parker, 2016); and to introduce new ideas that constantly question and challenge normativity (Kelemen & Rumens, 2011; Parker, 2002). To ensure the ongoing relevance of queer theory, its evolution must be core to its application; we have to identify and create ways to regularly reinvigorate its radical potential, its "capacity to startle, to surprise, to help us think what has not yet been thought" (Halperin, 2003).

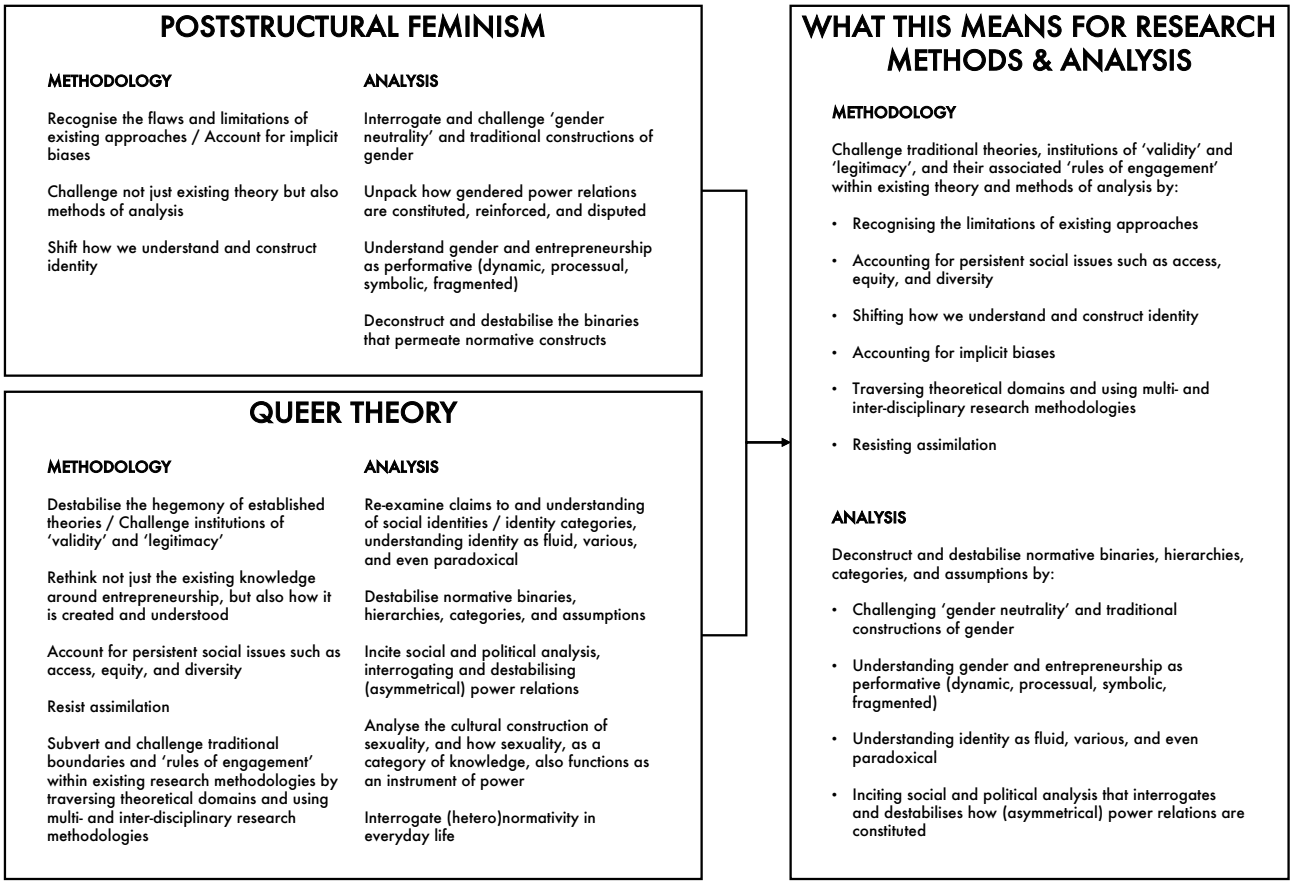
To this end, it is valuable – and in fact necessary – to the queering exercise to adopt methodologies that "fuck the discipline a little" (Parker, 2002, p. 158) by sauntering through and around disciplines, disregarding traditional bounds and codes of conduct while cognisant of the realities that shaped their categorisation – as well as the role and context of the researcher (Halberstam, 1998, 2011; Renn, 2010; Rumens, 2018a, 2018b). A queer reflexivity – reflexivity concordant with the principles of queer theory – is therefore essential to queering research (McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b). Conducting this study requires that I understand how my identity and the identities of my participants are fluid, provisional, and subject to change throughout the research process (McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b). In particular, this demands and interrogation of the politics of the research process as well as ongoing reflection on the performativity and closeting of identities (mine and participants') and how these may evolve (McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b).

It is also key to bear in mind that reaching single, definitive answers to the research questions may be impossible (McCann, 2016), since preventing the normalisation of queer theory requires that it is 'maintained' as a set of open-ended conceptual resources that can continually take on unanticipated meanings (Rumens et al., 2019). This is because, while queer theory offers a valuable means through which to queer the normative construction of entrepreneurship, it 'requires' that this is done in a way that precludes LGBT assimilation to the mainstream (McDonald, 2017) and prevents the emergence of a complacent comfort that robs queer of its ability to problematise heteronormativity (Rumens, 2016b).

## 3.3. IMPLICATIONS

The above two theories facilitate the critique of normalising processes and approaches and encourage the destabilisation of assumptions and categories (Bruni et al., 2004b; Calás et al., 2009; J. McDonald, 2017; Parker, 2002; Pullen et al., 2016a) – in this case, the hegemony of neoliberalism, masculinity, heteronormativity, and whiteness within entrepreneurship (Dy, 2020; Heilbrunn & Iannone, 2019; Marlow, 2020; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019). Applying the various principles within these two theories to my research methods and analysis is therefore valuable to understanding how queer entrepreneurs experience entrepreneurship and thus contributes to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse.

*Figure 1: Theoretical framework (author's own).*



# Chapter IV: Methodology

This paper aims to contribute to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse by understanding how queer entrepreneurs experience entrepreneurship. Achieving this entails addressing the research questions below.

- **Do queer entrepreneurs experience a normative construction of an entrepreneur?** If so, how and to what extent?
- **Do they feel the need to conform to a normative stereotype of entrepreneurship?** If so, how, to what extent, and to what end?
- **Do they have an 'ideal construction' of entrepreneurship that is more queer-inclusive?** If so, how, to what extent, and to what end?

This chapter presents the research method used to answer to these questions and is divided into seven sections. First, a discussion of the philosophical positioning of the study. Second, a discussion of the research approach, including a rationale for its relevance to this study and its limitations. Third, an explanation of the research setting. Fourth, a brief review of data sources. Fifth, a description of the approach to data collection. Sixth, a discussion of the ethical considerations of this study. The last section details data analysis.

## 4.1. Philosophical positioning

Contributing to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse requires giving precedence to change and subjectivity over rigid hierarchies and so-called objective structures (Linstead & Pullen, 2006). This implies the need for a new ontology that breaks the habits of normalised assumptions and stretches beyond binaries (Linstead & Pullen, 2006; Ogbor, 2000) "that blind us to the strangeness of the familiar" (Cooper & Burrell, 1988, cited in Ogbor, 2000, p. 606).

Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) metaphor and subsequent philosophy of the rhizome enables this. The rhizome is a flat, networked structure comprising multiple roots, shoots and bulbs wherein all nodes are connected (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Grosz, 1994; Styhre & Sundgren, 2003). Unlike the "tree/root of conventional thought" (Gannon & Davies, 2014, p. 80), the rhizome has no central axis or point of origin or direction (Grosz, 1994). Nodes of a rhizome are connected to each other, but still

open-ended, liberated from rigidifying dichotomies; they are multiplicities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Heckert, 2010; Styhre & Sundgren, 2003). The rhizome is thus appreciated as an appropriate and effective way to capture the complexity of the twenty-first century (Linstead & Thanem, 2007), as it reflects the heterogenous amorphous nature of reality, understanding it as inherently variable and shaped by structures that move, connect and transform constantly through the vibrant interplay between their constituent parts (Bissola, Imperatori, & Biffi, 2017; Chia, 1999). Importantly, the rhizome is characterised by connectivity over hierarchy, multiplicity over dichotomy, and fluidity over rigidity (Bissola et al., 2017; Chia, 1999; Linstead & Pullen, 2006). The rhizome thus enables us to frame patterns within a structure (albeit paradoxically unstructured); it facilitates not just the traverse but, critically, the transcendence of binary boundaries (Grosz, 1994; Linstead & Pullen, 2006).

Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, despite some concerns of dilution and exploitation by the rigidifying forces it seeks to critique (Munro & Thanem, 2017), can therefore be used as an ontological and epistemological model, as well as an analytical tool (Styhre & Sundgren, 2003). Some have suggested that the it presents concepts and practices that fundamentally critique strategy, challenge capitalism, and offer alternatives to mainstream knowledge systems and the creation of new ideas (Linstead & Thanem, 2007; Munro & Thanem, 2017; Styhre & Sundgren, 2003). Deleuze and Guattari's work is specifically directed against capitalism and capitalist forms of exploitation and actively serves to subvert the normative neoliberal value system (Munro & Thanem, 2017); the more recent entrepreneurship literature has also critiqued the primacy of neoliberalism in entrepreneurship practice and studies (Calás et al., 2009; Galloway et al., 2015). The rhizome is therefore ontologically and epistemologically valuable, as it brings both challenge and inspiration to how we rethink entrepreneur(ship/ing), exploring ways to re-evaluate and creatively subvert mainstream strategies (Munro & Thanem, 2017; Steyaert, 2007).

To this end, in my research and subsequent analysis, I have attempted to play the role of the 'rhizomatic researcher'. Inspired by the framework proposed by Clarke & Parsons (2013), I consciously cultivated a rhizomatic philosophy in my work by:

- **Actively reconceiving the researcher-participant relationship:** Embracing an active rather than reactive ethics by identifying opportunities for what could – rather than simply ought to – be done in engaging participants in a way that challenges normative hierarchies between us (Facca & Kinsella, 2021; Masny, 2016) and, while actively taking steps to avoid negative bias, allowing for authentic, personal connections with participants that may transgress traditional boundaries (Honan & Sellers, 2006).

- **Being nomadic:** Rather than looking for a 'centre' or hierarchical order to the research, I consciously and willingly move from place to place, idea to idea, open to the multiplicity of expanding and overlapping interconnections that may emerge, recognising my own embeddedness within the project and open to my own 'becoming' as a researcher (Clarke & Parsons, 2013; Facca & Kinsella, 2021).
- **Making room for creative connections:** Not necessarily adapting my thinking and writing to what is 'required' in the conventional and arguably reductionist orthodoxy of qualitative research (Honan & Bright, 2016) but, rather, embracing and celebrating chaos and "(im)plausible readings of connections between and across and within various data" (Honan & Sellers, 2006, p. 1).
- **Reconceiving answers as 'becoming':** Refusing the temptation to 'find' definite and ultimate answers that "tend to close dialogue between disciplines, literature, practitioners, and between researchers and diverse participant communities" (Koro-Ljungberg & Barko, 2012, p. 257) and instead thinking of the answers to my research questions as opportunities for further dialogue, ongoing questioning, and open-ended inquiry (Clarke & Parsons, 2013; Koro-Ljungberg & Barko, 2012).

In adopting such a philosophy, I am better equipped to queer entrepreneurship by queering the approach to research: actively rejecting epistemological essentialism to interfere with the normativities of traditional research practice (Honan & Bright, 2016; Koro-Ljungberg & Barko, 2012).

## 4.1. Research approach

This research aims to contribute to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse by understanding how queer entrepreneurs experience entrepreneurship – in effect, queering the current social construction of entrepreneurship. This is based on the appreciation that "knowledge is constructed in social interaction and mediated by language/tools, and that there are multiple ways of seeing, doing, and understanding" (Kerwin-Boudreau & Butler-Kisber, 2016, pp. 956–957) and that entrepreneurship is therefore socially constructed from a variety of contexts, experiences, and interpretations (Bruni et al., 2004a; Fletcher, 2011; Korsgaard & Anderson, 2011; Yetim, 2008; Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016). To this end, I draw from poststructuralism in understanding that language and meaning are intrinsically shaped by their contexts, and are therefore in flux – requiring that we understand the text or words as well as the systems that produced such, appreciating that theory is not separate from reality (Fawcett, 2012; Howell, 2015); this is in line with social constructionist principles (Fawcett, 2012). This study also borrows from poststructuralism in that it seeks a 'troubling' of

epistemological, ontological, and methodological concepts (Gannon & Davies, 2014) and a rejection of normative assumptions (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2019). Queer theory has also informed the below "scavenger methodology" (Halberstam, 1998, p. 13) by making connections across theoretical domains, and employing multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches that resist and destabilise normative academic coherence (Browne & Nash, 2010; de Souza, 2017; Kelemen & Rumens, 2011; McCann, 2016; Rumens, 2018b; Rumens et al., 2019).

The social construction of entrepreneurship is something that doesn't only affect people in theory; it isn't deconstructed and reconstructed only in theory either. Understanding queer entrepreneurs' experiences and their relationship to the stereotype of entrepreneurship requires direct engagement to find ways to relate to their experiences. I have adopted a qualitative approach for this study, as it considers the experiences and perspectives of research participants and distinguishes the meanings that people give to them (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & De Lacey, 2016; Harris et al., 2009).

Qualitative research delineates the characteristics of complex social phenomena to discern the meanings that people give to their experiences by appreciating the role of context in human life (Dougherty, 2005; Harris et al., 2009). It is about what transpires as people in the situation understand it, inextricably bound to the happenings within their social situations (Dougherty, 2005). This is appropriate to my study, as I will be engaging with queer entrepreneurs to understand their lived experiences, with the goal of queering normative entrepreneurship. Qualitative research also offers a means to overcome the restrictions imposed by fixed categories that are typically core to quantitative research (Rumens, 2018b), openly challenging the dominant approaches that smother the stories of life lived beyond binary identity categories (McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b), which is valuable to any queering exercise.

## 4.2. METHODS

Because queering is an orientation to research, it is not tied to any single method (McCann, 2016; J. McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b). A queer methodology is any one that collects knowledge on subjects who have been excluded from mainstream research (Rumens, 2018b), that uses various methods to disrupt the prevailing approaches to research (Halberstam, 1998; J. McDonald, 2017), and produces research that challenges the status quo, troubles mainstream conceptualisations of social phenomena, and enables us to understand them differently (J. McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b).

I have adopted the principles of Kathy Charmaz's (1996, 2006) constructivist grounded theory, as it facilitates the acknowledgement and inclusion of contextual influences on social phenomena as well

as people's individual understandings, interpersonal relationships, and the interactions they have with such phenomena, to better understand and explain them (Charmaz, 1996; Kushner & Morrow, 2003; Mruck & Mey, 2019). It invites the exploration of concepts to produce new theory that is unencumbered by pre-existing hypotheses, constructs, theories, or assumptions (Charmaz, 1996, 2006; Dougherty, 2005; Glaser, 2010; Kushner & Morrow, 2003; Thornberg & Dunne, 2019) and also offers structures that help address inequities and inequalities, barriers and access, and privilege and power to facilitate the eradication of oppression and exclusion (Charmaz, Thornberg, & Keane, 2018). These facets are valuable to a queering of entrepreneurship.

Within this framework, I followed Mey and Dietrich's (Mey & Dietrich, 2017) visual grounded theory methodology (VGTM), with data generated through arts-based methods (ABM). VGTM offers a way to diversify grounded theory away from purely textual methods, allowing for the construction of more detailed, robust accounts of events by mediating temporal and spatial constraints to magnify the understanding of social life (Hicks, 2018). Visual methods also help facilitate communication on topics that are difficult to raise because they are subconscious or subject to social inhibitions (Pain, 2012). This is achieved through the reduction of textual hegemony; text-only research methods can be limited in their abilities to convey the human experience or how people construct their realities (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Lapum et al., 2015). This is particularly valuable to my research exercise, as it opens avenues for communication that might otherwise be limited as a result of social inhibitions linked to a fear of anti-queer stigma or judgement.

The data used to generate the visual grounded theory come from arts-based methods, specifically collages created by the research participants. Arts-based methods (ABM) are valuable because they, among other benefits, democratise research, making it more accessible to more people through participative, communal, active enquiry (Grob, 2012) and in so doing, give voice to the silenced and the marginalised (Capous-Desyllas, 2010). This is valuable to my research because it facilitates self-reflection among participants and includes them in the process of re-constructing entrepreneurship, thus promoting more authentic meaning-making, and making more explicit the aspects of conscious, embodied knowledge that may be difficult to describe in textual methods alone (Kay, 2013; Simmons & Daley, 2013). To this end, ABM is valuable as a queer method, as it facilitates the collection and creation of knowledge about those that have been excluded from mainstream research (Halberstam, 1998; Rumens, 2018b).

ABM further 'qualifies' as a means to queer entrepreneurship, as it is a somewhat non-normative method that destabilises what is considered 'normal' in methodological practice, particularly in relation to the foundationalist approaches commonly taught in business schools (McDonald, 2017;

Rumens, 2018b). Such "methodological discordance and disciplinarity disloyalty may be necessary if data on how lives are lived queerly (e.g. those lives at odds with heteronormativity) is to be collected and analysed in its fullest, most discordant (queerest) sense" (Rumens, 2018b, p. 109) and is relevant to disrupting the heteronormative and managerial assumptions that pervade much of the entrepreneurship research (Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Marlow & McAdam, 2012).

### 4.2.1. GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory (GT) is a qualitative methodology introduced by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) that provides a way of deriving theoretical constructs from data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It originated as a way to challenge the quantitative orthodoxy of the time, offering a foundation for qualitative theory to become more visible, comprehensible, and replicable, and therefore more rigorous and valid (Belgrave & Seide, 2019). GT has evolved from Glaser and Strauss' original more positivist process of discovery into a general method that can be applied to various areas and disciplines and that offers a way to consider and conceptualise data, including the possible invention of new analytics procedures (Charmaz, 2009; Denzin, 2019). Perhaps most relevant to the current research exercise, GT focuses on building theory rather than testing or verifying it, allowing researchers to learn something new about a topic without being committed to and limited by a pre-existing hypothesis, existing constructs, theories, assumptions, or preconceptions (Charmaz, 1996, 2006; Dougherty, 2005; Glaser, 2010; Thornberg & Dunne, 2019). In so doing, GT helps us to queer the entrepreneurship research by disturbing existing conceptualisations of the social phenomena therein, thus enabling us to understand them differently (McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b)

There is a range of approaches to generating grounded theory, with each carrying their own underlying assumptions, methods, ontologies, epistemologies, and theories (Hallberg, 2006; Mruck & Mey, 2019). I believe that Kathy Charmaz's (1996, 2006) constructivist grounded theory is most relevant to my research questions. This is because constructivist GT acknowledges and includes contextual influences on social phenomena to understand and explain them more effectively (Kushner & Morrow, 2003; Mruck & Mey, 2019). It also seeks to explore people's individual understandings, interpersonal relationships, and the interactions they have with such phenomena (Charmaz, 1996), recognising that the research itself is constructed and thus rejects assumptions of an objective external reality or a neutral, passive researcher, (Belgrave & Seide, 2019). In so doing, constructivist GT can account for patterns of behaviour which are both relevant and problematic for those involved, through systematic and efficient theorising (Dougherty, 2005; Strauss, 1987). Constructivist GT is also fundamentally an

interactive and interpretive method that facilitates and promotes reflexivity, "the practice of examining one's subjectivity and reflecting on how this shapes the research process" (Roulston & Shelton, 2015, p. 2). For all of the above reasons, constructivist GT is valuable to the queering of entrepreneurship.

### 4.2.2. VISUAL GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded theory constitutes a flexible approach to research, offering a set of guidelines and strategies rather than formulaic rules for its application (Hicks, 2018). Grounded theory also lives by the maxim of 'all is data', illustrating its openness to a variety of data sources (Banks, 2007; Hicks, 2018). The use of visual data is therefore acceptable as part of a broader grounded theory approach. Visual methods are predicated on a constructivist epistemology and are therefore widely accepted tools for qualitative research, used in a range of disciplines, and informed by visual data which are generated through the generation and use of visual materials (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Pain, 2012).

Visual methods are used for two main reasons: to enrich the data generated in research so as to enrich our understanding of the social world, and to foster and enhance relationships between the researcher and participants (Morey, Le Clerc, Minns, Gregory, & Glynn, 2018; Pain, 2012). This includes but is not limited to the uncovering of multiple layers of meaning and perspectives (Mey & Dietrich, 2017); the construction of more detailed and robust analytical accounts (Hicks, 2018); facilitation of difficult-to-raise topics and prompts for the expression of abstract ideas (Pain, 2012); and the empowerment of participants through the reinforcement of their central role in the research process (Hicks, 2018; Pain, 2012). Visual methods offer unique ways to produce data (Morey et al., 2018) and counter the linear thinking often associated with traditional research (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010), and are therefore appropriate to queering entrepreneurship research.

I have used Mey and Dietrich's (2017) visual grounded theory methodology (VGTM) in my research. Their approach is informed by three key insights:

> Image is not text and cannot be analysed in terms of sequentiality. Images are not characterized by succession but by simultaneity. As such, criteria are required for a chronological order and "levels of meaning" for the interpretation.
>
> Criteria to establish the gestalt and sequence of levels of meaning during the interpretation process of an image are not justifiable on the epistemological level alone, but have to be deducted from the mediality of the image.

> If the mediality of the image is supposed to guide the sequence of the level of meaning, the referential framework needs to be spelled out. This can be accomplished in two ways: The composition of the image itself takes centre stage to analyse the levels of meaning; or the line of sight of the researcher functions as the organizing principle for the analysis, and the composition is merely informing the image analysis.
>
> (Mey & Dietrich, 2017, p. 291)

These insights informed their eight-step framework. The framework details the processes of contextualisation, inventory and description, and segmentation of visual data. It also provides recommendations for memo writing and coding, interpretation, and category-formation that helps translates the visuals to text. It further speaks to the expansion of materials, and the integration of image/text categories – all in line with the typical grounded theory approach but accommodating of visual data.

### *Arts-based methods*

To generate the visual data necessary for a VGTM, I employed arts-based methods. Arts-based methods (ABM) enable qualitative enquiry that emphasises constructivism, critical interpretation, and contextualism and are informed by three main goals: (1) making connections between research and lived experiences; (2) making meaning through multiple senses and media, and; (3) giving voice to those in society with less power, and making scholarship more accessible (Capous-Desyllas, 2010; Knowles & Cole, 2008). ABM offers a flexible way of understanding and examining experience by both the researcher and participants (Knowles & Cole, 2008), making use of the diverse ways of knowing, perceiving, and understanding the world (Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield, 2018). Instead of imposing rigid guidelines for gathering and working with data, arts-based methods follow a more natural process of engaging with events and experiences, relying on intuition and common-sense decision-making (Knowles & Cole, 2008). At the same time, art is characterised by patterns and structural elements that help reveal social phenomena beyond the experiences of individuals, helping enhance our understanding of the human condition through alternative, unconventional processes (Finley, 2008) and in so doing helps motivate and magnify awareness confront stereotypes, encourage empathy, and promote dialogue (Manning, 2017).

ABM is thus uniquely positioned for "radical, ethical, and revolutionary research that is futuristic, socially responsible, and useful in addressing social inequities" (Finley, 2008, p. 71). By counteracting

the hegemony of written texts (Capous-Desyllas, 2010), arts-based methods give voice to those that have traditionally been silenced or marginalised by textual and linguistic data collection and analysis (Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield, 2018). They also increase voice and reflexivity that helps expand the possibility of a range of diverse realities and understandings by facilitating knowledge not attained through verbal methods (Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield, 2018; Margolin, 2014). ABM is therefore appropriate to queering entrepreneurship, which typically reinforce homogenous knowledge structures and methodologies that don't adequately account for creative exploration of multiple perspectives (Baker & Welter, 2017; Bruni et al., 2004b; Galloway et al., 2015; Goss et al., 2011; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Ndemo & Weiss, 2017; Rindova et al., 2009).

## Collage

The specific arts-based method used in this study was collage. Collage is taken from the French word *coller*, meaning to stick (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). It involves the creation of visual artworks or artefacts through the use of images, papers, and other ephemera, cutting or altering them, and arranging them to a support (Chilton & Scotti, 2014). Such artefacts represent ideas by creating links in a single space that represent both emergent feelings and considered concepts (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010).

This is one of the strengths of collage. As a visual method, collage provides new insights to the research process that otherwise might not be uncovered (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Margolin, 2014). This helps elicit new awareness of hidden relationships and linkages between concepts, facilitating clearer articulation (Chilton & Scotti, 2014; Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999). Collage as 'a means to intertwine layers of knowledge' (Chilton & Scotti, 2014, p. 166) to understand phenomena in their formative stages and give way to multiple avenues of interpretation (Butler-Kisber, 2017) enables collage-makers to work in non-verbal, intuitive ways to reveal their own unconscious connections and understandings, bypassing more rational, linear modes of thought (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Vaughan, 2005).

This is another advantage to using collage: it enables people to articulate their thoughts, experiences, and perceptions in ways that verbal language might not allow (Culshaw, 2019). Collage allows participant to express themselves in new ways beyond binary thought patterns and language (Culshaw, 2019; Yuen, 2016). It also creates open spaces for participation without instruction for fixed techniques by the research facilitator (S. Dutton et al., 2019). It is a user-friendly medium that is accessible to many, where participants who might not ordinarily be part of the final product are included in the research process from beginning to end (Butler-Kisber, 2017; Gerstenblatt, 2013).

### 4.2.3. LIMITATIONS

There are some limitations to using alternative, visual forms of data representation. While they open up avenues of knowledge and allow for exploration of many perspectives, the data generated through arts-based methods can also be ambiguous: everyone gives their own meaning to the data such that consensus cannot be achieved (Eisner, 1997). There is also concern, when it comes to ABM, that "we are not substituting novelty and cleverness for substance" (Eisner, 1997, p. 9). To ensure better accuracy and generalisability, alternative forms of (visual) data must be accompanied by explanatory text (Capous-Desyllas, 2010) – this was collected via semi-structured interviews. Despite some lingering doubts, there is confidence that, as alternative and artistic forms of data are used increasingly within qualitative research, that the above limitations may be addressed or redefined to resolve their inherent tensions (Capous-Desyllas, 2010).

Additionally, there are concerns around the power dynamics at play within ABM. These methods are said to empower participants by enabling them to create their own new knowledge (Kay, 2013) and allowing them to control how much information is shared and how (S. Dutton et al., 2019). However, while these methods are offered as a means to address the power imbalance between researchers and participants within traditional textual research (Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield, 2018; Pain, 2012), there is risk of the reproduction rather than elimination of negative power dynamics (Harley & Langdon, 2019). Given the personal nature of the creative collage output and follow-up interviews, there is risk of participants hiding their truths or disguising them as 'the right thing to say' as a result of such power dynamics. Presenting open-ended questions in the interviews allowed me to probe further into their responses to uncover any uncertainties from their initial responses.

Collage specifically presents challenges around the materials used. This refers not only to the necessity for variety of material to stimulate participants' creativity, but also to the logistical difficulty of ensuring participants' access to such materials (S. Dutton et al., 2019). Additionally, I had to be cognisant of the structural challenges prevalent in South Africa, specifically regarding skills and digital barriers. To address these matters, I personally provided a range of mixed materials for physical collages. Digital and connectivity to support was offered to participants but declined. On top of this, constructing collages is time-consuming and is not the optimal use of an entrepreneur's productive hours! Further, not all participants were familiar with the concept of collage, and this had to be explained to them through the collage brief[1] – while still maintaining awareness of the power dynamics at play.

[1] Included in the appendix.

## 4.3. Research setting

As noted in the literature review, entrepreneurship has typically been framed within a fairly narrow stereotypical construction (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Calás et al., 2009; Gupta et al., 2009; Harrison et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2015; Marlow, 2014; Marlow & McAdam, 2012; Ogbor, 2000; Werthes et al., 2018; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). However, it is increasingly being explored beyond this stereotype: characterised as a process, an ongoing doing performed by a variety of people from a range of backgrounds for purposes beyond profit-making, such as emancipation from constrained realities, or social creativity (Baker & Welter, 2017; Hjorth et al., 2015; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2009; Rindova et al., 2009).

I have built on these alternative constructions, recognising their value in removing barriers to entrepreneurship for marginalised groups through the production of more inclusive, diverse, and pluralist knowledge on entrepreneurship that aligns to such populations' lived experiences (Leitch et al., 2010; Rajasinghe et al., 2021).

My research is set in the context in which individuals and groups strive be both economically and/or socially productive and impactful (OECD, 2019), but are constrained due to the proliferation of a narrow normative construction of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Ogbor, 2000). Specifically, my research engages with individuals who identify as queer; whose identity within a heteronormative mainstream has contributed to significant economic and social harm through, for example, stunted career development, diminished self-esteem, and restricted participation in mainstream organisational life (Rumens, 2016b).

## 4.4. Data sources

My primary sources of data were produced by people who identify both as queer and as entrepreneurs. The primary sources of data were visual collages produced by and interviews with research participants.

### 4.4.1. Sampling method

Choosing the 'right' sample is particularly important when generating grounded theory, as inadequate sampling undermines the validity and potential for replication of the research conducted (Morse, 2014). Yet, according to Dougherty (2005), there aren't any set rules for how much data is necessary

for qualitative research; similarly there are no set rules or guides for data collection (Charmaz, 2006; Mruck & Mey, 2019).

While there aren't any strict rules for sampling in grounded theory, it is suggested that the sampling approach represents the topic being researched and is prompted further by the theory that emerges (Morse, 2014; Stern, 2011). Given my research questions, random sampling was not appropriate, as the expected distribution thereof would not be representative of the social phenomena in question; representativeness of the topic is necessary for qualitative analysis (Morse, 2014). My research sample was shaped through purposive convenience sampling: making use of personal relationships to engage participants who are sufficiently characterised to help answer my research questions (Harris et al., 2009; Morse, 2014).

### 4.4.2. PARTICIPANT SELECTION

To connect with participants, I approached my personal network and various organisations focused on addressing structural barriers for queer people, particularly in terms of entrepreneurship. I did so using a digital flyer[2] that I'd created which included my project particulars and the anticipated expectations of prospective participants. Of the organisations that I approached, only one responded and allowed me to join their private social network for queer entrepreneurs and post requests there. Additionally, some personal friends and mentors put me in touch with their networks.

My sample comprised individuals who identify both as queer and as entrepreneurs. I have highlighted my participants' gender identity (including pronouns) below. This category was selected because it influences individuals' access to and experiences of entrepreneurship. However, I did not offer 'boxes to be ticked' for gender identity, giving participants the freedom to self-identify or decline any categorisation. I also asked each participant for their age, nationality and race, as these are variables that could influence their experience as entrepreneurs, given the factors discussed in the literature review.

[2] Included in the appendix.

In terms of sample size, Stern (2011) recommends a sample of 20-30 participants and/or hours of observation and engagement for grounded theory, in order to reach saturation of the categories of theory that emerge. I was unable to identify and engage with a large sample, securing seven participants in total. There are various factors that may explain this:

*Table 2: Participant details.*

| *Gender identity* | *Pronouns* |
|---|---|
| Queer | They/them/their |
| Queer | She/her/hers |
| Queer | They/them/their |
| Woman | She/her/hers |
| Man | He/him/his |
| Woman | She/her/hers |
| Woman | She/her/hers |

- Restricted access to large groups of people due to an economic and social lockdown linked to the Covid-19 pandemic
- Reduced availability of entrepreneurs because of a need to dedicate time and resources to essential business survival over voluntary research participation
- Limited access specifically to queer entrepreneurs because of a possibly high number of closeted entrepreneurs due to fear of ostracisation or stigmatisation, and what appears to be a narrow queer entrepreneurship community

To address this data shortfall, I undertook triangulation, which is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. That being said, it has been argued that adopting a more intensive qualitative investigation with a smaller sample is more valuable to establishing fruitful relationships that help address the research problem in more depth (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). I believe that my interactions with these seven participants were very rewarding, given my ability to connect with them on multiple occasions and discuss their deeply personal outputs.

## 4.5. DATA COLLECTION

When it comes to grounded theory, researchers have a diverse toolkit at their disposal: both inductive and abductive language, emergent strategies which further inform the data collection process; comparative methods, and critical and analytical thinking (Denzin, 2019). The grounded theory process is systematic yet flexible, allowing theories to emerge from the data (Charmaz, 2006). Importantly, in grounded theory, data collection and analysis are conducted simultaneously through regular, systematic comparisons throughout the research process; the data and emergent analyses are constantly interacting with each other (Charmaz & Henwood, 2011). The beauty of grounded theory is that any elements relating to the subject – creation, conversation, observation – as well as my existing knowledge, are data (Stern, 2011).

### 4.5.1. COLLAGES

Collage involves the identification, cutting, and sticking of 'found' images or materials to a surface to express experiences or phenomena (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). Using the collage brief[3], I asked participants to create collages that revealed their ideal constructions of a 'queer' entrepreneurship.

The initial brief was for participants to generate a physical collage using mixed materials; two physical collages were produced. However, as the Covid-19 pandemic progressed and South Africa entered into a lockdown, physical collages became impractical: couriering stationery and materials to participants was prevented due to temporarily closed businesses at first, and subsequently by participants' hesitation to handle foreign physical goods. I adapted to asking for digital collages, which have been accepted and recommended as a way to manage logistical challenges to physical collage creation and minimise the loss of time and financial resources (Diggs, Lubas, & De Leo, 2015; Gokasan & Aygenc, 2017). The downside to digital collage must however be noted: while it is still informative of the artists' intents, the use of found images online, typically presented in rectangular format, limits the variety of compositions and 'uninteresting regions' (Goferman, Tal, & Zelnik-Manor, 2010). Further, digital collage creation is limited to those with stable internet connections and digital literacy (James & Busher, 2012), which automatically excludes a significant proportion of the South African population. Fortunately, my participants had access to reliable connections and digital tools. They were given the option to produce digital collages in whichever format suited them best, including Microsoft Word or PowerPoint, Google Slides, and Adobe Photoshop.

All participants were briefed on the purpose and intent behind the collage creation. These collages came out varied and eclectic: some were composed exclusively of found images, some incorporated three-dimensional protrusions, and some included words. Each collage was collected and saved based on a participant-assigned 'tag'. The two physical collages were photographed; digital collages were saved in PDF format.[4]

### 4.5.2. INTERVIEWS

Given my small sample size, I determined it necessary to substantiate the collage data to enhance its credibility. Triangulation enables this through the application of several methods, differing theories,

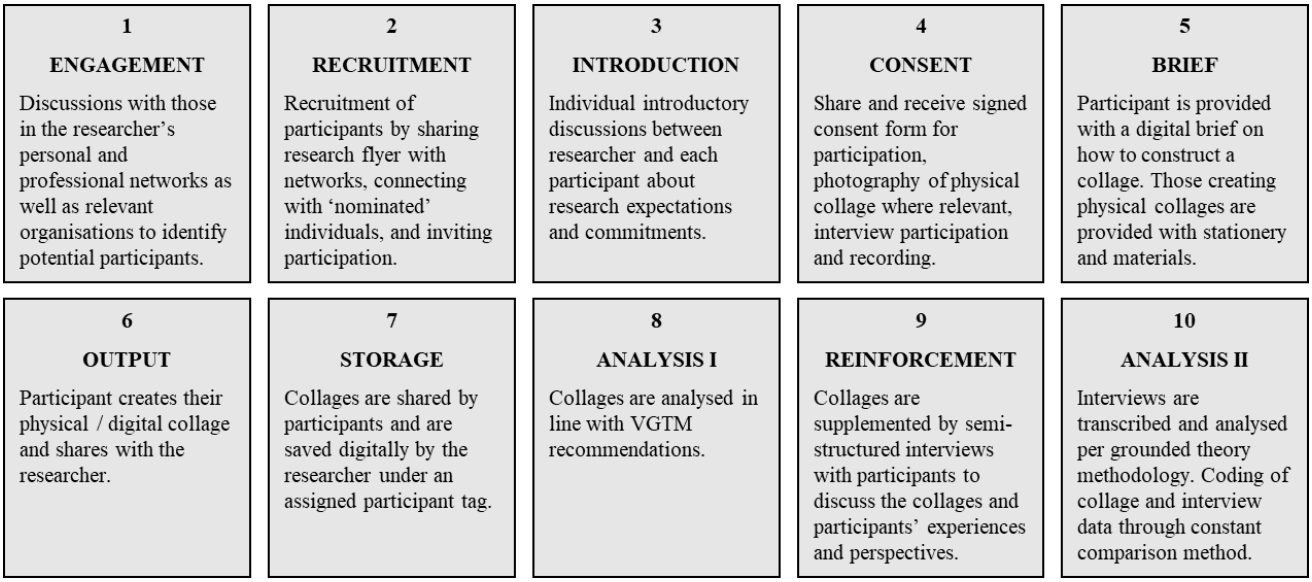
[3] Included in the appendix.
[4] Included in the appendix.

or multiple researchers (Flick, 2019b). I employed data triangulation: the combination of different forms of data within one study, which allowed me to collect new insights to build on the ones already obtained (Flick, 2019b). This collection of new data types is consistent with Morse and Clark's (2019) suggestion to supplement 'thin' data with other types to address a small sample size in generating grounded theory. It also in line with Mey and Dietrich's (2017) suggestion in the last step of their visual grounded theory methodology, which recommends that any sequentially used data, such as interviews with the creators of the visual data, should be considered during the analysis to enable constant comparison, which is critical to establishing clear and distinct categories (Charmaz, 2006).

To supplement my visual data with verbal data, I conducted online interviews with research participants. These interviews happened in real-time via WhatsApp calls, Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams – depending on the participants' preferences. Online interviews were necessary because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent social lockdown in South Africa. While online interviews can be limited due to gaps in connectivity and online literacy (James & Busher, 2012), they are advantageous over face-to-face interactions, as they allow people to conceal their contexts or present with some form of anonymity, creating space for participants to speak more freely (James & Busher, 2012). This was valuable to an exercise that required participants to discuss their personal experiences and perspectives.

These interviews were semi-structured, based on a discussion guide[5] of open-ended questions that allowed for spontaneity and organic conversations, as recommended by Charmaz (2014). Since the

*Figure 2: Data collection process (author's own).*




[5] Included in the appendix.

interviews took place overall several months, I was able to adapt and refine my questioning in line with the semi-structured approach. To avoid essentialising participants' identities, I allowed participants to lead our conversations, which helped me to gain rich insights into their experiences of and beyond their identities (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). Our conversations started with questions directly related to participants' collages but evolved to discussions of their experiences and perceptions of normative entrepreneurship, their queer identities, and the relationships between them. Interviews were recorded with participants' consent and transcribed to enable data analysis. They were labelled and stored according to the participants' tags to ensure alignment of the interview to the right collage.

All participants were reminded of their anonymity and the freedom to withdraw from the research process at any time. The participants' consent to involvement in the research process was obtained via the initial consent form signed at the beginning of the study.

## 4.6. Ethics

Ethical issues in qualitative research are essential because the research process can raise many complex and sensitive ethical and emotional issues (James & Platzer, 1999; Maxwell, 2013). This is especially true of research with marginalised individuals and groups, wherein the research process has potential to trigger traumas, expose protective mechanisms, deepen social stigmas, and misrepresent individuals (James & Platzer, 1999). There are three key concerns to address when it comes to ethical considerations in qualitative research (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000).

**The first concern involves the research-participant relationship** (Harley & Langdon, 2019; Orb et al., 2000)**.** Qualitative research intrinsically implies the development of complex and changeable relationships with people (Maxwell, 2013), due to the commitment to "exploring, examining, and describing people and their natural environments" (Orb et al., 2000, p. 93). In fact, in many qualitative studies, research validity is dependent on close, enduring relationships with individuals and communities (Carpenter, 2019). However, such relationships present a potential risk to the validity of a researcher's data through conscious or unconscious bias; they may lead to situations such as participants providing the data the researcher seeks rather than their truths (Carpenter, 2019). Similarly, in researcher-participant relationships, participants may feel forced or coerced into participation or the provision of the 'right' data due to the naturally embedded power dynamic between researcher and participant (Orb et al., 2000).

Moreover, queer reflexivity is critical to any queering exercise (McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b). Such an approach to reflexivity requires the researcher to acknowledge the performativity of their

identity and the identities of participants, understanding that such identities are fluid, contingent, and subject to change throughout the research process. (McDonald, 2017; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014; Rumens, 2018b). Queer reflexivity necessarily focuses on the ways in which (hetero)normativity is enacted and/or resisted (McDonald, 2017), but also helps reduce the risk of the researcher normalising or homogenising participants' experiences (Ozturk & Rumens, 2014). In so doing, it can enhance trust within the researcher-participant dynamic and enable interviewees to guide interview conversations (McDonald, 2017; Ozturk & Rumens, 2014).

In my research, I took efforts to establish an open, easy dialogue with my participants. I also tried to position myself as an equal contributor, rather than leader of, the interviews. My goal was that research participants could feel like collaborators and co-creators of the research, rather than being pure sources of data (Carpenter, 2019), and that they could guide the interview conversations (McDonald, 2017). I also obtained consent from participants, keeping in mind that there is a need for process consent throughout the project (James & Platzer, 1999). This consent referred not only to the initial agreement to participate but also to photograph, save, and use images of their collages in my final output. I also assured them of confidentiality and anonymity unless otherwise requested, and ensured that each fully understood their roles and contributions to the research (Harley & Langdon, 2019). Critically, I also made sure to check my language and position within the research setting in a way that recognised and accounted for my privilege, not just as researcher, but also as a white, well-educated, upper-income individual in South Africa.

**The second matter to address in ethical considerations is the potential for subjective interpretations of the data by the researcher (Orb et al., 2000).** In generating constructivist grounded theory, the researcher is expected to build on professional and personal life experiences, as these inherently influence how the research views and interacts with the data (Mruck & Mey, 2011).

Reflexivity was therefore an important consideration in my research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It is explicitly recommended within constructivist grounded theory, demanding ongoing self-reflection and self-consciousness around the influence of personal beliefs and experiences over the generation and interpretation of data (Charmaz, 2006; Mruck & Mey, 2011, 2019; Strauss, 1987). Reflexivity is also essential to any queering exercise to ensure an ongoing destabilisation of taken-for-granted assumptions and traditional claims to objectivity (McDonald, 2017). Without this reflexivity, the research ran the risk of elevating my tacit assumptions under the guise of objectivity, thus undermining the quality of the research output (Charmaz, 2006).

**Thirdly, there are concerns around the research design itself (Orb et al., 2000).** Visual methods are described as tools of empowerment that allow those that are marginalised, oppressed, or disenfranchised to communicate (Harley & Langdon, 2019). They are said to transform the researcher-participant dynamic transferring power and authority to the participant and away from the researcher (Harley & Langdon, 2019). There are however risks of negative power dynamics being entrenched rather than eliminated – for example when the researcher has to train participants how to engage or when participants lack the requisite skills to participate (Harley & Langdon, 2019). Additionally, there are challenges around the product of the research process, who owns it, and permissions for photography and usage (Hicks, 2018; Konecki, 2011).

In this respect, I generated a set of 'collage guidelines' for my participants to ensure understanding of the brief but allowed and even encouraged broad creative interpretation thereof. I also made sure to use collage materials that weren't exclusive of or biased towards specific cultural backgrounds. This meant using, for example, old egg cartons, magazines targeted at a wide variety of audiences, and mainstream national and community newspapers that ensured accommodation of various languages and cultural contexts. I also obtained written consent for the photography and use of participants' creative outputs.

## 4.7. Data analysis

The first analytic step in grounded theory is qualitative coding, "the process of defining what the data are about" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 186). Coding in grounded theory is, unlike other methods, conducted without a preconceived coding scheme (Kelle, 2011). Instead, codes and categories are allowed to emerge 'organically' from the iterative comparative processes (Charmaz, 1996; Kelle, 2011). To analyse the visual data produced through participants' collages to reveal codes and categories, I followed the steps outlined in Mey and Dietrich's (2017) visual grounded theory methodology.[6]

### 4.7.1. Collage analysis

Contextualisation, the first step in this approach, is not always required, but is useful as an indicator for how visual data are formed and who forms them (Mey & Dietrich, 2017).

[6] Outputs of the analytical process are included in the appendix.

The broader economic context in which these collages were generated is characterised by instability and uncertainty as a product of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is scepticism around how long global economic recovery may take, as well as demands for better quality of economic growth over higher speed (World Economic Forum, 2021). In South Africa, economic growth has been consistently low for several years, and unemployment has been high, particularly among the country's youth (Nordea Trade Portal, 2021). To help address these challenges, South Africa's Minister of the Department of Small Business Development in 2019 announced new mechanisms to drive economic transformation and job creation through the development of small businesses and cooperatives (Bowmaker-Falconer & Herrington, 2020). These mechanisms include making more funding available through all of the department's centres; introducing common templates for funding applications; launching a Small Business Innovation Fund, which will lower financial costs for entrepreneurs through loans and grants; and arranging to fund incubators under certain conditions (Bowmaker-Falconer & Herrington, 2020). However, South Africa 'still has some way to go towards developing entrepreneurship as a significant driver of economic development and job creation' (Bowmaker-Falconer & Herrington, 2020), with a fairly low entrepreneurial intentions rate of 11.9% relative to the global average of 23.72% (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2019).

Inequality has also accelerated over recent years, and even more so as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (World Economic Forum, 2021). As a result, we have witnessed an increase in global movements for the promotion of equality, justice, inclusion, and representation and protection of marginalised groups. These include, among many others, Abahlali baseMjondolo (a South African campaign against evictions and for public housing), Black Lives Matter (a movement against police brutality and racially motivated violence against black people), #MeToo (a movement against sexual abuse and harassment), various LGBTQ+ movements fighting for queer people's rights, and a number of movements calling for climate action.

Promoting LGBTQ+ rights has always been challenging globally, particularly in Africa, and especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Queer people have constantly had to contend with homophobia and transphobia demonstrated by governments, politicians and the public, which has had negative implications on their access to economic opportunities (Human Rights Watch, n.d.). And while South Africa's Constitution was the first in the world to proscribe unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, there is a dramatic contrast between policy and people's lived experiences (Pillay, 2018). In 2018, nearly 50% of South Africa's queer community reportedly experienced verbal, physical and/or sexual discrimination due to their sexual orientation (Pillay, 2018).

This context sets the scene for the environment in which queer entrepreneurs must develop their businesses: one which is profoundly challenging, both economically and socially.

Step two necessitates a description or inventory of what is shown in the image. This is not about simply listing image elements, but rather creating a 'pre-iconographic' or 'image-imminent' account of image contents as they show up and relate to each other (Mey & Dietrich, 2017). Importantly, at this stage, the visual data "needs to be understood in its non-text equivalent regularity" without the incorporation of external knowledge, standards, or interpretation (Mey & Dietrich, 2017).

Following this image inventory is segmentation. Image segmentation is a multidimensional and simultaneous process that unpacks chunks of the visual data based on how they interact with each other, rather than in terms of sequentiality (Mey & Dietrich, 2017). It unpacks the overall structure or composition of the image through "the process of perception" (Mey & Dietrich, 2017, p. 290) taking into consideration planimetrics (reconstruction of the image's overall composition), perspective, and scenic choreography (how different objects are related to or separated from one another) (Mey & Dietrich, 2017).

I found that steps two and three necessitated simultaneous analysis, as the documentation of image contents naturally led to an assessment of how they interacted with each other and with the overall image composition.

For step four of the process, I documented my preliminary segmentation of each of the collages in memos. At this point, I focused on interpreting the image directly without translating it into a text, so I identified codes based on the image segments (Mey & Dietrich, 2017). To do this, I asked generative questions of the collages, factoring in all elements beyond the initial eye-catching ones, and looked for potential relationships between the different image elements. While NVivo qualitative data analysis software does have the functionality to code visual data, I found the programme restricted my ability to capture the images effectively, distracting me from full immersion with the content. Belgrave and Seide (2019) noted that using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software can sometimes have this effect of removing the researcher from the data. Instead, I studied, coded, and wrote memos for each of the collages manually.[7]

Step five of the VGTM asks researchers to interpret the visual data in more depth "to align extra-pictorial discourses, visual cultures, or connotations of objects with the image segment itself" (Mey & Dietrich, 2017, p. 293). The application of "the bare minimum of everyday knowledge" (Mey & Dietrich, 2017, p. 293) and/or contextual or expert knowledge is recommended (Mey & Dietrich,

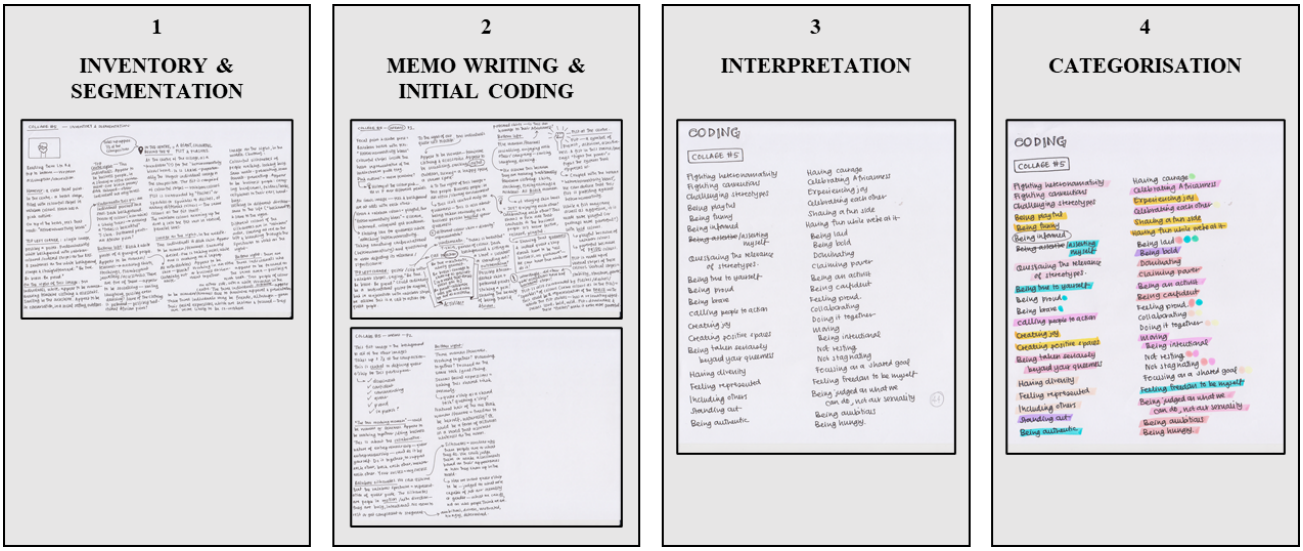
[7] These can be viewed in the appendix.

2017). My interpretation of the collages was therefore based initially on my own 'common knowledge', and then supplemented with reading into topics on which I lacked substantial understanding, including the meaning behind and evolution of Pride flags and 'visual grammar' around the meaning of lines, contrasts, white spaces, and colour usage.

During step four of the VGTM process, I found myself tempted to interpret the collages simultaneously as suggested in step five. To ensure that these steps remained discrete, I noted my memos for the two steps on separate documents. At the same time however, I used the somewhat organic dynamic between the two to engage in constant cross-comparison which is fundamental to understanding the potential relationships between image segments (Mey & Dietrich, 2017).

Following these steps of the process, I began to condense the emergent codes into categories by further exploring the findings in my memos and examining the connections of categories and sub-categories, per step six of the VGTM. Step seven of the approach suggests expansion of the material through theoretical sampling, but this step was not included for the reasons noted earlier in this chapter. Step eight focuses on promoting the integration of image categories with any additional data, such as interviews, which were used not only to supplement the collage data but also to triangulate it.

*Figure 3: Example of collage analysis process (author's own).*




### 4.7.2. Interview analysis

Following the coding and categorisation of the visual data, I coded the interviews using a constructivist grounded theory approach. This process started with an initial coding process, followed by more focused coding (Charmaz, 1996, 2006; Charmaz & Henwood, 2011). I analysed interview transcripts line-by-line and incident-by-incident and labelled each according to the concepts they described. These

concepts were then grouped together based on loose associations. As new ideas emerged from new interviews, some of the codes and clusters were renamed and reorganised.

As I coded my interviews, I noticed some clear themes emerging, even early in the process. These more prominent codes were grouped together, such that the initially loose associations were formalised into key conceptual categories (Charmaz, 1996). The concepts within these core categories – and their respective sub-categories and codes – were refined and defined, including the interrelationships between them.

Typically, the 'final step' in the coding process is to engage in theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is a strategic, specific, and systematic approach to collecting more data to clarify ideas that help develop the emerging theory further (Charmaz, 1996, 2006). Here, data is collected from participants who are selected specifically according to the 'needs of the study' (Morse & Clark, 2019). Theoretical sampling, and the coding that follows, continues until no new properties of a category are revealed or insights uncovered (Charmaz & Henwood, 2011). This is the point at which the researcher reaches theoretical saturation (Flick, 2019a). Given the limitations in generating a substantial enough research sample for the initial round of data collection, I wasn't able to saturate the data as thoroughly as I'd have liked. This is a significant limitation to my research. However, given that the interviews were conducted primarily to supplement my primary VGTM and enable triangulation, they still fulfilled their purpose in helping to generate new insights.

Critically, I conducted the coding process while trying to maintain self-awareness and ongoing reflection throughout, per the principles of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). This was to reduce the possibility for bias throughout the process and to ensure I made a concerted effort to ground the themes that emerged in the data, rather than in my own subjective interests (Charmaz, 2006).

*Table 3: Analysis process (author's own).*

| *Analysis phase* | *Analysis task* |
|---|---|
| (1) VGTM: Contextualisation | • Describe the context in which the collages were created. |
| (2) VGTM: Inventory | • Describe image contents as they show up and relate to each other<br>• External knowledge, standards, and interpretation are not incorporated at this stage |
| (3) VGTM: Segmentation | • Analyse chunks of the collages based on how they interact with each other |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • Consider overall collage composition, including planimetrics (reconstruction of the image's overall composition), perspective, and scenic choreography (how different objects are related to or separated from one another) |
| (4) VGTM: Memos | • Interpret the collage and segments to identify codes (n=375)<br>• Ask generative questions<br>• Look for potential relationships between different segments |
| (5) VGTM: Interpretation | • Align interpretation of the image segment to extra-pictorial discourses, visual cultures, or connotations of objects<br>• Apply 'everyday knowledge'<br>• Supplement with contextual and expert knowledge |
| (6) VGTM: Categorisation | • Condense emergent codes into sub-categories (n=22)<br>• Examine connections between categories |
| (7) Interviews: Initial coding | • Coding line-by-line and incident-by-incident<br>• Emergent codes (n=342) |
| (8) Interviews: Focused coding | • Focused coding through constant comparison<br>• Refined and collapsed codes (n=131) |
| (9) Interviews: Axial coding | • Axial coding of interview data through constant comparison<br>• Emergent sub-categories (n=20) |
| (10) VGTM: Integration | • Integrate image categories with additional data from interviews, refined and collapsed categories (n=5) |

## 4.8. EXPLORATORY FRAMEWORK

### 4.8.1. COLLAGE DATA

A preliminary framework was constructed as a product of the VGTM used to analyse the seven collages. Four categories emerged from the collage analysis: *fitting in vs. standing out; building and enriching my community; creating a good life*; and *taking action for progress*.

#### *Fitting in vs. standing out*

Two sub-categories emerged (fitting in and standing out) and were grouped together because of how they interacted with one another.

*Fitting in* emerged from the participants' desire to be accepted as 'legitimate' entrepreneurs. This is based on how success has been defined (making money), and a desire to be taken seriously for the value they add rather than based on their queerness. At the same time, to fit in as 'legitimate' entrepreneurs, participants want to stand out from mainstream commerce.

While seeking acceptance, participants also pride themselves on *standing out* from the normative construction by doing and thinking differently due to their queerness.

#### *Building and enriching my community*

This category is focused firstly on building community: being accepted, creating an environment where others are also accepted, embracing diversity, celebrating each other, and working towards a collective goal to create a better world.

The second component of this category focuses on enriching this community: giving back, showing up for and representing 'people like me', and being role models.

#### *Creating a good life*

This category encompasses overcoming challenges; finding balance; enjoying a 'soft' life (having hope, celebrating, feeling inspired, growing); finding and creating joy; and having the freedom to be oneself (being vulnerable, asserting oneself, giving voice to one's uniqueness, being whoever one wants to be).

#### *Taking action for progress*

This category is about being adaptable to a difficult environment, challenging the way things are, and actively pursuing change and transformation with a vision for progress that embraces queerness in a hetero- and cisnormative world.

### 4.8.2. INTERVIEW DATA

Five categories emerged from the interview analysis.

#### *Fitting in*

Participants indicated that they would want to fit in by being recognised as 'legitimate' entrepreneurs, and being accepted and taken seriously, without feeling the pressure to conform to a narrow stereotype of entrepreneurship or queerness.

‘Legitimate’ entrepreneurs display certain characteristics (assertiveness, tenacity, focus, courage, creativity, being a dreamer), are successful (creating a legacy, influencing people, making money, winning, being effective and efficient and maximising opportunities), and fulfil the ‘expected’ role of entrepreneurship (create something new, create change, create value for others, self-sufficiency, transform economies).

Being accepted and taken seriously means being accepted for who they are and the value they bring, being treated the same as any other ‘legitimate’ entrepreneur and not differently because of their queerness.

There is however pressure to conform to a narrow stereotype of the entrepreneur (older millennial, white, male, well-connected, money-hungry, privileged, peacocking, a bit sketchy) and to a ‘right’-exclusionary – way to be queer (be an activist, fight for social justice, have to suffer).

### *Standing out*

Participants are proud of standing out: by standing out from society (thinking differently, being an outlier, disrupting the mainstream, constantly learning and evolving, seeing the world in a different way), participants get to ‘fit in’ as ‘legitimate’ entrepreneurs.

At the same time, they are proud to stand out from the normative construction because of their queerness, because being queer is powerful (being a trendsetter, a creator of joy, having powerful conversations, transcending rules and norms, thinking and seeing differently).

The ideal queer construction of entrepreneurship is to stand out in a way that is celebrated rather than othered or judged.

### *Building, creating, supporting a community*

The ideal construction of a queer entrepreneurship would expand the role of the entrepreneur so that it’s not narrowly focused on money. This includes building and growing (your own) community (having squad goals, creating squad joy, drawing more people in) and supporting others (pushing for representation, being people-centred and selfless, changing people’s lives, giving back, having and being role models). It requires a different mindset (being communal / for the community, caring, collaborating and not competing, fostering and celebrating diversity, being generous, promoting inclusivity, showing humanity, and being considerate of one’s impact).

### *Owning your life*

The queering of entrepreneurship would give entrepreneurs the freedom to own and celebrate life in its wholeness (not having to hide who they are or struggle). This includes being true to oneself (authentic, unapologetic and unashamed, value-driven, confident, my queerness comes with me, don't have to be meek, assertive, boundless, free, living my truth, realising my potential); experiencing joy (creating and bringing queer joy, having fun, being happy, being free, not everything has to be activism/social justice); creating a good life (having freedom to create, being optimistic about the future, charting a path, claiming our destiny, showing others that life can be good, feeling inspired); and being able to overcome challenges (not having to be in survival mode, not having to feel uncertain, overcoming my own biases, having access to opportunities, overcoming self-doubt, not fighting for support).

### *Actions to help us get there*

There are several considerations necessary to achieve this ideal. Queer entrepreneurs need access (safety and safe spaces, formalising 'informal' businesses, broadening access, space to fail, support structures, access to existing or new networks, more queer spaces, more opportunities, funding, and mentorship / for queer people and the underprivileged/marginalised). They also need to be included in the mainstream (gaining access to existing academic and corporate space, access to existing panels / events / webinars, be invited for different perspectives that reimagine how entrepreneurs exist, have more non-queers advocating for them, and greater queer visibility by intentionally creating spaces and opportunities beyond stereotypes). To achieve the ideal, participants called for systemic change through ongoing education (better access to simple and useful information, curated panels / events / roadshows, deeper conversations, entrepreneurship education in schools to teach basic skills, training that inspires), meeting queer people where they are (cishet folks to enter queer spaces and not the other way around always, help build social capital, talk to people on the ground), more listening to and encouragement of diverse groups, and new values systems.

## 4.8.3. IMPLICATIONS

It appears that the categories that emerged from the interviews aligned with, and even substantiated, the collage categories. On this basis, it can be stated that the interpretation of collage data through the VGTM accurately reflects participants' sentiments, experiences, and ideals that were expressed explicitly in the interviews. This is reassuring that the VGTM process was adequately followed and

produced valuable outputs. However, there is also a potential risk of bias in such interpretation. Acknowledging my own subjectivity in the research process is important (Ogden, 2012). As such, self-awareness and reflexivity were critical throughout the process, to ensure I was engaged in the ongoing "uncomfortable assessment the interpersonal and interstitial knowledge-producing dynamics of qualitative research" (Olesen, 2012, p. 277), open to contradictory data and alternative interpretations (Ogden, 2012). I also aimed to demonstrate my commitment to the study's reliability through complete transparency of the research process, reflected in a detailed explanation of theoretical perspectives, process diagrams, and a methodology summary table.

# Chapter V: Findings

This chapter presents the main findings from the research and a discussion thereof, including, where relevant, links to the extant literature.

The first section of this chapter unpacks the entrepreneurship as it relates to participants' experiences of a normative construction current norm and a desired queer-inclusive 'ideal' construction. The second section considers adaptations to the normative construction that are necessary for it to be queered: ingredients and impediments. The final section then discusses the actions require to make such adaptations feasible and tangible.

## 5.1. Constructing entrepreneurship

### 5.1.1. The normative construction

In their interviews, participants were asked to explain whether they believed that there exists a stereotype of the entrepreneur, and, if so, to describe it. The existence of a stereotype was unanimously confirmed; participants were vocal in interviews about how the current construction of entrepreneurship is prescriptive within a narrow 'norm', and that they therefore felt excluded to some extent.

> Part of why I think there's a hesitation for people to even enter [entrepreneurship] spaces is because they think that they don't have the capacity to fit what it is currently structured as.

Participants' experiences of the current stereotype of the entrepreneur are largely in line with what is discussed in the literature. This norm or stereotype was described with varying specificity, though one participant captured the collective sentiment particularly succinctly:

> The current pop culture mould of an entrepreneur is predominantly male, Caucasian, straight or heterosexual...and privileged in some way.

Among all participants, it is taken as a given that the stereotypical entrepreneur is white. This aligns to the literature that observes – and subsequently critiques – a wide acceptance of the 'invisible' assumption of whiteness (Ahl, 2006; Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Marlow, 2014; Mirchandani, 1999). In

South Africa, such whiteness is directly tied to privilege, given the country's history with racial privilege and oppression, and its influence over access to social and economic capital.

> There's usually not a lot of places you can go to speak about [changing the narrative] because...of whiteness.
>
> The people who own a lot of the capital and money, but also physical structures, also then happen to be white.
>
> Either you come from a privileged background and your parents give you money, or you have the connections to get the money you needed, or you have the privilege of being able to get financed quite easily.

Maleness is also core to current perceptions and experiences of entrepreneurship. Privilege is again noted as a challenge, this time, in terms of needing social capital in heavily male-dominated spaces to succeed. Within this, heteronormativity is the default, which perpetuates exclusion and prejudice against those that identify differently from the normative binary (Bruni et al., 2004b; Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Marlow & McAdam, 2012).

> It's very much a white male-driven space, if not white male, then Black male.
>
> I'd always grown up to know all the other people around me to have worked for someone else and never really owned anything...Even my white friends' moms weren't business owners, it was really their dads.
>
> It's based on a social capital, based on who you know – in the corporate world, most times it's just people you've hooked up with, it's a gender-based thing.

Even where queerness does feature in the conversation, it is still centred on whiteness, maleness, and privilege.

> Whenever I think of queer business, that's always what I think of: white dudes with a small business with a small puppy and like a shit ton of money.

Remarkably, these attributes are described as the norm for entrepreneurship, despite many participants' early experiences of what they now consider to be entrepreneurship.

> Growing up, what I understood as an entrepreneur was always someone's mom: there was always someone who would wake up and start selling *amagwinya* and *polony* on the side of the road.
>
> When I think about entrepreneurship, at least from a South African context...I see a lot of women being involved.

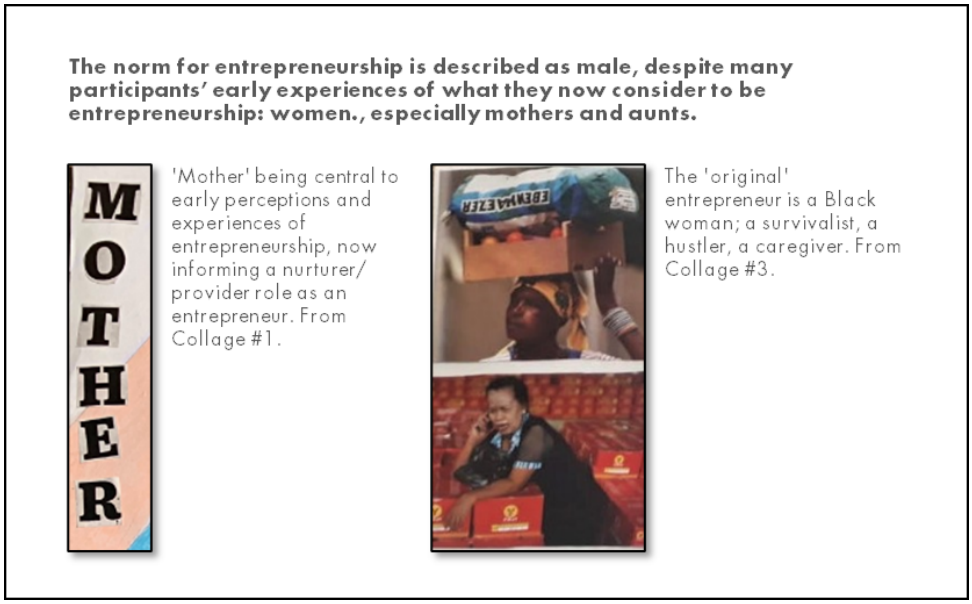
> In some way, shape or form, women are entrepreneurs.

This corresponds to the literature that argues that the majority of entrepreneurship research is Western-centric with limited accounting for alternative contexts or cultural nuances (Brush & Cooper, 2012; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017).

For obvious reasons, participants who are not white, male, heterosexual, or cisgender cannot identify with these attributes used to characterise the normative entrepreneur and are automatically excluded from the mainstream narrative. Each of the participants expressed a strong desire to change the conventional narrative around entrepreneurship to one that is more representative of the South African reality: one with more colour, more non-male identities, and more queerness.

Participants highlighted a further flaw in the normative construction of entrepreneurship not because it is exclusionary, but because it is shaped by values that are perceived to be problematic: a blinkered focus on money or wealth generation. This is a perceived issue, for both participants and many entrepreneurship authors, because it undermines the value entrepreneurship creates for individuals and communities beyond monetary wealth (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011).

*Figure 4: The normative construction vs. experienced reality.*



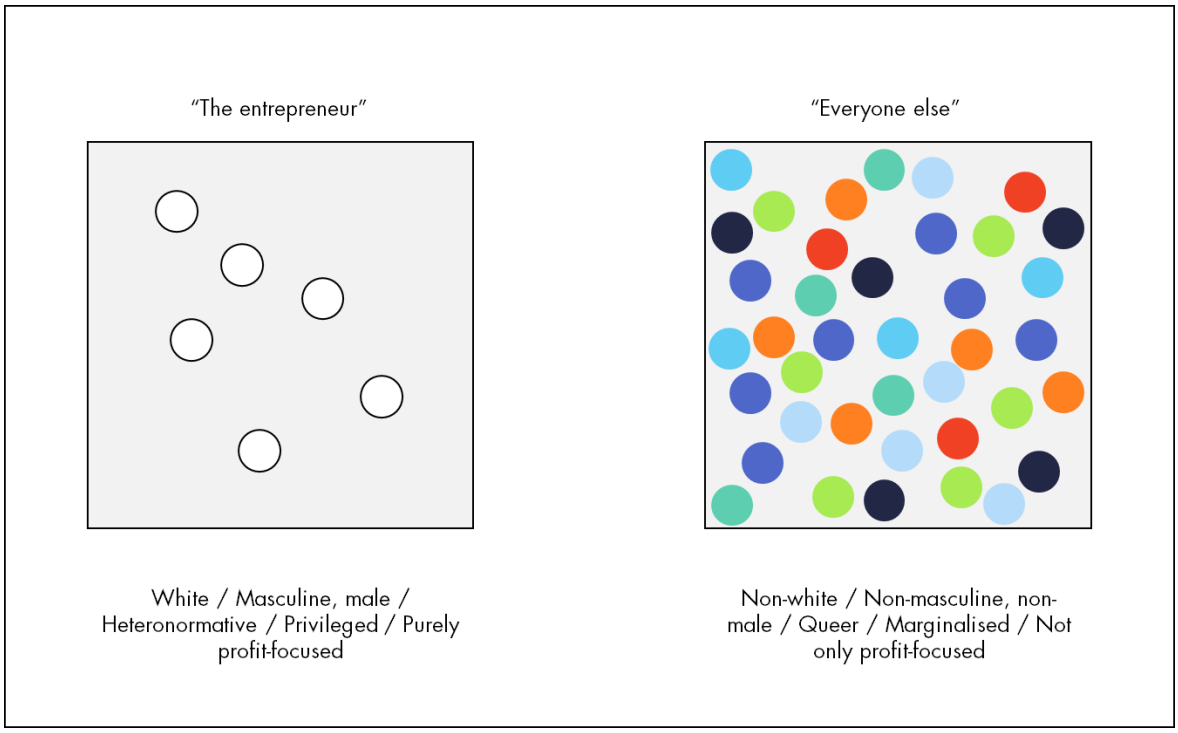

> It's just money hungry.
>
> People who use phrases like, 'We can move money here, we can make money, don't worry about it'.
>
> It's more heavily profit-focused and forgets about the community that got it there in the first place.

Participants indicated the need and desire for a reconstruction of entrepreneurship to address these issues. This is because entrepreneurship is recognised as a pursuit that should be accessible to all and should therefore be non-prescriptive.

> It's just the whole idea of creating a conducive environment of networks that people can tap into, not just exclusive people, but anyone.
>
> Don't tell me what business needs to be for it to be business, there can't be a thing that qualifies what or how I think I should go about it.

It is within this context that they developed their collages, which illustrated their ideal constructions of a queer conceptualisation of entrepreneurship.

*Figure 5: The current construction of entrepreneurship (author's own).*




### 5.1.2. AN INCLUSIVE CONSTRUCTION

> My vision in how I see entrepreneurship and how I do entrepreneurship is all of those things [white, male, heteronormative, privileged, profit-focused] but the opposite.

While participants readily critiqued the current social construction of entrepreneurship, they were far more excited and passionate about a more inclusive reconstruction – a queering – thereof.

A queer-inclusive construction of entrepreneurship obviously but somewhat superficially demands greater inclusion of queer individuals, in terms of gender and sexuality. Part of how this is achieved is through the active confrontation of heteronormative standards within the current construction, which have been noted to maintain and reproduce discrimination and prejudice against those that identify

differently from the normative binary (Bruni et al., 2004b; Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Marlow & McAdam, 2012).

> I do it as much as I possibly can within my relationships...go against the grain like, 'Fuck heteronormativity, man.'
>
> I want it to break those heteronormative standards that are constantly shoved down our throats, that we constantly regurgitate anyway in general society.

However, queering the construction of entrepreneurship towards a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse demands an entirely new 'ideal' construction that is more inclusive and representative of marginalised identities in general, not just queer folk. This is consistent with calls to incorporate a wider range of cultures, contexts, and nuances to address the inherent inequality embedded in the normative conceptualisation of entrepreneurship (A. Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Welter et al., 2017). Such an outlook, in this research project, is informed by the shared experience being excluded as outsiders.

> You rarely find people in the LGBTQIA+ community who don't think about everyone else because people didn't think about them for such a long time.
>
> Understanding that I look different... and everyone that looked like me in those communities was looked down upon, it was important for me to start showing representation and start showing success... so that we could form a new norm for people that were nonbinary, that were of colour, that were women, that were young, that came from certain socio-political backgrounds.
>
> It's expanding opportunities and spaces for these [marginalised] individuals to exist and to share what they offer but also to create a more inclusive space.

The inclusion and elevation of Black and brown identities is therefore fundamental to queering the normative construction. This is not simply about an aesthetic change for 'appropriate' representation; it is linked to historically marginalised communities in South Africa that haven't had access to the same kinds of economic opportunities as their white counterparts.

> I've found that most entrepreneurs [in South Africa] are Black and they are Black women. I've put them there because I feel they carry a lot of embodiment of what it means in South Africa to actually be an entrepreneur, what it means to be very South African, and how strong it had to be to not be cast into the shadows, to always be prevalent. Always be waking up in the morning and making this work.

Driven by a stronger social mandate than the normative construction of entrepreneurship, the ideal construction aims to generate value for communities and broader society beyond – but not necessarily to the exclusion of – wealth creation. Generating profits is still important to queer entrepreneurs; it just isn't the sole motivator.

> You still have to be doing things for the customer, for the consumer, for the community, and the profits will come, like the share price will come and the profits will come.

For most participants, this is rooted in their backgrounds as Black South Africans, with a deep appreciation of the various people and communities that supported their growth and ability to overcome socioeconomic obstacles. This contrasts with the mainstream entrepreneurship scholarship which maintains a focus on "methodological individualism" (Steyaert, 2007, p. 456). For all participants, making a meaningful community impact is just as important a reflection of success as monetary wealth is. This is consistent with criticisms in the entrepreneurship literature that highlight how Western definitions of success conceal the value that entrepreneurship may create for individuals and communities beyond economics (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017).

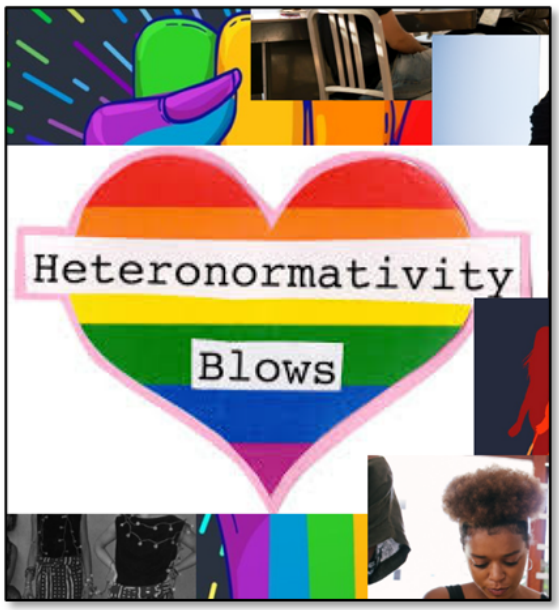
> I'm a big believer in giving back even if it's not financially, even if you're not in a position to give back financially... whether it is your time, whether it is sharing the lessons that you've learned or sharing your skills and expertise.
>
> Small businesses can build and grow, marginalised or disadvantaged and underserviced communities.
>
> I'm part of the people. It's actually the people that make up an entrepreneur. Without them, it's not going to happen.
>
> At the heart of it is wanting to change people's lives, wanting to make things easier.

It is however critical to note that this may not be an exceptional belief system held among queer entrepreneurs. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019/2020 report indicates that South African entrepreneurs are more purpose-driven than some of their regional peers, with 85% of South African

adults agreeing that their primary motivation to start a business would be to make a difference (Bowmaker-Falconer & Herrington, 2020).

*Figure 6: How the ideal construction differs from the norm.*

**The ideal construction actively confronts normative rules and conventions and celebrates divergence and diversity.**




The ideal construction actively fights against heteronormative standards being imposed. From Collage #5.



Individuals who don't 'fit in' or conform to heteronormative, patriarchal norms are welcomed and celebrated under the new construction. From Collage #6.

*Figure 8: The ideal construction elevates the inclusion of Black entrepreneurs.*

**The ideal construction helps create and celebrate an inclusive Black, queer family.**




From L to R, top to bottom: Collages #1, #2, #5, #4, and #1.

*Figure 7: The ideal construction is inclusive of many identities, not only queer entrepreneurs.*

**The ideal construction is explicitly inclusive and welcoming of diversity due to an appreciation of what it feels like to be marginalised and excluded from mainstream society.**




Inclusion of all queer identities signalled through a variation of Daniel Quasar's 'Progress Pride Flag' that incorporates trans individuals and people of colour. From Collage #1.



Inclusion of women who, although more readily included in the entrepreneurship mainstream, are still marginalised in a masculine world. From Collage #5.





Including other marginalised identities, such as lower-income communities or 'othered' religions. From Collage #6.

*Figure 9: The ideal construction conceives of success differently.*




### 5.1.3. Points of Intersection

Despite offering some compelling critiques of the stereotypical entrepreneur and alternative queer constructions, participants also strongly identified with and expressed a desire to embody certain characteristics of the norm, as expressed in both their collages and their interviews.

Understanding that entrepreneurship has been socially constructed as a means to pursue freedom and autonomy, self-interest, and personal improvement; to realise one's capacity for innovation; and to

liberate individuals from institutional constraints, (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Calás et al., 2009; Lewis et al., 2017; Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018; Ogbor, 2000), asserting their association with and demonstration of such attributes enables queer entrepreneurs to establish legitimacy as entrepreneurs, to claim success, and possibly to be worthy of 'fitting in' in a world in which they have often felt marginalised. This supports Schumpeter's assertion that entrepreneurial individuals may not be driven purely by hedonistic intent but may also be seeking social and economic distinction (Schumpeter, 1934) – reflecting a desire to stand out and in so doing 'fit in' to the entrepreneurial norm.

For my participants, being an entrepreneur is a point of pride. This could be based on the South African attribution of high status to entrepreneurs: in 2019, 82.2% of adult South Africans considered entrepreneurship a career with high status (Bowmaker-Falconer & Herrington, 2020).

Specifically, participants expressed esteem around autonomy, freedom from institutional constraints, and distinction from non-entrepreneurs.

> The one thing I love about being an entrepreneur, is that you've got a lot more flexibility than you do doing anything else.
>
> I feel liberated from what was initially projected onto me as I child.
>
> Entrepreneurship allows for a very different engagement with making money, essentially; a really creative way of making money without the 9 to 5.

On top of this, having the space to innovate and pioneer new ideas or new ways of working is perceived as a triumph. This is in line with mainstream media representations of the entrepreneur as an innovative risk taker (Ahl, 2004; Hamilton, 2013; Jayawarna, Jones, & Marlow, 2015; Marlow & McAdam, 2012).

> One of the things that inspires me about being an entrepreneur is connecting the dots in ways previously unconnected.
>
> Entrepreneurship is all about being new, about being fresh.
>
> It allows for a lot of thinking outside the box. It allows for people to bring their own particular flavour and style to things.
>
> Entrepreneurship allows us to go outside of the norms and to try new things.
>
> What entrepreneurship offers is that we are creating new industries. We're pioneering.
>
> I think it's that whole idea of taking general mainstream ideas and queering them.

Critically, entrepreneurship is also perceived as a vehicle for personal expression and achievement.

> Being an entrepreneur is about catching your dreams and figuring out ways of turning your dreams into realities.
>
> I think entrepreneurship is one of the many forms of self-expression for me, especially, particularly, as a creator, I find that entrepreneurship is a way of expressing myself economically.
>
> It's just about that space to be super creative... [it] just drives the human psyche because we're naturally a very inquisitive animal.

Participants also expressed pride in the role they play as contributors to economic development through entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of job creation. This is pertinent in an economy where unemployment reached 32.5% in Q4 2020, with 63.2% unemployment in people aged 15-24 years and 41.2% in those aged 25-34 years (Stats SA, 2020).

> I believe the role of entrepreneurship is to provide solutions to a gap in the market, whether it's in terms of a service or a product.
>
> There is the job creation element of it, which is probably the biggest element of entrepreneurship and small businesses: the number of jobs that we're able to create very quickly.
>
> Entrepreneurship is the only way that South Africa, as an emerging market, can transform the economy.

Participants' identification with these traits indicates that there is still some degree of identification with the norm. This needs to be accounted for in creating the ideal construct to ensure its relevance and individuals' affinity to it.

*Figure 10: Queer entrepreneurs embrace certain attributes of the stereotype.*

**Participants resonate with entrepreneurship as a means to assert independence and pursue freedom, to fight against the norm, to explore and realise one's potential.**




Figure performing/protesting could be a way to assert independence & distinction, fight against imposed norms. Entrepreneurship as freedom to 'Create and build your own. Do you, unapologetically.' From Collage #1.

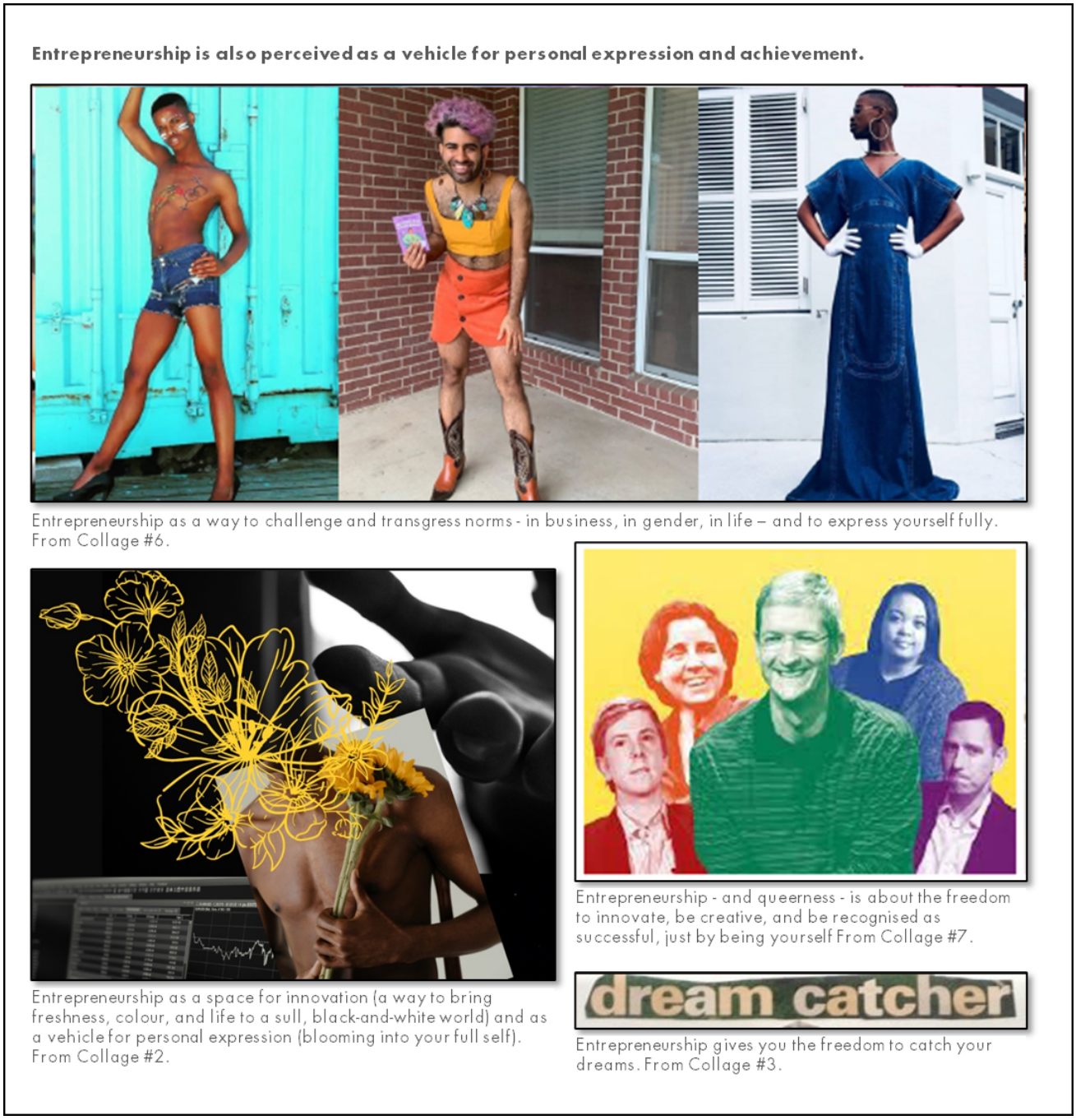


Entrepreneurship as an open road – with space to explore, every new idea is a new opportunity. From Collage #4.




The break from mainstream 9-5 office jobs and having the freedom to reimagine normative gender roles and careers is core to entrepreneurship. From Collage #7.

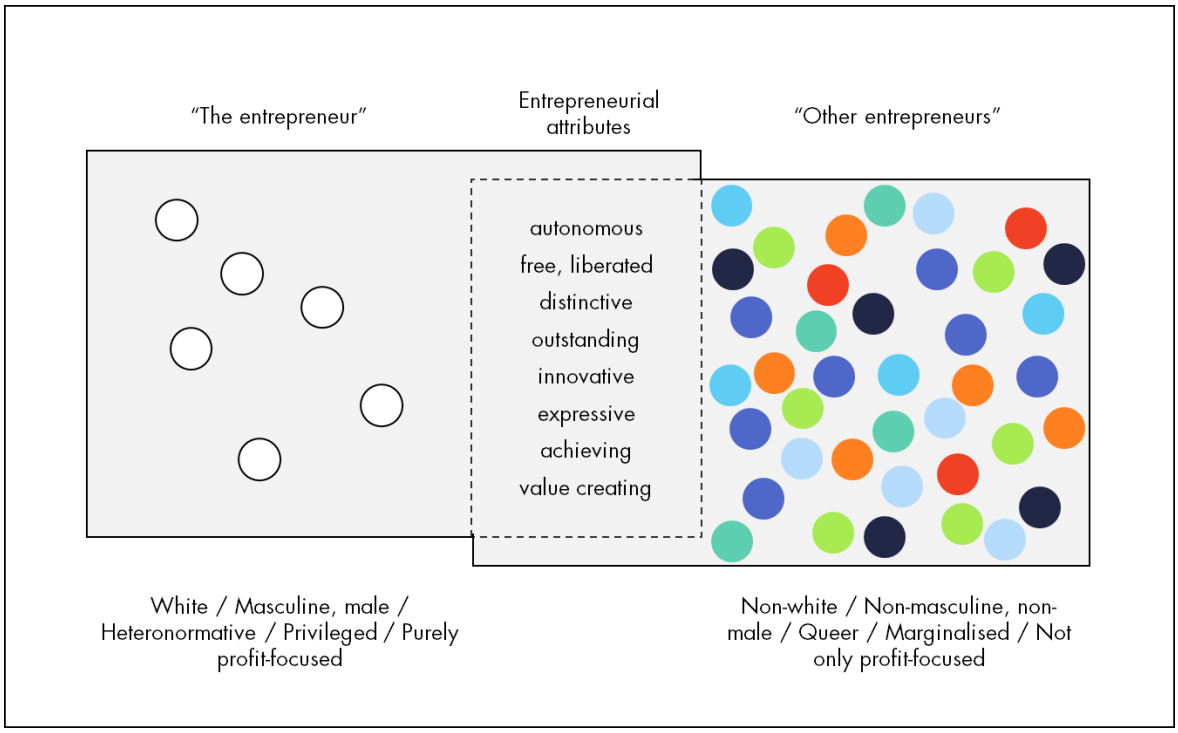
*Figure 11: Entrepreneurship is embraced as a form of self-expression and achievement, queer or otherwise.*




### 5.1.4. AN IDEAL CONSTRUCTION

Participants defined a new ideal construction of entrepreneurship that is inclusive not only of queer individuals, but of various marginalised groups. This ideal is based on addressing current stereotypes, including others, and building on shared entrepreneurial attributes. I will refer to this as 'the ideal construction' moving forward.

*Figure 12: Towards the ideal construction by addressing current stereotypes, including others, and building on shared attributes (author's own).*




## 5.2. REALISING THE IDEAL

Identifying the attributes of an ideal construction of entrepreneurship is only one step in the process to achieving it. Making such construction a reality also requires substantive change to how we think and talk about entrepreneurship (Ogbor, 2000). This comprises the identification of the ingredients necessary to realise a new construction and the impediments that could stifle it. These are discussed below.

### 5.2.1. INGREDIENTS TO SUCCESSFULLY QUEERING THE NORMATIVE CONSTRUCTION

Realising the ideal construction of entrepreneurship requires a reconstruction of the norm so that it is more expansive and inclusive, both in the literature and in practice. The data from the collages and interviews revealed the need to expand entrepreneurship across four critical dimensions.

#### *Expand the definition and recognition of 'success'*

The queered construction challenges Western notions of success that elevate the role of the individual and the importance of profit-making. For the queered construction to materialise, how success is

defined and, more importantly, recognised and accepted in the mainstream must evolve. We must reconsider values systems entirely.

There are four components to this updated definition of entrepreneurial success:

i) **Communal value.** The creation of value for the collective is the primary driver of entrepreneurial pursuits and indicator of success within the queered construction. This value is not necessarily economic; it is about sustainable, inclusive socioeconomic development for entire communities, particularly those that have been marginalised historically.

> We start with that little nugget of wanting to change our lives and the lives of the people around us in our communities, and eventually you figure out how to make money out of that.
>
> We're helping each other to get by in life. It's not necessarily to get super-rich.

ii) **Cultural value.** Driving larger-scale cultural change is also critical to success within the queered construction. This involves transforming entire systems and structures into the long-term to be more inclusive, representative, and collaborative.

> I want to create a legacy. I want to create a space for people of colour, queer individuals, women especially, where we can be in this industry freely.
>
> If one entrepreneur can change your life or change your day, then you can go and do the same for someone else. It'll just build a different culture within South Africa.
>
> It's not an us against them type of situation.

iii) **Spiritual value.** As both a by-product of the above, and a conscious pursuit in itself, finding fulfilment and joy in your work is also a marker of success.

> Queer entrepreneurship, especially in the work that I do, is all about bringing about queer joy.
>
> We should be true to ourselves, be brave with who we are, and be brave within our sexuality.

iv) **Economic value.** While not expressly mentioned, economic value is core to entrepreneurial success, because it sustains the creation of broader societal value. Critically, the normative conceptualisation of success is not discarded entirely, but rather expanded upon; success does involve money, especially as an enabler, but is not *only* about money.

> It's got to do a lot more than just about sustaining myself, but it's about sustaining my community. It's about sustaining the environment.

These different facets of value align to the literature that distinguishes entrepreneurship as social activity, where entrepreneurship is both an outcome and driver of sociocultural contexts (Yetim, 2008), creating value that is inclusive of and beyond commerce (Hjorth, 2013; Zahra & Wright, 2016). It also speaks to entrepreneurship as emancipation, which enables individuals to pursue freedom and autonomy through the confrontation of existing structures and perceived social constraints (Martinez Dy et al., 2018; Rindova et al., 2009). Further still, such an expansive characterisation of success supports the idea of entrepreneurship as a growth mechanism that measures success not simply economically but also through social development (Galloway et al., 2015; Hjorth, 2013; Zahra & Wright, 2016).

### *Expand on the requisite behaviours for success*

While the normative construction of entrepreneurship demands competitive 'conqueror' behaviours to succeed (Bruni et al., 2004a; Ogbor, 2000), the ideal construction does not. This is not to say that assertiveness is not advantageous or discouraged – some participants indicated that their 'hustle' mindset is what drives their success, particularly when fighting against a heteronormative system that is perceived to command compliance.

> It's bootlegging, it's pushing, it's hustling. It's all of that. It's all of the stuff that nobody sees and nobody likes.

> You don't have to be super meek to be a successful entrepreneur in South Africa as a Black woman.

Within the ideal construct though, harshness is not the only way to achieve success, and it is not mutually exclusive from humanity. The collage and interview data revealed that success is ultimately achieved through a balance: work hard/play hard, be strong but gentle, be generous but firm with your

*Figure 13: Redefining success is core to the ideal construction.*

**For the ideal construct to materialise, how success is defined, recognised and accepted in the mainstream must evolve.**



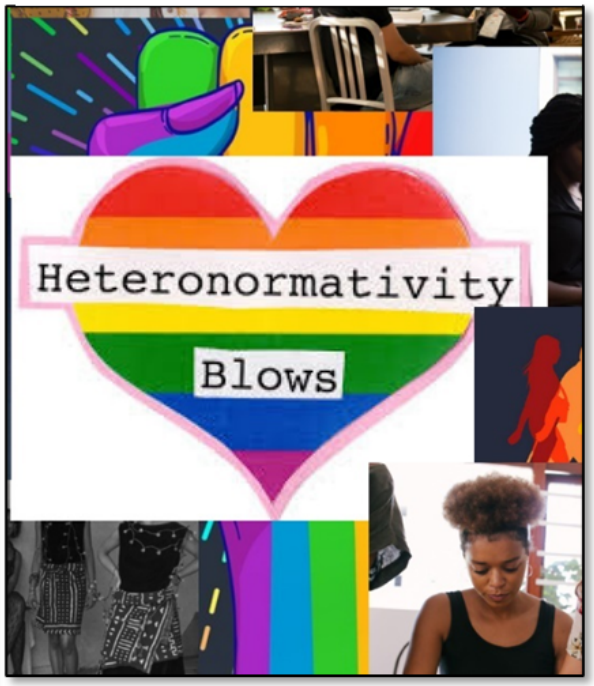
Success involves positively changing the lives of people who have historically been excluded (communal value), and driving systemic shifts in who gets to participate and which voices are elevated in dialogue (cultural value). From Collage #6.



Entrepreneurial success can be measured through the spiritual value it creates: Enabling freedom, joy, softness, comfort, confidence, and playfulness. From Collage #4.




Success under the ideal is representative of a broader population (Black, queer), and changes the future through positive change and hope within a community (communal value). From Collage #1.



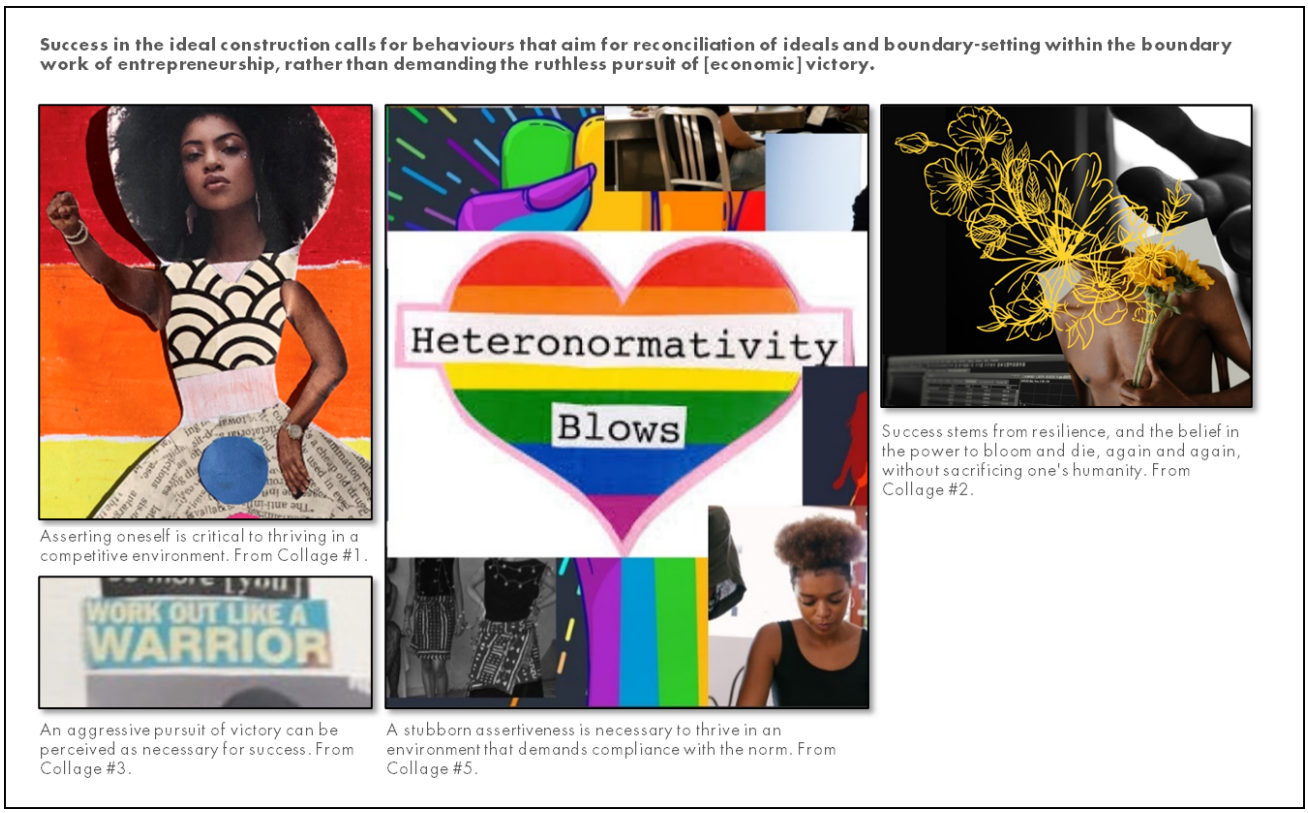

Success includes the ability to drive larger-scale cultural change by fighting against norms (signified by the fist) to transform industry/ business dynamics to be more inclusive, more collaborative, less competitive, and perceiving people based on what they are capable of, not their sexuality or gender. From Collage #5.

[economic] victory, success in the ideal construct calls for behaviours that aim for reconciliation of ideals and boundary-setting within the boundary work of entrepreneurship.

> A lot of people have to sacrifice their very being, to be seen as doing a great job for the community. I don't think that that's sustainable in the long run... you also have to be resilient. To shrink yourself also means that, at some point, you start to lose yourself and you can't give back anymore.
>
> There's still the softness that still allows that person to thrive despite necessarily fitting in.
>
> The idea that flowers blossom and die really represents that you could fail, but it doesn't mean that it's the end.

This belief system is concordant with the construction of entrepreneurship as emancipation, in that it gives individuals the space to challenge the reproduction of unequal power dynamics and establish new ones to facilitate social change (Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011). It also aligns to the idea of entrepreneurship as process, particularly in terms of the creation of new organisational forms, purposes, and ways of being that accommodate the different subjective and personal experiences of those engaging in entrepreneurial activity beyond a set formula for 'how to do entrepreneuring' (Hjorth et al., 2015; Johannisson, 2011; Steyaert, 2007).

*Figure 14: The ideal construction encourages behaviours that embrace balance and humanity.*



### *Embrace the expansiveness of queerness*

A construction of entrepreneurship that is queer-inclusive naturally necessitates the acceptance of queerness. It appears, to participants, that the common understanding thereof relates to the acceptance of an individual's non-normative sexual orientation or gender identity. However, for these queer entrepreneurs, queerness extends beyond an orientation or identity.

Queerness reflects a way of doing and thinking that is interrogative, creative, and unconventional.

> [We] were having a conversation about what the meaning of queer is and that it just means other, that you just have a different way of seeing things, of understanding the world around you. It's like an analytical lens through which you really interrogate everything.
>
> My queerness transcends just my orientation. It also seeps into how I do things.
>
> I think it's that whole idea of taking general mainstream ideas and queering them in terms of having to-- Because you've had to think outside the box for so long, in terms of your life.

Queerness also involves the shaping of new identities and a distinctive way of being beyond binaries, refusing to be bounded or defined.

> I bring my queerness and my version of self with me everywhere I go.
>
> Normal is so boring and somebody who's able to step out and say, "This is me and take me as I am," is very unique within everything else going around and that is what makes you stand out.
>
> If I only really dreamt within the limits of what people told me I was able to achieve, I would not amount to anything.

Embracing queerness as such therefore requires an openness to the ongoing questioning, transgression, and rejection of normative perspectives and perceptions, even when uncomfortable.

> It is an uncomfortable conversation to have, to come to terms with our unconscious bigotry, biases.
>
> I think the authentic nature of how many people exist in that nonbinary space is a lot more apparent than we're willing to experience, or that society is willing to experience.

Based on the above, achieving the ideal construction necessitates a broader understanding of queerness as both an all-encompassing term for non-normativity and an undefined concept that liberates individuals and systems from binary thinking; it is a multiplicity. As Jonathan Sacks (2003) describes it, "We are particular *and* universal, the same *and* different, human beings as such, *but also* members of his family, that community, this history, that heritage. Our particularity is our window on to universality" (p. 56). Embracing queerness therefore requires enthusiastic acceptance of fluidity, multiplicity, and experimentation that is not confined to a certain way of seeing, doing, or being (Browne & Nash, 2010; de Souza, 2017; Sedgwick, 1994).

*Figure 15: Queerness in all its forms is welcomed.*

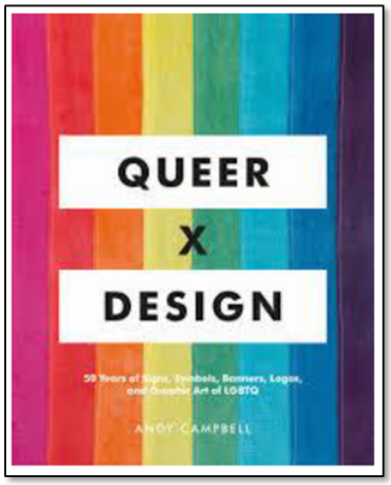
**A queer-inclusive construction of entrepreneurship necessitates the acceptance of queerness – not just as an identity or orientation, but as a way of doing and thinking about the world.**




A strong diagonal visual disrupts the comfort and stability of horizontals, much like queerness disrupts normativity, refusing to be bound by what existed before. From Collage #1.



Queerness isn't simply about one's gender identity or sexual orientation but is rather about leaning into a world of questioning, transgression, and rejection of binary modes of thinking and being. From Collage #6.




Queering is deliberate and emphatic - by design - in challenging the status quo. From Collage #4.



Phases of the moon reflect a movement, a transcendence, a beacon of light in the dark. Could be symbolic of how queerness evolves and takes on different shapes and forms, shining light on the current way of being, giving way to continual rebirths of thinking and being. From Collage #2.

### *Expand our collective acceptance*

In line with the literature (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Ogbor, 2000), participants perceive entrepreneurship as a way to liberate people from institutional constraints and so have pursued entrepreneurship in part for the freedom to show up as queer, without any restrictions or judgments on how they think or behave. As such, achieving the ideal means that queer entrepreneurs are accepted as valuable contributors in their respective fields – no matter their gender identity, gender performance, sexuality, or any other marginalised social ascription.

> If you want to hire somebody...if they have the requisite qualifications and experience that you require with a minimum or maximum then they should get a salary based on that and not based on their gender or how they identify.

> The knowledge that I have is the reason why I have a seat at this table, the experience that I have is the reason why I have a seat at this table, so you need to listen to what I have to say. I'm not going to change who I am. Me being queer is not necessarily my whole identity, but it is an aspect of me.

> People should hire people based off of the energy that they will bring to the office. Because if everybody at the office is like yourself or people that you know, then you will not grow as an entrepreneur... You need people that think differently than you, people that will challenge your perceptions of the world and how you see it.

However, acceptance is not sufficient to achieving the ideal construction. A queer-inclusive construction of entrepreneurship is not simply about making sure there are those from marginalised populations with the 'right' faces in the relevant forums – even if such inclusion is based on qualifications and experience rather than identity. It's about making entrepreneurs feel welcomed and included, ensuring that they believe they have a voice, and *actively* listening to it as a valid, necessary, and appreciated part of the conversation.

> Representation matters and it goes far beyond putting a particular marginalised firm on the seat and saying, 'There, you've got a seat at the table.' It's about putting the actual marginalised people that know what they're doing and know what they're saying, and they've got the expertise, to have a seat at the table.

Therefore, to achieve a truly queer-inclusive ideal, there also needs to be an active endorsement of the value added – and where it might come from. Participants were unambiguous about how their experiences as queer people are key to their success as entrepreneurs: these experiences have informed unique and compelling perspectives, encouraged the questioning of normative thinking and

behaviours, and embraced disruption. This requires letting go of prescriptive definitions within the mainstream construction of entrepreneurship, and actively welcoming new ideas, approaches, and business models.

> There's no right way to be a businessperson. Any person can be a businessperson. In fact, we need more different people to help us reimagine how we exist.
>
> [We are] able to forge a new way of doing things and a new way of seeing the world that [isn't] based on male or female.

Such thinking is not only necessary for a queer-inclusive entrepreneurship or even more broadly inclusive construction of entrepreneurship; it is fundamental to *entrepreneuring* (Goss et al., 2011; Johannisson, 2011; Verduyn, 2015).

*Figure 16: A queered construction recognises entrepreneurs' value beyond their queerness.*

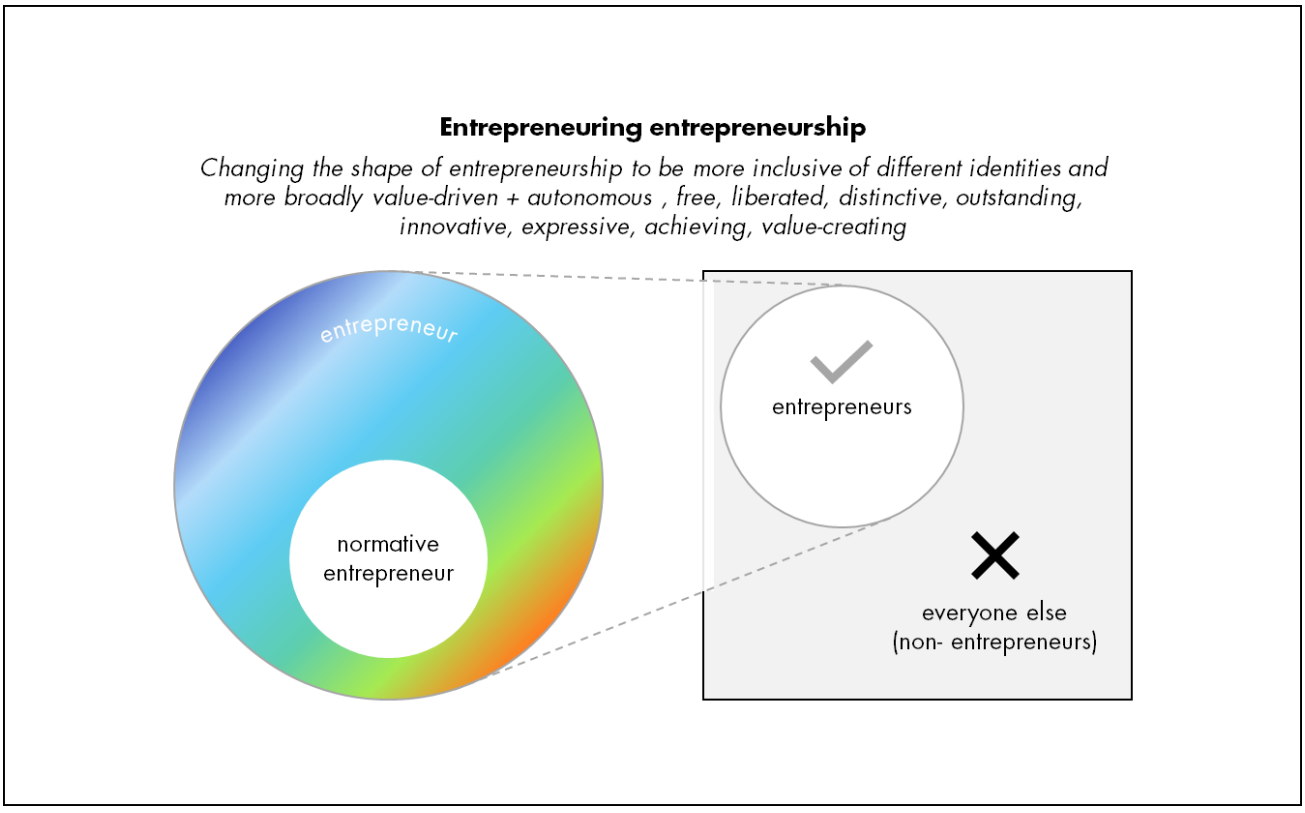



### *Ingredients: Key take-outs*

Based on the above, achieving the ideal construction demands an *entrepreneuring* of entrepreneurship itself: "re-envisioning the discipline so that it questions its own boundaries and accepted ways of doing things" (Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017, p. 197). It craves, rather than an alternative to the norm, an extension, evolution, and enrichment thereof that changes the shape of entrepreneurship and (re)imagines ways of being not as opposites but as dynamic tensions that ebb and flow with context.

Understanding entrepreneuring as a way to engender new environments (Rindova et al., 2009), this is achieved through "a conglomerate of transindividual practices" (Verduyn, 2015, p. 639) that actively intervene in the taken-for-granted assumptions and practices – in this case, of the normative construction of entrepreneurship – to disrupt the status quo and overcome perceived constraints of the current paradigm (Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Johannisson, 2011; Rindova et al., 2009; Verduyn, 2015). Importantly, entrepreneuring is an ongoing, experimental process that requires continuous questioning, such that any perceived failures are turned into learnings that stimulate further entrepreneuring (Johannisson, 2011) – so as we develop new understandings, approaches, or definitions, we are perpetually open to challenges that facilitate the inclusion of new perspectives. This outlook is fundamental to the ideal construction.

*Figure 17: Entrepreneuring entrepreneurship to change the shape of entrepreneurship (author's own).*




### 5.2.2. IMPEDIMENTS TO A SUCCESSFUL QUEERING

There is immense optimism about a future for entrepreneurship that is more queer-inclusive, and ultimately more broadly socially inclusive. However, there are barriers to overcome in realising this construction, which are discussed below.

### *Defining success narrowly*

The ideal construction of a queer-inclusive entrepreneurship conceives success as the creation of value beyond individual profits, where having a positive and lasting impact on a community is just as worthy of esteem as monetary wealth is. A perpetually narrow, Western definition of success that reveres the exploitation of economic opportunities for profit (Bird & Brush, 2002; Rindova et al., 2009) undermines this notion.

Entrepreneurs who are perceived as successful within the normative construction are those that make inordinate amounts of money – and do so conspicuously.

> There's this big idea of glitz and glam, super successful, wearing a suit, went to a great graduate business school or came up with this really great idea that no one else ever thought about in their whole entire life. It's directly linked to how much money you make and how much noise there is around what you're doing and who you know.

This contradicts the ideal construction as it signifies that the only way to be recognised as a legitimate entrepreneur is to make money and make noise, giving primacy to performance (perhaps performativity?) over substance.

> [Other queer entrepreneurs] have proven themselves and they've gone through the trenches and they have made that first million or 10 million. Or they start working with recognisable brand that endorses them. Only then are they accepted as part of the normal.

As a result, queer entrepreneurs, in their pursuit of acceptance and recognition, feel pressure to conform, focusing on the monetary value of their assets, rather than on their core values and ideals or the value that they create for communities and broader society.

### *Maintaining masculine, heteronormative behaviours*

It has been implicitly, and occasionally explicitly, communicated to and experienced by participants that, to achieve success (per the narrow definition thereof), an entrepreneur must be competitive and aggressive.

> There's some actors who will establish a business on the side will be considered a risk-taker, an innovator, and potentially cut-throat... Cut-throats get the deal done.

> The whole metric of business is that you've got to be hardcore.
>
> What we predominantly know about industries and business is, it's male, cishet and a very harsh environment.

These characteristics pervade entrepreneurship and are not exclusive to queer entrepreneurs' experiences thereof. The normative construction of entrepreneurship has been described as glorifying masculinity and thus encourages aggressive, assertive, heroic, or risk-taking behaviour to "conquer and master nature" (Ogbor, 2000, p. 618) for economic success (Bruni et al., 2004a; de Bruin et al., 2006; Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2017; Gupta et al., 2008; Marlow, 2014).

This hegemonic masculinity compels entrepreneurs to conform to supposedly generic behaviours to claim entrepreneurial legitimacy and, in so doing, amplifies heteronormative, binary thinking (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Bird & Brush, 2002; Ogbor, 2000).

> In business, what we tend to do is, we tend to stick to these heteronormative standards... we fall under these heteronormative roles. When we talk about our sexuality, we talk about it in a very heteronormative way, so that there is an understanding from the heteros.

Such embedded thinking is incompatible with the ideal construction because it neglects the strong communal element thereof by maintaining and reproducing the exclusion of those that don't subscribe to the normative binary. It also disregards the need for a gentler, more restorative approach to entrepreneurship and overlooks the social value of queerness in its multiplicity.

*Figure 18: Confronting masculinity and heteronormativity.*

**The hegemonic masculinity intrinsic to the normative construction of entrepreneurship compels entrepreneurs to conform to supposedly generic behaviours to claim entrepreneurial legitimacy and, in so doing, amplifies masculine, heteronormative, binary thinking.**




Even though femme figures dominate this collage, many are dressed 'androgynously', in typically masculine attire. Could signify either leaning into the masculine stereotype to subvert/parody it, or to conform to it. From Collage #3.













The subversion of masculinity is a prominent theme across collages, highlighted by the unambiguous exclusion of men and masc figures in many, and by the contrasts of masculinity vs. femininity in others. From top left to bottom right: Collages # 4, #5 , #6, #1, and #2.

## *Imposing queernormativity*

The ideal construction of a queer-inclusive entrepreneurship understandably requires the inclusion of queer individuals. Understanding that social inclusion is dependent on "feelings of belongingness to a host society" where belongingness reflects "one's cognitive judgement of fit and emotional connectedness to the host society" (Licsandru & Cui, 2018, p. 332), it is logical to expect that queer

entrepreneurs must feel that they belong within the 'club' of entrepreneurs. It also necessarily assumes a sense of belonging within the queer community.

This doesn't always appear to be the case. While the queer community *can* be supportive – because everyone within it knows what it is like to be an outsider – it emerged from the research that the community can be exclusionary.

> We do tend to be exclusive, cliquey in all accounts, in all situations and it's always bothered me.

Part of this is because narrow stereotypes prevail, even within the queer community. Typecasting is pervasive and confines queer individuals to a particular presentation or performance, both as individuals and in terms of intra-community dynamics.

> With queer women, it's always this more masc-presenting vibe and every other person falls by the wayside. Like all the 'lipstick lesbians' and all those other weird little labels.
>
> He doesn't fit what is said to be the traditional flamboyant gay guy.
>
> Every time I think of a queer business, I always see these really funky white dudes, and they've got the gelled-up hair, and they've got enough money to have like a small puppy that has all the best in the world.
>
> There was always that thing about gay men and lesbian women don't necessarily get along, and that makes no sense. With lesbian women and bi women, there's a disconnect there. Then just everyone else against trans people. We tend to exclude trans people.

Additionally, participants feel that there is pressure to be queer in one particular way, and that one's queer identity is inauthentic if it doesn't fit within this paradigm.

> Queer entrepreneurs also get lumped into this monolithic 'everyone's the same' idea. Everyone's queer, you expect the same thing from everyone. You're expected to mould into the ideals of queerness and belong to this community.

Jason Orne, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Drexel University, describes this as 'queernormativity': "[queer leftist community spaces] identify a 'right' way to be queer and argue that everyone else is doing queerness incorrectly" (Cheves, 2019, para. 30). Even as it seeks to help marginalised communities and attempts to promote diversity, it does so only in rhetoric rather than practice (Orne, 2017). Within the popular discourse, it is described by one Twitter user as questioning

a queer individual's legitimacy "because they do not adhere to a certain script of traumatic, non-normative experience (by [W]estern standards)" (@benvyle, 2020) that can only ever be embodied by a certain (Western, metropolitan) proportion of queer people. As such, as much as "queer is community. It's just not a community you'd want to live in" (Orne, 2017, p. 14).

In particular, there is a perception that, as a queer entrepreneur, you are expected to embed a noble activist cause within your model – and if you don't, you're not authentically queer. Again, this has been discussed online (@ConceptualJames, 2019):

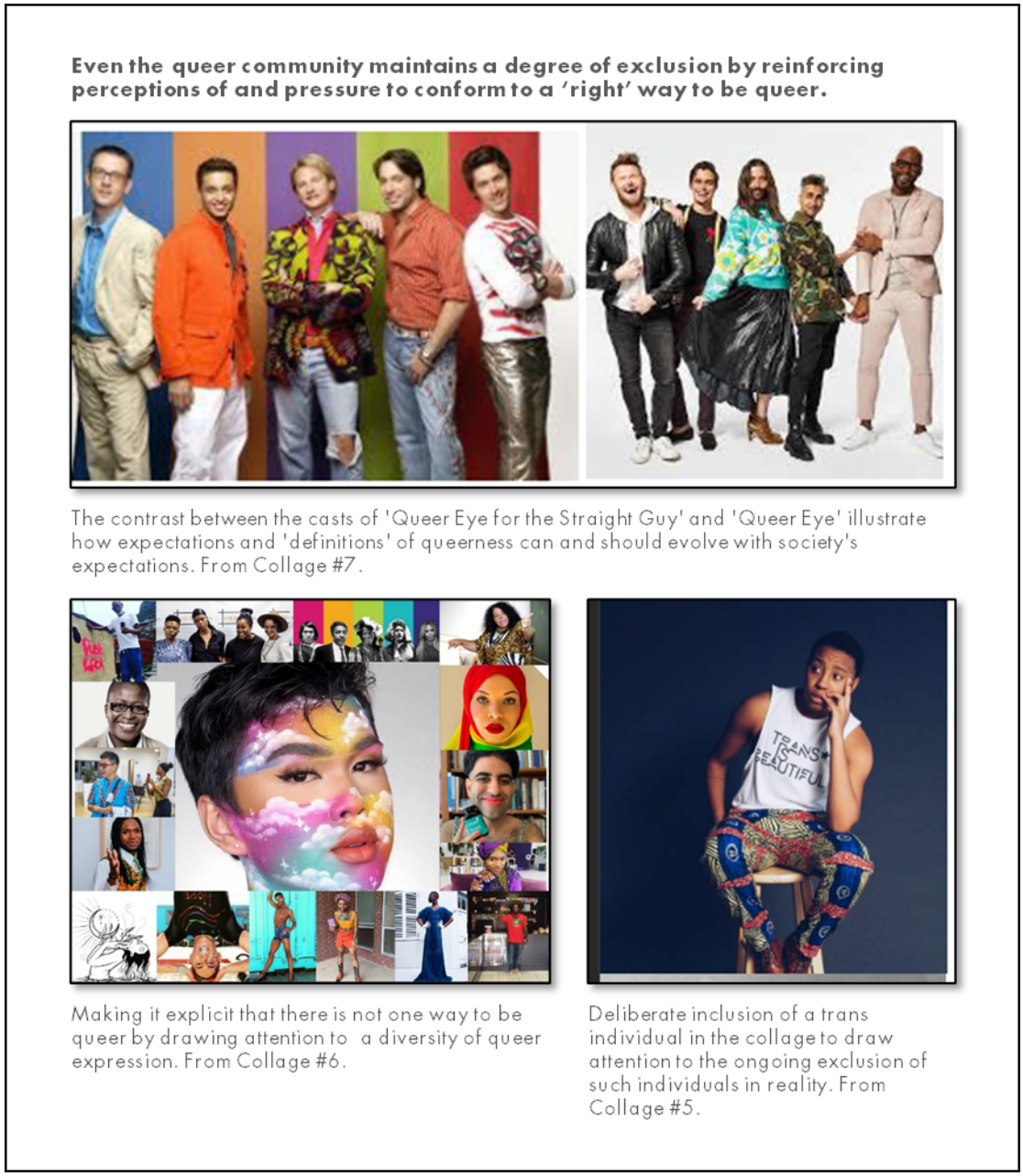
> Queer Theory promotes one and only one identity status: queer identity, which must 'strategically' resist 'normativity' always by being satisfactorily queer. Social Justice isn't about identity. It's about compliance.

This came through in some of my discussions with participants: that there is a perceived moral obligation – and corresponding judgement – to 'do good'.

> Whenever somebody does something with a queer lens, it's a social justice thing. Even if it's a money-maker, it's still a social justice thing.
>
> We're showing queer people that they literally can only be activists or else they are not valid.

Despite being "*a community that is crying out for inclusivity*," even the queer community maintains some kind of exclusion shaped by "a propensity to be 'more queer than thou'" (Orne, 2017, p. 18) which ironically excludes those it claims to include through a universal appreciation for diversity (Orne, 2017). This contradicts the ideal construction because it generates and perpetuates fractures within a marginalised community rather than channelling collective energy into addressing the underlying systemic barriers to broader inclusion within normative entrepreneurship.

*Figure 19: Challenging implicit queernormativity and embracing evolution.*




### *Perpetuating homogeneity*

It's well-established in the literature that, while the stereotypical construction of entrepreneurship doesn't expressly exclude individuals, its ongoing reproduction in the mainstream perpetuates implicit exclusion (A. Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Ogbor, 2000). However, despite exhibiting many of the characteristics 'typically' associated with the normative entrepreneur, queer entrepreneurs still experience an explicit exclusion.

Participants noted that, as queer entrepreneurs, they fail to 'tick the right boxes' because they don't subscribe to a homogeneous norm and, despite carrying the relevant credentials in their respective sectors, can be excluded from significant conversations, opportunities, and support as a result.

> There's usually not a lot of places you can go to speak about that [non-normative entrepreneurship]... When you come and you try to get help it's really like, 'Well, you were doomed to fail because you don't fit into X, Y, Z box' versus, 'Yes, but if I had support, then I wouldn't be in the situation.'
>
> There are individuals... but they are never given an opportunity just because they don't necessarily fit into society's norms.

When they *are* included, queer entrepreneurs find that the inclusion is somewhat conditional, coming with sometimes loaded questions, judgements, and assumptions about their queerness.

> How do you deal with questions around when some people start sharing pictures of their kids and this is my wife or this is my husband? How do you navigate that personal part? It shouldn't even matter if you're great at your job, but it's something that happens like, 'Who are you? Where are you from?'
>
> The moment it comes up that you're queer, they'll be like, 'Oh, your husband is—' 'No, actually, my wife is this or my girlfriend is this.' Then that's when they stop and like, 'Oh... okay.'

Often, disparaging stereotypes of queer people shape how these individuals are perceived such that their entrepreneurial legitimacy is called into question. As a result, those queer entrepreneurs who *are* included are not taken as seriously as normative entrepreneurs.

> You'll find they'll be called an influencer... and actually they're an entrepreneur... Waphapha[8] is the word that came to mind, which is Tswana. The closest way I can describe it is 'somebody who likes things'. You're very out there... Whereas if it's a straight person who has multiple things, the word that will be used is a 'serial entrepreneur'... oh, and [you're considered] fame-hungry.
>
> Now that everybody has found out that you're queer, and now there's the jokes that come along with it. 'You lesbians are rough so you can handle it.'

[8] *Waphapha* is a colloquial term that is loosely translated from Tswana to mean 'too forward'/ 'involved in business that doesn't concern them' OR 'generally liking things'/'doing things just to be seen or noticed.'

To be included and taken seriously as legitimate businesspeople, queer entrepreneurs therefore feel compelled to 'hide' their queerness to prove themselves – sometimes overcompensating for it by code-switching.[9]

> You don't ruffle the feathers because you don't want it to affect your bottom line.
>
> Sometimes when I walk into a room... Just to avoid possibly losing out on a deal, or losing out on business, or losing out on a relationship with going into partnership with someone, going into partnership with a specific company, I already changed who I am, code-switching.
>
> What I then wondered to myself is, 'Is he doing that as a way of being professional or is he doing it as a way of not letting anybody know... almost like a code-switching.

Despite this, blame is still shifted to the queer entrepreneurs for not doing enough to fit into the norm and is used as a rationale for further exclusion.

> We're also trying to fit into the heteronormativity, and there's just so much of trying to be everything that you end up getting so tired, and then you can't carry on... then it becomes a 'queer people can't be entrepreneurs' versus they're just really tired because there's no support.

This othering in the form of exclusion, questioning, adapting, and blaming erodes queer entrepreneurs' motivation to keep trying, or to even pursue entrepreneurship at all.

> The admin of it all starts to suck the life out of why I wanted to do this.
>
> Part of why I think there's a hesitation for people to even enter spaces is because they think that they don't have the capacity to fit what it is currently structured as.

Ongoing othering impedes the realisation of the ideal construction because it reinforces the existing exclusionary norm and holds queer entrepreneurs accountable for making change happen – rather than confronting an intrinsically flawed entrepreneurship construct.

[9] Code-switching is "adjusting one's style of speech, appearance, behaviour, and expression in ways that will optimise the comfort of others in exchange for fair treatment, quality service, and employment opportunities" (McCluney, Robotham, Lee, Smith, & Durkee, 2019)

### *Impediments: Key take-outs*

The impediments to the realisation of the ideal construction contrast directly with the ingredients necessary for fulfilment, shaping the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship as a box into which individuals must fit – or be excluded. A narrow conceptualisation of success and the entrenched expectations of masculinity and heteronormativity correspond with the stereotype of entrepreneurship experienced by the participants and described in the literature. The perpetuation of homogeneity is also consistent with the literature. Queernormativity, which doesn't appear to have been explored in the entrepreneurship literature, to the best of my knowledge, appears to be an increasingly prevalent concern, academically, culturally, and socially. Each of these impediments, entrenching and perpetuating various forms of normativity, are driven and confined by binary premises.

Breaking phenomena down into categories "is an instinct … [that] satisfies a primeval human need for order" (Dutton, 2020, p. 16). Yet it is a problematic mode of thinking that, unchecked, enhances the potential for murky assumptions that divide, discriminate, and sow discord. These narrow impediments, as means of categorisation, present false dichotomies and hypocritical hierarchies that undermine entrepreneuring's capacity to question institutional structures and disturb the comfort of what currently exists to make way for something new (Hjorth, 2013; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Johannisson, 2011; Verduyn, 2015). They "divide[s] the universe into us and them, opposing camps who can only agree on the need to fight until one camp declares victory" (Hart, 2005, para. 13), thus losing the value of understanding within the messy middle. In so doing, they give the illusion of scarcity: that we have exhausted all possibility for the boundary work of entrepreneuring.

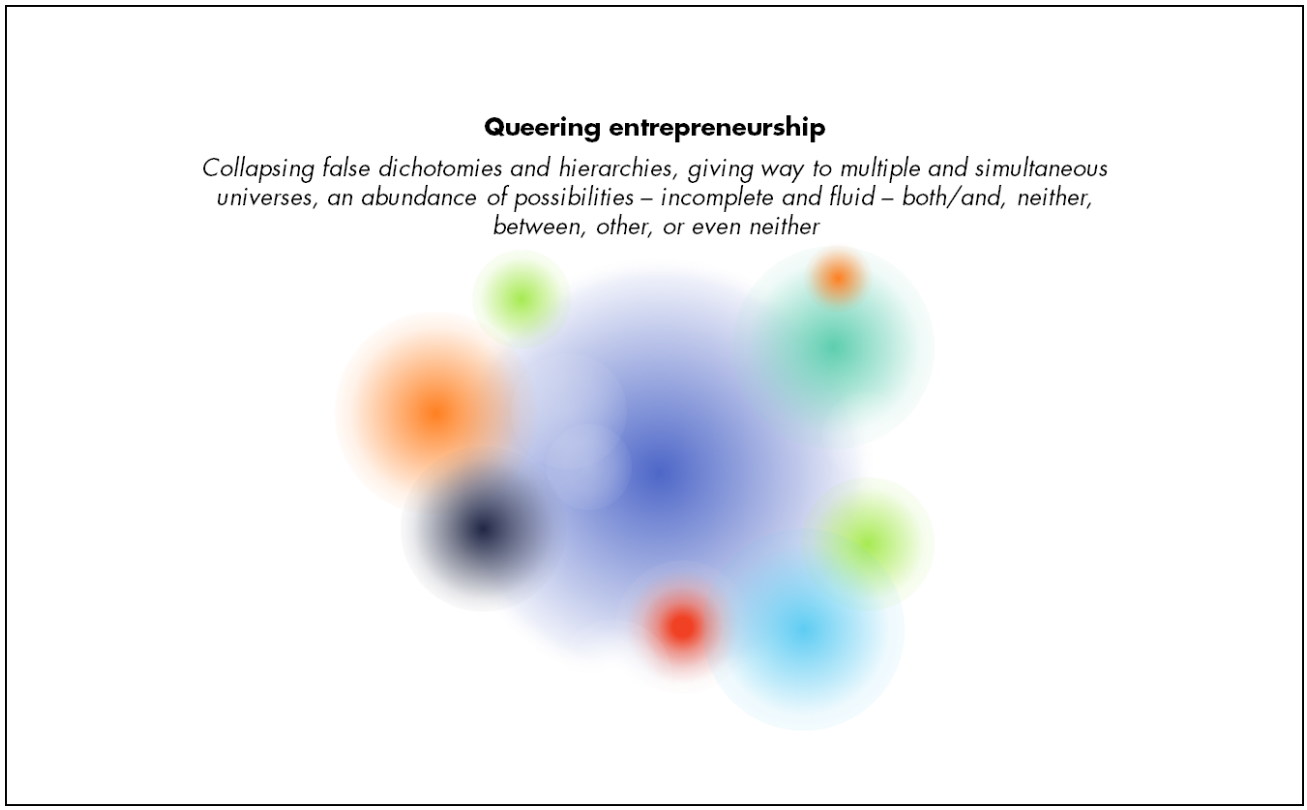
Overcoming these impediments in pursuit of the ideal construction demands a new approach to how we study the entrepreneur (ship/ing) that accounts for multiple and simultaneous universes and gives way to the abundance of possibilities within the field; a queering. Adopting a multiversal view promotes the belief that, "you existing—in your full multi-hued, magnificent size and power—does not take away from me existing, in my own full multi-hued, magnificent size and power" (Barker & Iantaffi, 2019, p. 142). In so doing, it accommodates in-between landscapes and multi-hyphenates, repositioning the entrepreneurial construction as a rhizome rather than as a box, such that individuals can be both/and, neither, between, other, or even neither. They can seek to become wealthy *and* create value for society or consider themselves *between* identities, or *neither* as entrepreneurs nor as the typical 9-to-5 worker.

> I have been told in the past that I, technically, do count as an entrepreneur, but I think I'm also struggling with my own biases about what an entrepreneur is,

> because I'm like, "But am I though?"... Whenever people ask me what I do, I size you up and I'm like, 'Author. Yes, take that. That's a good answer for you', or I size you up and I'm like, 'Podcaster', or I size you up and I'm like, 'I actually curate an online platform.'

This can be expressed visually as an explosion of full-colour, unbounded multiplicity of entrepreneurship.

*Figure 20: Queering entrepreneurship (author's own).*

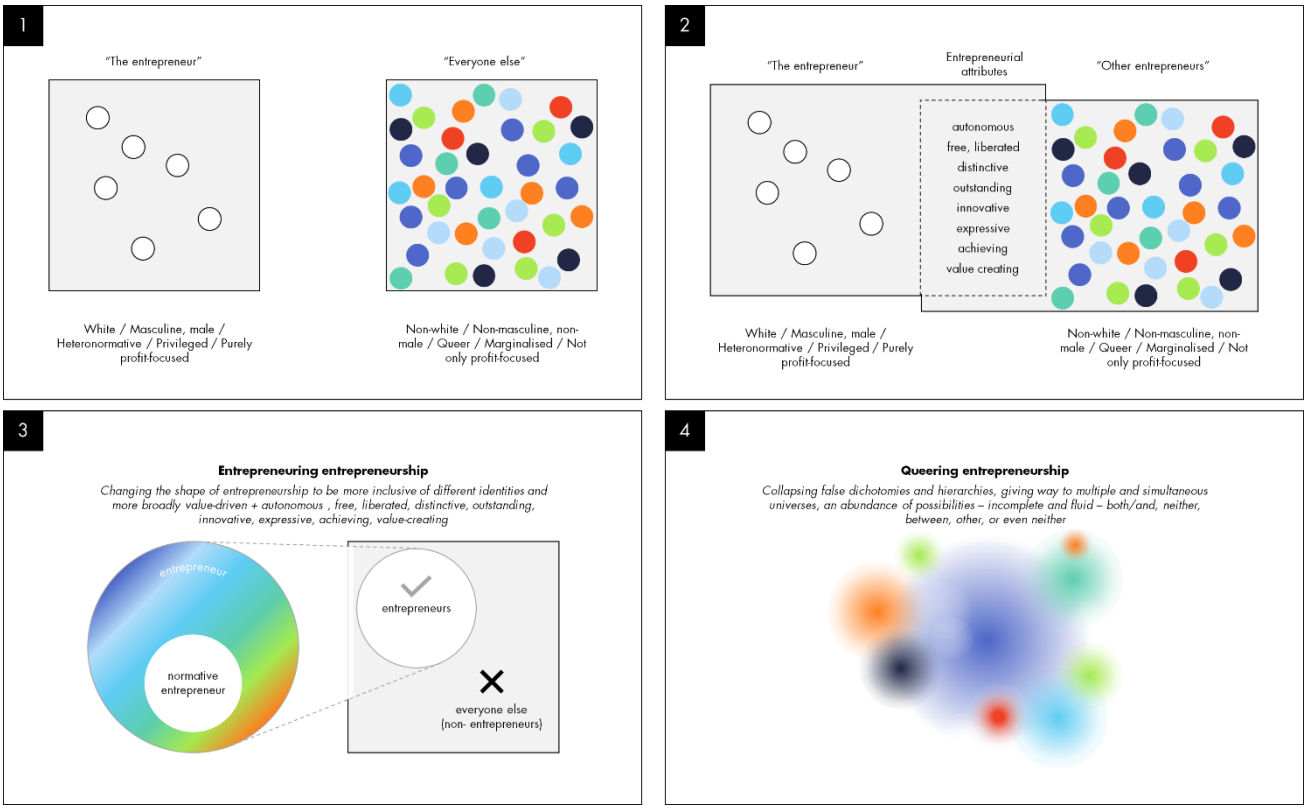



This approach simultaneously corresponds with and challenges the 'new directions' called for in the literature (Ahl, 2006; Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter, & Welter, 2012). It supports such calls by insisting on accounting for the context and nuance that shapes entrepreneur(ship/ing), and the adoption of new epistemological positions in research. However, it also challenges these directions given that they, to some extent, perpetuate binary modalities, viz. entrepreneurship *or* women's entrepreneurship studies, entrepreneurship as an economic *or* social change activity, entrepreneurship as an individual *or* social pursuit. It accounts for the multiplicity of what constitutes the construction of entrepreneur (ship/ing). Entrepreneur(ship/ing) as multiplicity embraces the incompleteness and fluidity of poststructuralism (Ahl, 2004; Gannon & Davies, 2014) and actively engages the construct's normative assumptions, determining whether and when to keep, change, discard, or play with them (Glickman,

2012). It challenges the notion of a discrete, independent subject (Browne & Nash, 2010) and instead injects new meaning into existing structures to both traverse and transcend binaries (Gannon & Davies, 2014; Linstead & Pullen, 2006; McCann, 2016). In so doing, it enables a more inclusive construct for entrepreneur (ship/ing) that embraces non-binary thinking and "invite[s] us to be in power with one another, rather than in power over one another" (Barker & Iantaffi, 2019, p. 143).

To realise the ideal, then, requires interventions that actively seek to mitigate these impediments. Critically, the binary thinking that informs these impediments is deeply embedded in societal structures and therefore cannot be addressed with 'quick fixes'; it requires deep systemic interference. As a way to subvert normative binaries and incite socio-political engagement (Rumens et al., 2019; Wilchins, 2004), queering enables this. The lack of a definitive answer to how to achieve the ideal construct beyond 'Abandon binaries! Embrace multiplicity!' while challenging, is characteristic of queering, as it limits the risk of being too comfortably accepted within the mainstream and thus facilitates an continual queering (Rumens, 2016b). In so doing, we are compelled to repeatedly rethink our existing – and even emergent – knowledge of entrepreneur(ship/ing) as well as how it is created and understood (Kelemen & Rumens, 2011).

*Figure 21: The process of entrepreneuring and queering entrepreneurship to realise the queered construction.*



### 5.2.3. IMPLICATIONS & INTERVENTIONS

As established above, achieving the ideal construction of entrepreneurship – one that is inclusive of queer individuals – calls for an entrepreneuring and a queering of the normative construct.

The simultaneous entrepreneuring and queering – *entreprequeering*, if you will – results in an active and ongoing questioning and subversion of the binaries that prevail within the normative construct, to generate something new: an constant de- and re-construction. Instead of narrowing down a revised construct to a single answer or approach, it opens it up to infinite possibilities. In so doing, it helps mitigate exclusion by enabling greater participation by more individuals, in more environments, in more ways. Such participation empowers individuals and helps them mobilise for social change (Haugh & O'Carroll, 2019); this contrasts with inclusion or integration into a defined construct which expects individuals to fit into "all social norms and demands . . . even having to prove such conformity under penalty of being excluded" (Steinert and Pilgram, 2003, p.6 in Abrams et al., 2007, p. 3).

One way in which to foster entrepreneuring and queering to thrive is to treat them as social innovations rather than simply as disruptions to the status quo. Though there is no agreed single definition of social innovation, it is understood here as a new process or programme that changes the basic routines and beliefs of the social system in which it occurs to generate opportunities that enhance the social and economic well-being of marginalised communities (George, Baker, Tracey, & Joshi, 2019; Haugh & O'Carroll, 2019). In treating these interventions as social innovations, we can follow the pathways for implementation suggested by George et al. (2019).

1. **Provide the infrastructure that can help 'level the playing field' for those that have historically been excluded**

While the social innovation literature focuses on the provision of public infrastructure – such as access to internet connectivity – it could be extended to consider the physical and social infrastructures that enable or inhibit access to resources and opportunities (George et al., 2019). For participants, these include access to support structures such as monetary resources; physical spaces for engagement; and incubation.

> I feel like there's a lot of people who are doing the groundwork, but they don't have the support structures, just to be able to sustain themselves, to sustain what they're doing.
>
> Just general access to resources, everything from mentorship to actual money. People love to stop the entrepreneurship thing with mentorship. Like "Oh my god, I mentored three people to sell cupcakes on the side of the road." This is amazing,

> but I can know how to sell cupcakes, but if I don't have access to funding and money, and people who back me, and people put their proverbial stamp on my work, especially with money, it doesn't work.
>
> To give support to queer people also means to give them opportunities. To give them opportunities means to go where they are. Not just to put out a net from a very high position and be like, 'Well, whoever comes, comes'.

It is especially important that such infrastructure isn't only provided from the top down, owned by a structural elite – such as policy makers or space owners – but also works at the level of relationships between those most affected by the exclusion (The Impact Guide & Toolkit, 2021). This involves the actors of power moving into more marginalised spaces in a way that facilitates deeper empathy.

> For me, [it's] expanding opportunities and spaces for these individuals to exist and to share what they offer but also to create a more inclusive space for straight spaces to be able to enter into these kinds of diverse spaces would be important.

Ensuring the provision of the relevant infrastructure can help realise the ideal construction by creating and ultimately enabling the 'ownership' of resources and spaces that facilitate the shaping of new values systems that enthusiastically accept and embrace non-normative identities and perspectives. Failing to provide such infrastructure – whether in the public, private, or third sectors – simply perpetuates the negative cycle of queer entrepreneurs' exclusion, disincentivisation, and potential for failure.

### 2. Incentivise and facilitate corporate action

Corporate action is understood as fundamental to facilitating far-reaching social change (George et al., 2019). This is because private sector businesses have the expertise, practices, resources, and influence to positively impact the economy, society, and environment systemically and at scale (Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016; Porter, 2018). Further, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved into a (somewhat peer-pressured) strategic priority that reconsiders the role of business in society beyond generating profits to provide public goods (Florini, 2019). Given this, corporate players are in an ideal position to expedite large-scale social change, and have a vested interest in doing so due to the demonstrated evidence that it can benefit business through growth, resilience to volatility, and retention of employees and customers (Hartman, 2021; Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016).

In context of realising the ideal construction of entrepreneurship, this goes beyond promoting 'intrapreneurship' to consider the resources that businesses have access to and can share with others.

These can again include physical spaces, but also comprise incubation opportunities, meaningful social networks that cut across sectoral boundaries, and platforms for engaged conversations, all of which can foster the necessary social capital, visibility, and solidarity desired by queer entrepreneurs (George et al., 2019).

> It's about opening up networks or helping people find networks that suit them because the more the field grows, the deeper certain networks will become.
>
> The lack of safe spaces for queer individuals to exist in, I think, is limited because the conversations in business schools or corporate spaces or entrepreneurial spaces is very much based on social capital.

For participants, corporate action is not only about using the power of institutional privilege to restrict facilitate change, but also entails the occasional ceding of such power to marginalised groups to address barriers to access (Haugh & O'Carroll, 2019).

> Hosting spaces that create access, queer spaces, could be useful. We're always hosting events on business, but very seldomly would you hear a particularly queer business-oriented venture or conversation happening.
>
> Break that gender-base down completely and just have normal conversations in as many spaces as possible, whether it's in your Old Mutual buildings, in your FNB buildings – give queer entrepreneurs the platform to lead these conversations, to facilitate those conversations.
>
> Get the corporate sector or academic spaces to give up a little bit of power to say, "Every year, once a month, that's queer month."
>
> More in-depth conversations [are] definitely a need. This ties into panels that are curated, webinars that exist.

Doing so advances empowerment – ignoring the cringeworthiness of its (ab)use in corporate ipsum – the promotion of participation that enables marginalised groups to gain control over their lives in a way that brings about change (as opposed to domination over others) (Haugh & O'Carroll, 2019). Corporate action thus facilitates the implementation of 'entrepreneuring and queering' by challenging deep power structures to increase local autonomy and increase collective power of marginalised groups – in this case, queer entrepreneurs (Nilsson, 2019).

### 3. Investigate and implement avenues of institutional and political change

Institutions are the culturally embedded, normalised ideas, beliefs, understandings, and actions that enforce patterns of interests and privilege (Jennings, Greenwood, Lounsbury, & Suddaby, 2013; Micelotta, Lounsbury, & Greenwood, 2017). They include formal and informal institutions that are performed through myriad macro- and micro interactions and patterns (Jennings et al., 2013; Nilsson, 2019). By specifying and justifying social arrangements and behaviours, they confer legitimacy of actions, and in so doing, reinforce continuity and reward conformity (Garud, Hardy, & Maguire, 2007).

Core to the realisation of the ideal construction through entrepreneuring and queering therefore lies in challenging institutions. However, those committed to existing ways of doing – due to various factors, but including the proliferation of existing power structures – are unlikely or unable to envision and embrace new practices and encourage others to adopt them (Garud et al., 2007). This is because "the force of institutions – for good and bad – lies in how unthinkingly most of us go along with most rules, norms, and beliefs" (Nilsson, 2019, p. 286). The good news is that institutions don't maintain themselves; they are maintained by us (Nilsson, 2019).

As such, we must cultivate our capacity to conceptualise alternative possibilities to the status quo, while also accounting for the reality that such possibilities and emergent practices are fundamentally constituted – although not determined – by institutional rules and beliefs embedded in existing practices (Garud et al., 2007; Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007). This requires that we address the complex roots of the institutionalised system rather than merely on its symptoms, practising social innovation as "institutional work" (Nilsson, 2019, p. 284) or "institutional entrepreneurship" (Garud et al., 2007, p. 957). I'd venture to extend this to include queering, since queer theory "dictates an anti-institutional stance and oppositional politics" (Pauliny, 2011, para. 1) and helps explore new ways of understanding organisational life (McDonald, 2017).

Doing this requires that we appreciate that while actors within a system are distributed across various dimensions, they are still united by shared cultural beliefs that reproduce the institutions we seek to disrupt (Garud et al., 2007). As such, we must address the desired institutional change as an endogenous process that relies on individuals' performativity – how they both reproduce and change certain practices through variation in their enactment (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007). We can thus postulate that those within the system, who are familiar with its intricacies and unspoken rules, are best equipped to help change it.

Consequently, we can propose that those with a queer identity that intersects with more powerful or privileged identities (e.g. whiteness, masculinity, hetero-presentation, cisgender, higher income, etc.)

step in as active agents or 'representatives' for those that perhaps might not have the same kinds of access to the privileged spaces that enable the shaping of new institutions. The role of a 'more privileged' queer entrepreneur is to infiltrate and make change happen from within the structures rather than extrinsic to them. Doing so necessitates that such individuals – institutional entrepreneurs, social innovators – draw on the existing cultural and linguistic content available to define change in ways that incentivise cooperation from other groups (Garud et al., 2007).

That being said, it is important not to place too much emphasis on these individuals' capability to institute change as heroic actors, and certainly not to give primacy to their efforts over the contributing effects of broader institutional forces (Micelotta et al., 2017). In fact, unconventional collaborations across different organisations and institutions are key to effective social innovation, entrepreneuring, queering (George et al., 2019). Such collaborations are characterised by various social actors working together to overcome "the traditional governmental hierarchies and market-based approaches" to collaboration (Florini, 2019, p. 433) in a way that mobilises resources to enable collective action (Khan, Munir, & Willmott, 2007).

Such collective action is multifaceted, and could comprise any number of interventions that help establish a new dominant practice (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007). Such interventions noted by participants include the introduction and adoption of new language in policy and mainstream discourse as well as direct action to be more representative of a marginalised community; specifically allocated institutional resources to such community; and the explicit promotion of visibility in normative spaces.

> If we could have a situation where our voices are distorted, no one can see who we are and we just say whatever we have to say that we bring across to the table... so that our biases don't necessarily come into play. I think that is honestly [the solve] because if we say that people need to change their ideas and their beliefs, that's now another situation.
>
> Funding for queer individuals would definitely be something that we should look into. If we could include it in our broad-based Black economic empowerment criteria that I think we could honestly just stop there.
>
> I'm a social justice activist, and my whole thing is about access. That is the one thing that we are lacking in this country: we have these amazing policies and inventions, but who benefits if people cannot physically reach them or tap into them?

> There are so many people doing such great projects, but they don't have visibility. Without visibility, they're not going to give them a chance. Without a chance, then no one else will ever see that it's possible to solve.

Such actions as above, as well as the multitude of those not explicitly accounted for, are intended to reintroduce agency, promote shared and individual interests, champion the generation of previously-subjugated knowledge, and renegotiate power accordant with institutional work (Garud et al., 2007; Rumens, 2018a). By "infus[ing] organisational fields with new, regenerative and innovative values and practices. (Khan et al., 2007, p. 1055), we can disrupt the normative construction of entrepreneurship in pursuit of the ideal thereof.

## 5.3. Summary

Entrepreneuring and queering, treated as social innovations, are about active and participatory intervention, by both the privileged and the marginalised. A collaborative effort, social innovation demands curiosity and healthy scepticism of both local communities and entrenched systems. It's all well and good to posit theoretical constructs – but these simply perpetuate the normative system to some degree. All talk and no action make for interesting discourse but frustrating inertia. However, such transformation can take years – maybe decades – and so we must account for what kind of impact it can have in the shorter term. The value of such 'entreprequeering' innovations, through their active disruption of the discourse and smaller, yet not insignificant provocative nudges for action, help stimulate further interrogation and innovation. In so doing, they help achieve that deeper goal of social innovation: to stimulate more social innovation "so that the world's generative capacity might dramatically increase" (Nilsson, 2019, p. 301). Instead of viewing a lack of immediate change as a failure, we treat it as a core to the sustenance of the agitation of normative structures and enhanced resilience (Nilsson, 2019), because

> The world is not so linear. You need people that think differently than you, people that will challenge your perceptions of the world and how you see it.

# Chapter VI: Discussion and conclusion

This chapter presents a discussion of the main findings of this study, significance of the study, its limitations of the study, and concluding thoughts. The literature review presented in Chapter 2 forms the basis for this discussion. Analysing participant collages using VGTM and supplementing the visual data with interviews revealed several findings in the previous chapter that inform how the research questions, reiterated below, may be answered.

- **Do queer entrepreneurs experience a normative construction of an entrepreneur?** If so, how and to what extent?
- **Do they feel the need to conform to a normative stereotype of entrepreneurship?** If so, how, to what extent, and to what end?
- **Do they have an 'ideal construction' of entrepreneurship that is more queer-inclusive?** If so, how, to what extent, and to what end?

## 6.1. Discussion of findings

Seven queer entrepreneurs participated in the study by creating collages to capture their 'ideal' construction of entrepreneurship and providing verbal context to their creations based on their perceptions and experiences of the normative construction of entrepreneurship. The findings from this exercise are discussed in respect of the research questions and extant literature below.

The study revealed that queer entrepreneurs experience a normative construction of entrepreneurship that is pervaded by whiteness, masculinity and heteronormativity, privilege, and money-driven objectives. This aligns to the extant literature that acknowledges the prevalence of a normative construction of entrepreneurship (Ahl, 2006; Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Bruni et al., 2004a; Calás et al., 2009; de Bruin et al., 2007; Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2017; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Fred, 2006; Galloway et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2008; Henry et al., 2016; Holvino, 2010; Hwang & Powell, 2005; Langevang et al., 2015; Lewis, 2006; Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Marlow & McAdam, 2012; Mirchandani, 1999; Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015; Ogbor, 2000; Rindova et al., 2009; Risman, 2004; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017).

The findings of this study also indicate that queer entrepreneurs do feel the need – and may even 'choose', to some extent – to conform to this normative stereotype. While critical of the normative

construction of entrepreneurship, participants were quick to 'conform to' and adopt the more positively perceived traits of entrepreneurship, namely autonomy and freedom, distinction from non-entrepreneurs, innovation, self-expression, personal achievement, and economic development. These traits have been discussed at length in the literature as 'core' to entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2006; Fuller et al., 2018; Hashi & Krasniqi, 2011; Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; McAdam & Marlow, 2007; Ogbor, 2000; Schumpeter, 1934; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Thomas & Mueller, 2000).

Findings also showed however that there is a 'queer construction' of entrepreneurship that is inclusive of Black and brown and queer individuals, inclusive and representative of marginalised identities, and value-driven. Recognising that most entrepreneurs do not conform to the normative stereotype, and that different 'entrepreneurships' may arise from diverse social contexts, this queer construction aims to be as multi-dimensional and complex as the social contexts from which entrepreneurship emerges and to which it contributes. The literature has noted repeatedly that most entrepreneurs do not conform to the normative construction of entrepreneurship (Dyer, 2015; Thornton, 1999; Welter et al., 2017; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017), and that there is no single entrepreneurship but rather a range of entrepreneurships that arise from diverse social contexts (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Hjorth et al., 2008; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Welter, 2011; Welter et al., 2017).

Additionally, the 'queer construction' of entrepreneurship suggests that entrepreneurship is pursued not only for wealth generation, but also as a facilitator of social change – whether as a means of self-expression, an enabler of autonomy and freedom, or a way to make a meaningful community impact. This supports assertions in the literature that entrepreneurship, as an instrument of social change, creates value both within and beyond commerce and offers opportunities to pursue personal and social goals beyond commerce and economic profits (Bruni et al., 2004a; Hjorth, 2013; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Ulhøi, 2005; Welter et al., 2017; Zahra & Wright, 2016). This however is not discordant with, but rather a functional queering of, the normative construction of entrepreneurship, on the basis that queering fundamentally aims to open up new avenues for identity-making and self-expression (McDonald, 2017).

The findings suggest that achieving the ideal construction of entrepreneurship requires a deliberate *entrepreneuring* of the normative construction, so that it expands the definition and recognition of success, shifts behavioural expectations, embraces the expansiveness of queerness, and accepts and endorses difference. In so doing, the definitive innovation and creativity of entrepreneurship (Bruni et al., 2004a; Esfandiar et al., 2019; Rindova et al., 2009; Thomas & Mueller, 2000) are emphasised. Critically, entrepreneuring entrepreneurship doesn't demand an alternative but rather an extension and

enrichment of the normative construction. This is supported by and supportive of the concepts of entrepreneurship as social creativity and as process.

Entrepreneurship as social creativity refers to the role entrepreneurship plays in transforming existing rigid social realities through reconstruction rather than destruction, in order to create new spaces for opportunity (Hjorth et al., 2008; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2009; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007). Entrepreneurship as social creativity reflects the ability within individuals and communities to shape new social realities through experimentation, curiosity, inventiveness, and disruption of an unquestioned stereotype (Hjorth et al., 2015, 2008; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2009; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007). Entrepreneuring entrepreneurship thus invites the shaping of new realities of and for entrepreneurship itself. Meanwhile, entrepreneurship as a process involves the identification, questioning, and destruction of institutional structures and norms so that it is simultaneously characteristic and disruptive of the established expectations of entrepreneurship within a specific social context (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009). Entrepreneuring entrepreneurship aims to achieve exactly that: to live up to the innovative, pioneering characterisation of entrepreneurship by innovating and pioneering new constructions thereof. In so doing, it promotes the creation of new organisational forms, purposes, and ways of being (Hjorth et al., 2015; Johannisson, 2011). Entrepreneuring entrepreneurship thus involves and in fact necessitates ongoing learning and creative organising that disturbs, interrupts and unsettles the comfort (and complacency?) of established norms (Hjorth, 2013; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004; Johannisson, 2011; Verduyn, 2015).

There is, however, a further need to overcome the impediments to achieving the ideal construction, to entrepreneuring entrepreneurship. The findings revealed that the narrow definition of success, masculine and heteronormative behaviours deemed appropriate and necessary to succeed, imposed queernormativity, and more broadly prescribed homogeneity that appear to be intrinsic to the normative construction of entrepreneurship insist that there is a 'right' way to be an entrepreneur – and that any other expression or experience thereof is invalid. This supports and is supported by the literature (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Calás et al., 2009; Goss et al., 2011; Marlow, 2014; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). Yet, at the same time, the findings suggest that, with the ideal construction, there is no right or wrong way to [be an] entrepreneur; there is no binary. There is simply an ongoing being and becoming with the intention of disturbing normativity in favour of openness, diversity, and greater inclusion.

This demonstrates the value and importance of incorporating fresh ontologies, such as poststructuralism, into the entrepreneurship literature, to prioritise change and subjectivity over normative, positivist hierarchies (Linstead & Pullen, 2006). The incompleteness and fluidity of

poststructuralism allows us to inject new meaning into existing structures (Ahl, 2004; Gannon & Davies, 2014; Linstead & Pullen, 2006; McCann, 2016). Deconstruction, in particular, is valuable in its capacity to resist and critique the binaries that have been reinforced, or silenced, within the entrepreneurship field (Galloway et al., 2015; Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014; Ogbor, 2000). Queering, however, is arguably the most relevant approach to the current research, given it ability both to challenge everyday heteronormativity and to subvert broader normative structures in favour of building meaningful non-normative identities (McCann, 2016; Rumens, 2016b; Rumens et al., 2019; Wilchins, 2004). It could reasonably be concluded that queering entrepreneurship, for these queer entrepreneurs, is not simply about a sexual orientation or gender identity, but a way of being and seeing the world. This addresses the ongoing question raised around queering: whether queer is "best understood as a substantial term with historical links to communities marked as gender and sexual deviants or as a more abstract theoretical term, one that describes a capacious non-normativity, political critique, and resistance to identity" (Love, 2014, p. 175). For these participants, queering entrepreneurship involves both: the intentional inclusion of queer individuals (creating an academy of queers) as well as the deliberate destabilisation of normative identities and methodologies in the field (queering the academy).

There is no *single* solution to the question of how the normative construction of entrepreneurship can be adapted to be more inclusive of queer entrepreneurs, as the recommendation to entrepreneur and queer the current theoretical construct presents infinite possibilities of what this looks like, characterised not by a doing but by a becoming. This is concordant with Steyaert (2003) and Welter et al.'s (2017) assertions that there is no single entrepreneurship, and with Steyaert's suggestion that entrepreneurship, rather than being a well-defined construct, is "a generative and travelling concept" (p. 456) shaped by rhizomatic logic. As such, just as a rhizome exists as a "variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots" (Deleuze, 1993, p. 36), so does entrepreneurship; it is continual unfolding, emerging, and becoming, a by-product of social phenomena, a multiplicity intertwined with other multiplicities (Browne & Nash, 2010; Styhre & Sundgren, 2003).

However, to kickstart the process of entrepreneuring and queering entrepreneurship – which necessitates far deeper, ongoing systemic intervention within academia, commerce, policy, and broader society – it is suggested that these processes are approached as social innovations with practical implications, rather than simply theoretical prods at the extant literature. This involves the provision of relevant infrastructure, incentivisation of corporate involvement, and the investigation and ultimately implementation of avenues for institutional and political change. In so doing, the customs and beliefs of the neoliberal economic and social system in which entrepreneur(ship/ing)

exists are slowly but actively critiqued and subverted in favour of generating opportunities that enhance the social and economic well-being of marginalised communities (George et al., 2019; Haugh & O'Carroll, 2019).

## 6.2. CORROBORATION

The findings of this research confirm the stated prevalence of an entrepreneurial stereotype and substantiates it further by illustrating that it exists not just in the literature, but also in lived reality. Existing research also argues that such a narrow construction of entrepreneurship is exclusionary and thus undermines the credibility and applicability of entrepreneurship research (Ahl & Nelson, 2010; Calás et al., 2009; Gathungu & Mwangi, 2014; Shinnar et al., 2012; Thomas & Mueller, 2000). Findings confirm that the normative construction is indeed exclusionary, limiting access to entrepreneurship resources and opportunities for individuals who don't fit in with the narrow norm – specifically queer entrepreneurs, in this case.

This study also upholds the notion that entrepreneurship is not a single concept but rather a heterogeneous multiplicity of socially-situated dynamics and interrelationships that transforms communities, economies, and societies (Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Hjorth et al., 2008; Johannisson & Olaison, 2007; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Welter, 2011; Welter et al., 2017). By promoting the expansion of the entrepreneurship construct beyond its current normative, binary confines, the findings of this research offer avenues for exploration into the range of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurships that exist as a product of diverse and sometimes intersecting gender identities, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic classes.

Further, this research confirms that entrepreneurship is understood and pursued as a way to achieve personal and social goals beyond commerce and economic profit: as a means of self-expression, an enabler of autonomy and freedom, or a way to make a meaningful community impact. This supports the literature that understands entrepreneurship as an instrument of social change (Bruni et al., 2004a; Hjorth, 2013; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Ulhøi, 2005; Welter et al., 2017; Zahra & Wright, 2016).

## 6.3. CONTRIBUTION

The literature has repeatedly called for insight into entrepreneurs who are not white, male, heterosexual, or cisgender in order to enhance the diversity within and therefore relevance and applicability of entrepreneurship research (Ahl, 2006; Dy et al., 2014; Köllen et al., 2012; Marlow,

2014, 2020; Marlow et al., 2018; Minniti, 2009; Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015; Welter et al., 2017). To address the issue of Western hegemony and privilege within the entrepreneurship literature, scholars have also called for the inclusion of more diverse perspectives from the Global South (Calás et al., 2009; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Fred, 2006; Galloway et al., 2015; Wheadon & Duval-Couetil, 2017). This study addresses these concerns, adding new perspectives to the entrepreneurship discourse across three key dimensions: queering, including people of colour, and including perspectives from the Global South.

### 6.3.1. QUEERING

As a critique of identity, queer cannot and should not be reduced simply to sex, gender or sexuality (Parker, 2002; Pullen et al., 2016b). The aim of queer theory is "to make theory queer, not just to have a theory about queers" (Warner, 1993, p. xxvi). However, incorporating LGBT and queer perspectives and issues is still valuable to a queering exercise in a field where such representation is limited (Love, 2014; Rumens, 2016b). By engaging with entrepreneurs who identify as queer in terms of gender identity and/or sexual orientation, this study contributes to a queering of entrepreneurship by better understanding the current experiences of queer entrepreneurs and offering future directions for inquiry into entrepreneurship that question the masculinity and heteronormativity intrinsic to the normative construction. Particularly, this study highlights the pressure that queer entrepreneurs feel to conform to a narrow stereotype of the entrepreneur *as well as* to being the 'right' kind of queer as a product of queernormativity, something that has not been discussed before in the entrepreneurship literature, to the best of my knowledge. In addition, this research provides insight into what motivates queer individuals to pursue entrepreneurship – other than the default assumption of discrimination in the workplace – and also highlights the discrimination faced by queer individuals within and beyond the workplace, in terms of access to funding, resources, and networks (Schindehutte et al., 2005).

This research therefore contributes to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse, adding to the valuable insights into entrepreneurship as it relates to LGBT and queer individuals already offered by Chin (2021), Galloway (2007, 2011), Hardin (2016), Köllen et al. (2012), Marlow et al. (2018), Rumens and Ozturk (2019), Schindehutte et al. (2005), and Scorsone (2017).

Additionally, through the discussion of the masculine, heteronormative, and generally exclusionary dynamics that these queer entrepreneurs have had to navigate in terms of business opportunities, platforms, funding, networks, and partnerships, this research also contributes to the broader debates

around LGBT and queer inclusion in the management, organisation, workplace, and tertiary education literature as presented by Bowring and Brewis (2009), Calvard et al. (2020), Giddings and Pringle (2011), Graham and MacFarlane (2020), Holvino (2010), and Rumens (2016; 2013, 2017, 2018b, 2018a, 2018c) among others. This study also invites deeper inquiry into the relationship between gender and entrepreneurship, which has been explored extensively by Ahl (2004, 2006; 2012, 2021; 2010), Gupta (2014; 2008; 2012), Marlow (2012, 2021; 2002, 2014, 2020; 2018; 2018; 2012, 2015; 2018), Welter (2020; 2011b; 2010; 2012; 2020; 2014), and many others (Brush et al., 2020; Camelo-Ordaz, Diánez-González, & Ruiz-Navarro, 2016; Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2017; Holmquist & Sundin, 2020; Laguía et al., 2019; Tlaiss & Kauser, 2019; Wieland, Kemmelmeier, Gupta, & McKelvey, 2019). In so doing, this paper stimulates a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse.

On top of queering entrepreneurship by explicitly adding queer entrepreneurs to the entrepreneurship literature, this research has attempted to queer the field by destabilising the normative boundaries and binaries of entrepreneurship (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017; Packard, 2017; Rajasinghe et al., 2021) through the application of 'disruptive' research paradigms and methodology (McDonald, 2017; Rumens, 2018b). Through the application of feminist theory to entrepreneurship, this study contributes further to the work of Ahl and colleagues (2002, 2006; 2012, 2021; 2010; 2016), Calás et al. (2009), Marlow and colleagues (2020; 2012, 2015; 2018), Mirchandani (1999), and Tlaiss and Kauser (2019). The application of queer theory to this study contributes to the research generated by Galloway (2007), Marlow and Martinez Dy (2018), and Rumens and Ozturk (2019). The application of VGTM, and arts-based research methods to a field that has historically been predominantly positivist and functionalist (Galloway et al., 2015; Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009) is my contribution to queering the norm in entrepreneurship studies. This is because, to the best of my knowledge, VGTM and arts-based methods have not yet been applied to the study of entrepreneurship.

Additionally, in the queering of entrepreneurship, this research contributes to the broader queering of the business school. Entrepreneurship education is increasingly featured in undergraduate and graduate programmes in other faculties (Kuratko & Morris, 2018; Turner & Gianiodis, 2018), but its origins lie in the business school (Kuratko & Morris, 2018; Nieuwenhuizen, Groenewald, Davids, van Rensburg, & Schachtebeck, 2016). Many business schools globally offer courses in entrepreneurship (Arshad, Farooq, & Afzal, 2018), understanding that it fills a significant gap in the business school curriculum by addressing small business contexts and helps encourage entrepreneurial activity and broader economic development (Kuratko & Morris, 2018). By including the perspectives and experiences of queer individuals as they pertain to entrepreneurship, I have added marginally to the

queering of the business school. Further, by questioning of the primacy of neoliberal capitalism and heteronormativity within entrepreneurship theory, as well as the normalising discourses around whiteness and its influence over access to economic and social capital, I have contributed to a queering of the business school by challenging its inherent institutional assumptions (de Souza, 2017; Parker, 2002). This contributes to the crucial arguments raised by Bell et al. (2020), Bendl et al. (2008), de Souza and colleagues (2017; 2016), Holmquist and Sundin (2020), Parker (2001, 2002), and Rumens and colleagues (2014; 2016a, 2016b, 2017, 2018c, 2018a; 2019).

### 6.3.2. Including people of colour

While participants' races and ethnicities were not central to the research questions, they still influence participants' perceptions and experiences of the normative construction of entrepreneurship. This is valuable to the entrepreneurship field as it (1) confirms the existence of the white stereotype and (2) offers new insight into the perceived implications of entrepreneurs' non-whiteness on their access to entrepreneurial opportunities, including access to economic and social capital. The inclusion of perspectives by people of colour on entrepreneurship in my research adds to the provocative and necessary insight provided by Dandridge (2010), Dy and colleagues (2019; 2020; 2014), Harvey (2005), Jones (2017), and Scorsone (2017), thus contributing to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse.

### 6.3.3. Including perspectives from the Global South

Being conducted in Africa by and with Africans, this study offers a non-Western perspective on entrepreneurship, which is crucial to contributing to a more inclusive, diverse, and representative entrepreneurial discourse. This answers the calls in literature that have been made by Calás et al. (2009), Dy (2019; 2020), Galloway et al. (2015), Maalaoui et al. (2020), Rindova et al. (2009), and Wheadon and Duval-Couetil (2017). This research suggests that Western norms are pervasive in entrepreneurs' motivations for and measurements of entrepreneurial success, even when based in an African / developing economy. However, this study also offers a valuable perspective on how entrepreneurial success in the African context is defined more expansively, accommodating the social role and impact of entrepreneurship and how this influences how entrepreneurs pursue and measure success differently. Whether or not this is unique to an African, specifically South African, context needs to be investigated further.

## 6.4. LIMITATIONS

While this paper offers valuable contributions to the literature, there are also some critical limitations to its applicability, which are noted below. Future investigations or the extension of this study to other contexts should take these limitations into consideration.

### 6.4.1. HOMOGENISATION

Due to constraints on time, sample size, and scope of degree, this study homogenises queerness within entrepreneurship. I was unable to explore the variation of experiences and ideals between cisgender and gender non-conforming individuals, or between those whose sexual orientations differ. As such, this study does not account for how varying queer identities can be discursively produced (Rumens & Ozturk, 2019) and thus undermines the queer project to some extent (Halperin, 2003). . Understanding that queer is a critique of identity (Butler, 2007), referring to the participants of this study collectively as 'queer' could undermine the credibility thereof. Additionally, "queer theorizing should not simply study those who disrupt norms, minorities or Others, nor solely the social processes which create people as deviants via labels and categories" (Rumens et al., 2019, p. 598), yet this study focused on queer individuals rather than on the various dimensions of normativity to which they have been subjected that could be queered. There is also the possibility that working towards the inclusion of queer individuals in mainstream entrepreneurship – a phenomenon that is widely and fundamentally understood to be neoliberal and capitalist in nature – simply perpetuates homonormativity and homocapitalism by driving assimilation rather than participation (Stoffel (he/him/his), 2021). Further still, there are concerns in the broader literature that queer theory marginalises non-Western epistemologies and voices from the Global South (Rao, 2015).

I attempted to mitigate these limitations through the use of a methodology that unsettles the norms of entrepreneurship research (Rumens, 2016b). That the research was conducted in South Africa on African entrepreneurs addresses to some extent the concern about the marginalisation of non-Western perspectives.

### 6.4.2. Fractured perspectives

The literature notes a substantial lack of research on the experiences of those entrepreneurs whose identities intersect across markers of difference (Chasserio et al., 2014; Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Holvino, 2010; Knight, 2016). However, this research hasn't explicitly examined or accounted for how race, gender, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, or any other social ascription interact or intersect with each other, and the consequent impact on entrepreneurship due to limitations around time, sample size, and scope of degree.

To address this limitation, I have tried wherever relevant to note the potential influence of identity markets on participants' perspectives, including their respective races, ethnicities, nationalities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, while other identity markers such as race and socioeconomic class certainly influence entrepreneurs' access to resources and opportunities, participants were explicit that it is predominantly their queerness that has shaped such access (or lack thereof).

### 6.4.3. Perpetuating inequity

There is also a concern that this research exercise, by highlighting queer ex/inclusion in entrepreneurship, will simply reify the binaries of the entrepreneurship literature by further – although unintentionally – 'othering' queer entrepreneurs (Rumens & Ozturk, 2019).

I aimed to address this issue through my recommendations for the entrepreneuring and queering of entrepreneurship, as they position entrepreneurship as a dynamic, ever-expanding 'organism' that accounts for infinite identities such that everybody and nobody is simultaneously 'othered'.

### 6.4.4. Methodological limitations

The limitations of using visual forms of data and arts-based methods have already been noted in Chapter V. To reiterate briefly: there are concerns that, while visual data and arts-based methods can open up possibilities for exploration, they can also be perceived as gimmicky, insubstantial, and ambiguous (Eisner, 1997). To account for these risks, I supplemented the visual data with interview data and explanatory text (Capous-Desyllas, 2010).

A further risk with arts-based methods is that they can perpetuate, rather than eliminate, negative interpersonal power dynamics between the researcher and participants (Harley & Langdon, 2019). The personal nature of the collage outputs and interview content could result in participants withholding

the ‘full truth’ due to unequal power dynamics. To mitigate this risk, I offered participants the freedom to withdraw from the research process at any time, was fully transparent about my intentions and positionality, and presented questions in an open-ended way that allowed for their own interpretation and exploration to empower participants to create and ‘own’ the knowledge shared (S. Dutton et al., 2019; Kay, 2013).

Lastly, collage as a mode of data collection is challenging in terms of the availability of physical and digital collage material (S. Dutton et al., 2019) and digital access and literacy. Participants’ creativity in their collages may have been constrained by a lack of flexible digital software such that their creative intention and final execution did not align. To address these matters, I personally provided a range of mixed materials for physical collages. Connectivity support was offered to participants but declined. Interview data supplemented the collage data to give participants the room to expand on their thinking and ensure the intended meaning was achieved. Additionally, not all participants were familiar with the collage concept, though this challenge was addressed by providing a collage brief[10] before commencing. Collage creation is also time-constrained – especially for entrepreneurs who are likely to allocate productive hours to operating their businesses. Unfortunately, given the time constraints of this project, this limitation could not be addressed fully, and has implications for the generalisability of this study.

### 6.4.5. Limited generalisability

The small sample size of this study has already been discussed briefly in Chapter V, but bears repeating. This study involved seven entrepreneurs who identify as queer. All seven are South Africa-based, and all but one are South African (the exception being Kenyan). These participants are well-educated, including with tertiary qualifications, and they operate their businesses formally – with the implication that they all have access to social and economic capital that less educated or informal entrepreneurs would not. As such, the findings of this study are limited in their generalisability. However, they are promising as they confirm and add to existing findings, and offer a useful starting point for future research, particularly into queer and/or African entrepreneurship.

[10] Included in the appendix

### 6.4.6. SOLO RESEARCH

The ethics implications of conducting this research solo have been considered in Chapter V. The importance of reflexivity was also discussed. It is worth noting these limitations again: having this study conducted by only one researcher (yours truly) means that the findings are subject to personal bias, affecting their credibility. This was unavoidable, as the study was self-funded and time constrained. However, I aimed to ensure the credibility of this study to account for its interpersonal and interpretive nature (Ahl, 2007; Strauss, 1987) through:

- Explicit communication of my perspectives and intentions with research participants
- Ongoing data analysis and interpretation through digital and manual memos
- Frequent discussion of content, codes, and analysis with peers
- A structured and well-documented inquiry process, illustrated in Chapter V so that others may replicate the study reliably
- Regular assessment of my analysis against the literature as recommended for grounded theorising (Charmaz, 2006)
- Active consideration of participants' voices
- Supplementation of visual data with interview data in an effort to reduce the effects of personal bias and to ensure a more robust representation of the social phenomena explored (Hadley, 2019)

## 6.5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Given the above discussion, there are various avenues to be explored in future entrepreneurship research.

### 6.5.1. QUEER ENTREPRENEURS

While this study has suggested that entrepreneurship is a multiplicity that shouldn't be limited by either/or thinking, there is still a need to understand the various facets thereof and how they simultaneously shape and are shaped by entrepreneurship as a whole – for the promotion of diversity over universality (Galloway, 2007). The literature has repeatedly called for research into entrepreneurs who don't fit into the normative construction of entrepreneurship – those who are not white, male, heterosexual, cisgender, or whose success is shaped exclusively by Western ideals (A. Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Minniti, 2009; Muntean & Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015; Welter et al., 2017). Yet there are

still few studies that address these – independently or simultaneously – extensively, with most gender-oriented entrepreneurship focusing on women (A. M. Dy et al., 2014; Marlow, 2014) as a homogenous group without accounting for race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other marginalised identities (Harrison et al., 2015; Knight, 2016; Marlow & Martinez Dy, 2018; Steyaert & Katz, 2004; Williams & Patterson, 2018). While this study has started to uncover how entrepreneurship could be constructed to be more inclusive of queer entrepreneurs, there is ample opportunity for future research into queer entrepreneurs themselves and the various facets of entrepreneurship, such as motivations, identity-building, access to financing, performance, and social impact – matters which have been investigated at length for heterosexual and cisgender men and women (Ahl, 2006; A. M. Dy et al., 2014; Köllen et al., 2012; Marlow, 2014, 2020; Marlow et al., 2018).

### 6.5.2. GENDER VS. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The findings of this research grouped queer individuals together regardless of their gender identities or sexual orientations, presenting some limitations as discussed earlier in this chapter. Given these limitations, as well as the general scarcity of literature on entrepreneurship in terms of entrepreneurs' non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations (Galloway, 2011; Marlow, 2014; Marlow et al., 2018; Pijpers & Maas, 2014; Rumens & Ozturk, 2019; Schindehutte et al., 2005), further research is needed globally on the relationships between (1) non-normative gender identities and entrepreneurship and (2) non-normative sexual orientations (including and beyond gay, lesbian, and bisexual) and entrepreneurship. For instance, a cursory search for the terms 'entrepreneurship + non-binary/nonbinary/transgender/queer' in the International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship, revealed 0 results (this was admittedly not an in-depth review and invites further investigation). Further research into how non-normative gender identities and/or sexual orientations intersect with other identity markers such as race or socioeconomic class would also be beneficial to the entrepreneurship field.

Additionally, to promote the queering of the entrepreneurship field beyond investigating non-normative identities and processes, future studies could answer the research questions by extending them to heterosexual and/or cisgender entrepreneurs and query the perpetuation of heteronormativity within entrepreneurship in line with the kind of thinking presented by Ozturk and Rumens (2019).

### 6.5.3. Access to economic capital

Whiteness, masculinity, and heteronormativity have been found to influence individuals' access to economic capital. Research shows that it is easier for white and/or male entrepreneurs to access economic capital (funding, venture capital) and that women and/or Black individuals find it more difficult to access finance for entrepreneurship (Bewaji, Yang, & Han, 2015; Campos & Gassier, 2017; Harvey, 2005; McGorman et al., 2018; Ngoasong & Kimbu, 2019; Palia, 2016; Younkin & Kuppuswamy, 2018). The findings supported this, noting perceptions that being male and/or white makes it easier for entrepreneurs to access funding and resources for entrepreneurship. There is a need for further research on the extent to which this is true, particularly in South Africa, and for which race groups and sexual orientations. Additionally, research into the influence of (non-white) race, non-normative gender identity, non-normative sexual orientation (including and beyond gay, lesbian, and bisexual), and the intersections thereof, is limited, especially in terms of entrepreneurs' access to economic capital (Díaz-García & Welter, 2011a; A. Dy & Agwunobi, 2019; Harrison et al., 2015; Marlow & McAdam, 2015). There is therefore a need for research on the influence of each of these identity markers, as well as the intersections thereof, on entrepreneurs' access to economic capital.

### 6.5.4. Access to social capital

Whiteness, masculinity, and heteronormativity pervade the normative construction of entrepreneurship but research into the influences of such identity markers on individuals' access to social capital and their corresponding effects on entrepreneurship is varied.

How social capital shapes entrepreneurship is well-researched, with previous studies indicating the beneficial effects of social capital on entrepreneurship (Neergaard, Shaw, & Carter, 2005; Neumeyer, Santos, Caetano, & Kalbfleisch, 2019). Social capital influences the nature of the business; entrepreneurs' access to funding opportunities, competitive insights, and potential customers; innovation capacity; the creation and maintenance of credibility (Anderson, Park, & Jack, 2007). It impacts the propensity for self-employment within communities (Kwon, Heflin, & Ruef, 2013) and enhances entrepreneurs' ability to access resources and financing, diverse contacts, and category and competitive information through social networks (Neumeyer et al., 2019; Wang, Cai, Zhu, & Deng, 2020).

Research into the relationship between race and social capital is also established – see (Brondolo, Libretti, Rivera, & Walsemann, 2012; Ganapathy, 2020; Hikido, 2018; S. McDonald, 2011; Munn, 2018, 2019). However, research into how race and social capital intersect with individuals' pursuits of

and successes in entrepreneurship is limited, to the best of my knowledge, with few examples such as Dandridge (2010), Harvey (2005), and House (2000). This is especially pertinent in South Africa, where an individual's non-whiteness has a profound effect on their access to social capital due to the country's historical oppression of non-whites. In the findings, individuals expressed that race influences access to social capital in South Africa because whiteness ensures having access to the 'right' social connections. This highlights the need to investigate the extent to which an individual's race influences their access to social capital in terms of entrepreneurship within a South African context.

There is also a solid body of work exploring the relationships between gender, social capital, and entrepreneurship that highlights the critical positive influence that social capital has on women's entrepreneurial pursuits and successes – in Western contexts (Lindvert, Patel, & Wincent, 2017; Neumeyer et al., 2019; Poon, Thai, & Naybor, 2012; Wang et al., 2020; Yetim, 2008). However, these findings appear to be limited by the heteronormative assumptions within entrepreneurship research that equate gender to 'women', based on my reading into the matter, which admittedly is not exhaustive. This necessitates further research into the role that an individual's non-binary or transgender identity may play in their access to social capital as it relates to entrepreneurial opportunities.

Research exploring the influence of an individual's sexual orientation on their social capital also appears to be limited (Cronin & King, 2014), especially in terms of entrepreneurship. This calls for investigations into the relationship/s between sexual orientation, social capital, and entrepreneurship, and would be especially interesting if overlaid with investigations into queernormativity. There is also a need to explore the influence of the intersections of these identity markers on individuals' social capital as it relates to entrepreneurship.

### 6.5.5. South African and Global South perspectives, and comparative studies

As noted already, there is a need to investigate the extent to which men have easier access to access funding and resources for entrepreneurship in South Africa. Given the general lack of research on entrepreneurship in countries from the Global South (A. Dy & Agwunobi, 2019), it would be valuable to see research from other African and 'Global South' countries on whether this holds, and for which race groups and sexual orientations. It would also be beneficial to investigate the influence of non-normative gender identities and sexual orientations on entrepreneurship more broadly in other developing nations.

Further, it would be interesting to understand whether, and to what extent, South Africa's political history has influenced individuals' entrepreneurial aspirations and achievements – e.g. how race, ethnicity, geography, and socioeconomic class in South Africa, as a product of historical policies and their pervasive effects, shapes individuals' necessity, willingness, or hesitance to pursue entrepreneurship.

It would also be fascinating to conduct comparative studies on the above in and across other countries. This could include South Africa vs. other African countries or developing vs. developed countries.

## 6.6. Concluding thoughts

This study on how the normative construction of entrepreneurship can be adapted to be more inclusive of queer entrepreneurs is illuminating in many ways.

It highlights that, despite progress made in the academic literature, a predominantly Western construction of entrepreneurship – one that is white, masculine, heteronormative, and centred on individual wealth generation – still pervades mainstream perceptions and experiences of entrepreneurship. It also shows that various layers of normativity impede queer entrepreneurs' capacity to innovate and express and achieve – they are limited not just by heteronormativity but also by queernormativity, on top of various other social identities that influence their ability to identify, access, and realise the possibilities promised by entrepreneurship. This study also envisions a new construction of entrepreneurship that is more inclusive and representative of Black and brown people, of queer people, and of any marginalised community – such that it isn't accessible only to white (and sometimes Black) men. It envisions a new construction that is values-driven rather than solely wealth-driven – where wealth creation is seen as important but is not the primary driver of entrepreneurship.

On this basis, the study delineates the ingredients required to make a new, queer-inclusive ideal construction of entrepreneurship a reality, through an expansion of how success is defined and what behaviours are necessary to achieve it, leaning into the expansiveness of queerness, and the acceptance and embracing of difference. In this regard, the study proposes an *entrepreneuring* of entrepreneurship itself by continually intervening in and experimenting with traditionally unquestioned beliefs and practices. This study also outlines the key impediments to realising the ideal construction, which can be summed up as various extensions of binary, normative thinking. With respect to these impediments, this study suggests the *queering* of the normative construction of entrepreneurship, not only through the inclusion of communities of sexual and gender 'deviants', but also through problematising heteronormativity and the deliberate subversion of normativity.

Critically, the findings of this study highlight that a more inclusive construction of entrepreneurship does not necessitate the absolute destruction of the existing norm, but rather a constant de- and re-construction thereof – now and into the future. In so doing, we conceive of entrepreneurship less as an identity and more as a multiplicity that accommodates a variety of multi-hyphenates – therefore, not a box to fit into or even a spectrum to fit within, but rather a colour picker from which to choose freely how to show up as an intersection of identities.

This study also presents findings that encourage the application of social innovation research to give action to the entrepreneuring and queering so that they can extend into tangible intervention rather than remaining rhetorical – and in so doing indicates active steps for policymakers, academic institutions, corporate funders, and small, queer businesses to take in driving a more inclusive construction.

Further still, this study demonstrates the value of non-normative methods in encouraging the development of and engagement with non-normative theory.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Collage brief

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION**

Principal researcher: Rhiannon Rees

Project title: De- and re-constructing the social construction of entrepreneurship for greater social inclusion.

**PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES: CREATING A COLLAGE**

**What is a collage?**

Collage involves the creation of visual artworks or artefacts through the use of images, papers, and other materials, cutting or altering them, and sticking them to a surface to express experiences (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010; Chilton & Scotti, 2014).

**The collage brief**

Please create a collage using any of the materials provided, as well as any additional found materials that you have identified. In your collage, please visualise **your vision or interpretation of the 'ideal' entrepreneur / concept of entrepreneurship – one that is not restricted by the normative stereotype.**

- For your reference, the normative stereotype of the entrepreneur / entrepreneurship is associated with whiteness, maleness, heteronormativity, cisnormativity and neoliberalism (a focus on profit making for the individual).
- The key question that should guide your creation then is: how and where, if at all, would you change the definition or understanding of entrepreneurship so that it is more open, inclusive, and accessible beyond this normative construction, and how would you express this visually?

**Some execution guidelines**

1. Start with a blank base: a single sheet of white paper (size A3 or A4)
2. Using a range of creative materials (recycled materials, magazine and newspaper cutouts, markers, and oil pastels) create your collage by:
   a. Cutting or tearing and sticking words and/or images to your paper base
   b. You can also think about overlapping words and/or images on top of each other
   c. Consider whether you'd like to include writing or drawing of your own on top of using the provided and/or found materials
3. Please remember that there are no specific rules to how you create your collage; it is your unique expression and answer to the question. So go ahead and make it as colourful or monochromatic, crowded or tidy, big or small as you feel. Anything goes!
4. Please label the back of your collage with your assigned tag, i.e. your participant number
5. Please photograph your collage and share the image with me at rhiannonjaneti@gmail.com

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FULL COLOUR THINKING

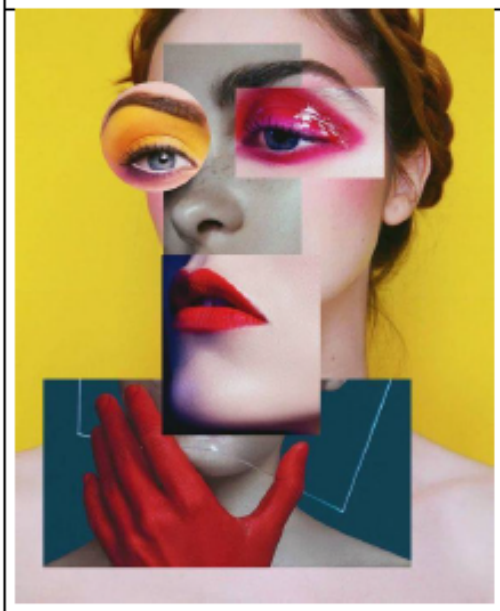
**Examples of collage**



Source



Source



Source



Source

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Source



Source



Source



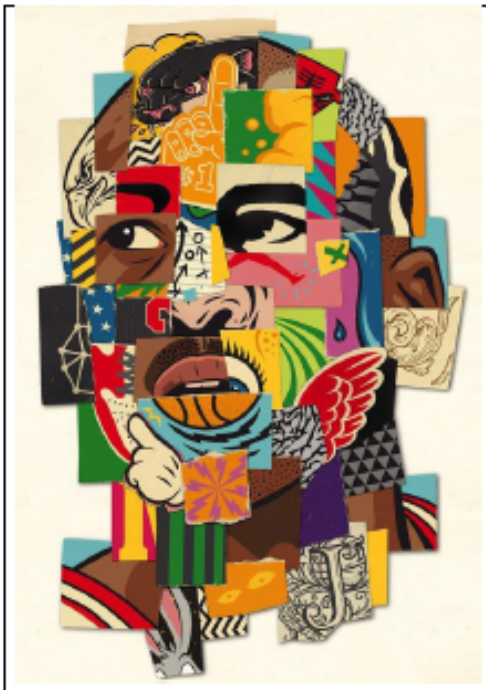
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Source



Source

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## Appendix B: Flyer

# LOOKING FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS



### WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

Challenging the current social construction of entrepreneurship to make it more queer inclusive and representative.



### WHO AM I LOOKING FOR?

Current or aspiring entrepreneurs or business people who identify as queer/LGBTQIA+.



### WHAT DO I NEED FROM YOU?

1 intro call (10 min) +
1 hour of your time:
30 minutes creating a collage (digital or physical) + 20-30 minutes of interview time.



### WANT TO KNOW MORE INFO?

Please feel free to contact me on email or Whatsapp if you're interested in participating or have any questions. All info will be kept completely confidential.

rhiannonjanet@gmail.com

+27829419588

## APPENDIX C: DISCUSSION GUIDE

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT**

*Interviewer to provide brief recap of the scope of the project if necessary, and the purpose of the discussion.*

*Participant is reminded of anonymity, protection of identifying details, voluntary participation, and freedom to withdraw at any point. Participant is also reminded of interview recording and transcription. Interviewer to ask if participant would like a copy of recording / transcription.*

**PARTICIPANT DETAILS**

*Interviewer to describe the role of such information to the study, including contextualising their responses and helping identify areas for future research.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Date/time** | | | | |
| **Location** | | | | |
| **Age** | 18-24 | 24-34 | 35-44 | <45 |
| **Race** | | | Prefer not to say | |
| **Nationality** | South African | Non-South African | Prefer not to say | |
| **Gender Identity** | | | Prefer not to say | |
| **Preferred pronouns** | | | | |
| **Current occupation** | | | | |

Is there anyone that you think I should talk to next? If so, please share details below.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Contact number: _____

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**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Referring to your creative execution:

1. Please describe the creative execution/collage you've created and the intentions you had behind each element. Please refer to things such as colours, shapes, words, symbols, size of objects, and any other content.

2. For you, what about this creative execution/collage:
    a. Exemplifies your ideal image of the entrepreneur?
    b. Is contrasted to or different from the stereotypical entrepreneur?

Thinking about entrepreneurship in South Africa:

3. What do you believe is the role of entrepreneurship in South Africa?
4. Do you believe that there is currently a stereotype of what makes an entrepreneur?
    a. If yes, how would you describe this stereotype using three words, what would they be?
    b. Are there any examples of the stereotype that come to mind?
5. Would you describe yourself as an entrepreneur in relation to the above words?
    a. Why / why not?
    b. If yes: What made you pursue your own venture or want to be an entrepreneur?
6. Please describe your ideal concept of an entrepreneur, unconstrained by the earlier discussed stereotypes?
    a. Which three words would you use and why?
    b. What impact do you think this could have on entrepreneurship in South Africa?
    c. How do you think we can make this concept of entrepreneurship a reality?

**CLOSING**

7. Do you have any additional comments or questions that we haven't yet addressed?

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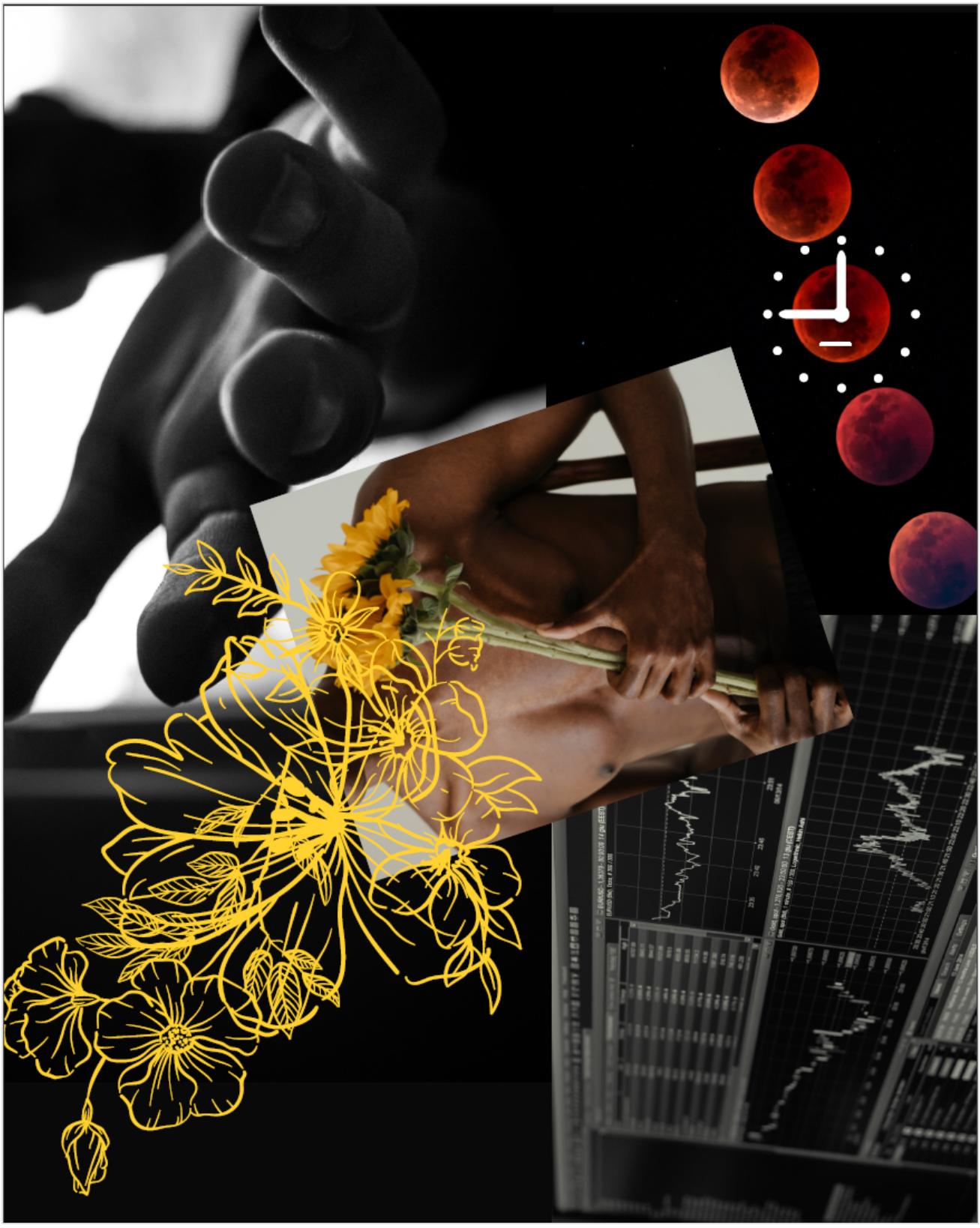
FULL COLOUR THINKING

## APPENDIX D: COLLAGES

### COLLAGE 1



**COLLAGE 2**



**COLLAGE 3**


NEW
FRESH
dream catcher
tomboy
be more [you]
WORK OUT LIKE A WARRIOR
Dark Lovely
Connecting AFRICA to
IT'S
OWN
SHEAR BRILLIANCE
WEALTH IS NOT JUST
MEASURED BY WHAT YOU HAVE,
BUT ALSO BY WHAT YOU GIVE.
SUPPORT THE COMMUNITIES

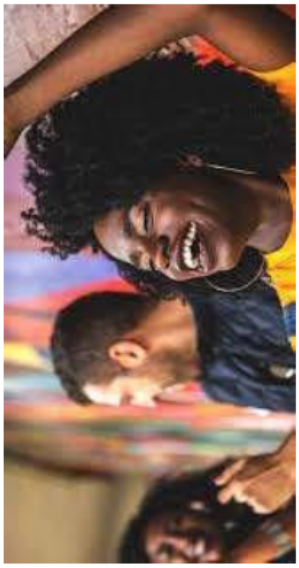
## COLLAGE 4









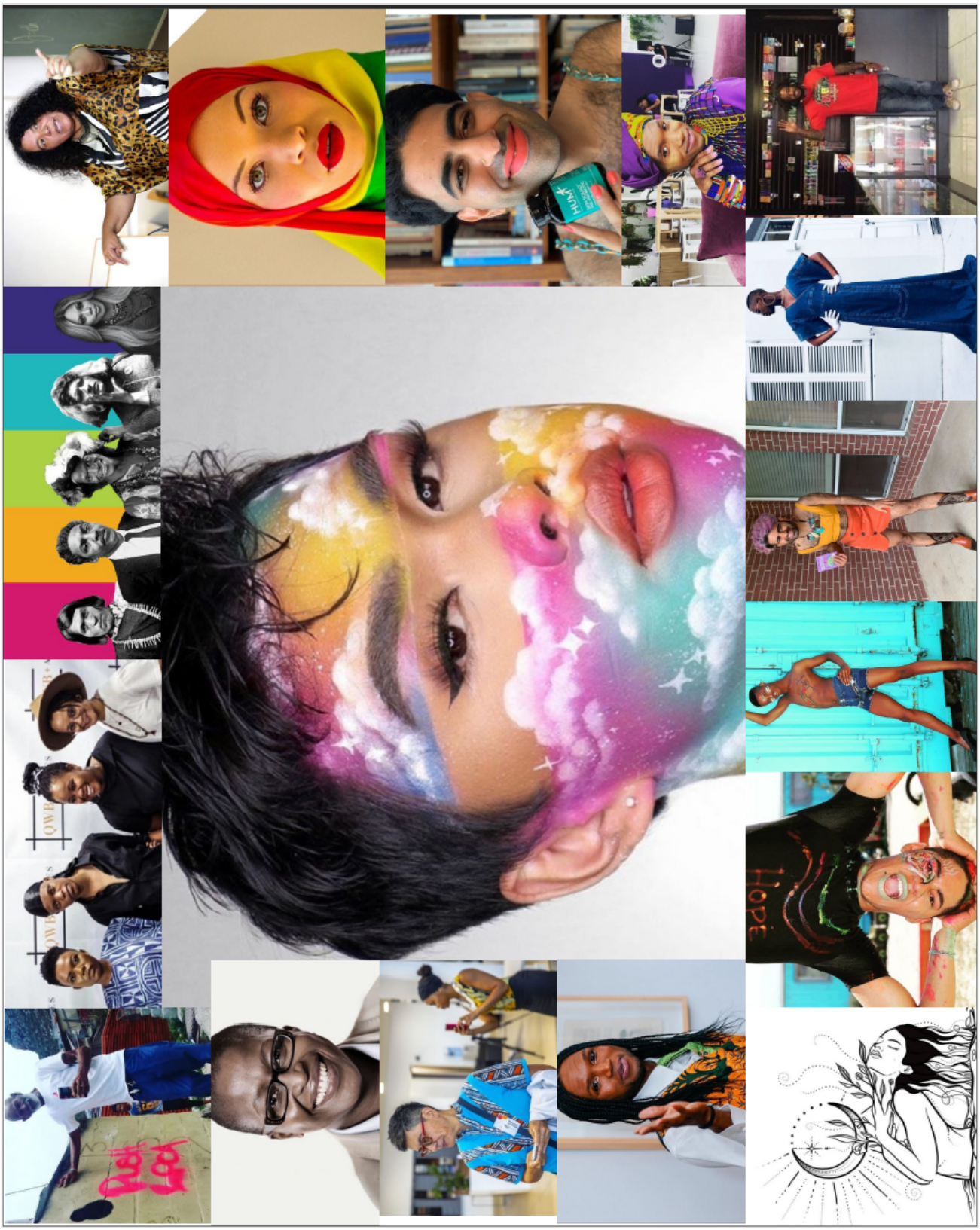




**COLLAGE 5**



## COLLAGE 6



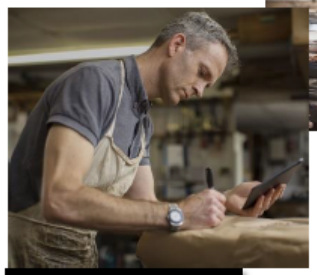
**COLLAGE 7**


Words: collaborative and collective, creative, unapologetic, bright colours, exciting, cool, playful, accessible, hope, unique within the noise, value driven, origins, nature, sustainable, normalize
"AGEISM, SEXISM, RACISM, DISCRIMINATION, HOMOPHOBIA...have no place in the world I want to live in"

## being different in the workplace=ow you

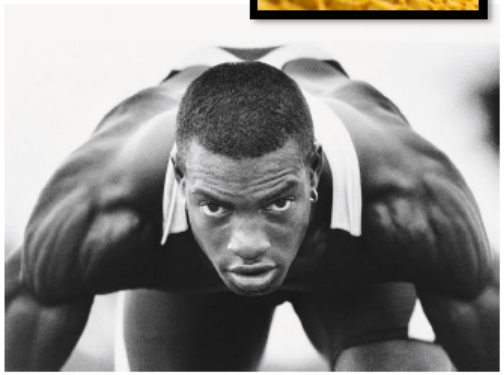
think about gender constructs and fluidity



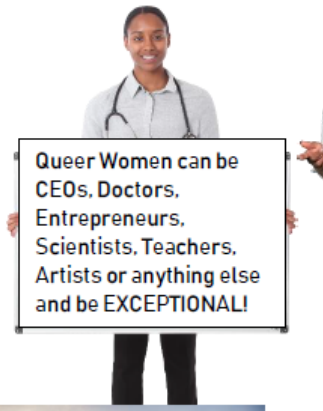




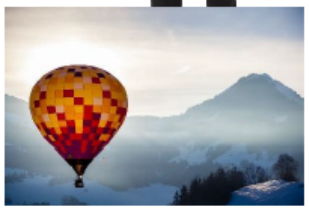








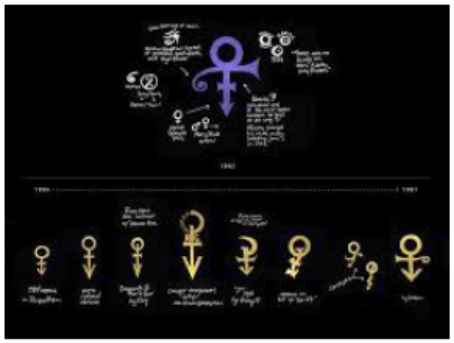








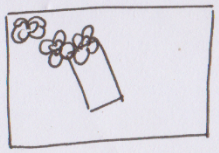



UBER
MasterCard
GAP
American Airlines
(RED)
lyft

## COLLAGE 1


COLLAGE #1 : INVENTORY & SEGMENTATION
HORIZONTAL /LANDSCAPE :
Fuller composition, creates more space for background & context
Majority of background = HORIZONTAL stripes x 6 colours.
Reading from L to R = how we read (Western assumption). + conventionally top to bottom
STARTING POINT = MOTHER
reads from top to bottom. Is this all-encompassing? representing everything that follows?
TOP / BOTTOM LEFT = triangle/ Diagonal stripes → dynamism
Directional, helps us read from L to right (conventional reading)
STRIPE COLOURS: White + pink + blue + tan + black.
Trans flag + POC?
Diagonals of the triangle encourage reader to read from L to R but also bottom to top— creating a sense of movement, guiding the eye.
"EYE PATHWAY" leads to main figure.
ASSUMPTION : pride flag = RED to ORANGE + Yellow + GREEN + BLUE + PURPLE
Horizontal stripes = more stable & steady than diagonals.
"GROUNDING"
vs.
Grouped into themes?
WORDS ON TRIANGLE
Fanning out? Funneling in?
BLACK. QUEER. FAMILY.
ADAPTATION. SUPPORT. COMMUNITY.
SEEKING LIFE. BLACKOWNED.
FUTURE. CHANGE. HOPE.
CONE / EGG CUP. (3D) = gives shape, form. Words appear to funnel in (L to R) or pour out (R to L). Directional. Sits on the border of the diagonal = a pivot point. A from → to.
Stripes arranged in a rainbow pattern, in terms of colour. Horizontality of stripes suggestive of pride flag. But juxtapose with the diagonal of the triangle. A jolt? An adjustment? A stabilisation?
Focal point = FEMME FIGURE.
Dominant in the composition. This is what stands out first.
Black. Woman/femme. Hands are positioned in a way that creates movement. Large dress = stereotypical "women's wear". Detailed with embellishments. Wearing high-heeled boots.
Serious / stern facial expression.
Press made up of words, B&W.
Femme figure is central to the Pride background.
Positioned on top of words.
"Create and build your own. Do you, unapologetically."
These words = part of the same line of sight of the figure.
Words + figure = one segment/idea.
Clear relationship—nature of r'ship to be explored.
FIGURE + EGG CUP
Direct relationship. Egg cup = link between fan of words & figure. Are words channeling into the figure, or is the figure generating these words?
COMPOSITION
Full composition. Not busy, focused. Whole composition is cohesive, tells a single story (not disjointed)
Bold. Colourful.
Top heavy.

COLLAGE #2



INVENTORY / SEGMENTATION.

Ordinarily, we read L to R → Western convention / assumption

HOWEVER very clear focal point in the centre of the composition:
- brightly coloured in a dark composition
- at an angle in a somewhat linear arrangement
- other components "fit together"; this sticks out / juxtaposes.

→ At the same time, our eyes follow a "natural" / comfortable path: from L to R & top to bottom — starting at the yellow floral graphic

What is our focal point?
Person of colour, male-presenting, nude, holding flowers
- overlaid with flowers graphic

Organic. Outline rather than solid. Yellow. Also at an angle.
The yellow florals appear almost as a 'head' for the masc figure. Many layers — adds a little bit of complexity. Overlapping each other = more depth, more brightness.

COMPOSITION. Very full, yet not entirely cohesive. Approx. 4 background images placed in a horizontal format.

Horizontal / landscape orientation allows for creator to provide more context. Yet diagonal placement of the central figure is a juxtaposition of this.

COLOUR. Predominantly B&W / greyscale, except for central figure & phases of the moon & yellow floral graphic.
DARKNESS vs. LIGHT.
At various stages of GROWTH.

I've read these from L to R, top to bottom, sequentially — based on assumption of Western reading convention.

BACKGROUND IMAGES:

These images are arranged neatly, stacked, rigid. Look like they fit on a grid. No apparent overlaps.

B&W / Grey. Dark subject matter, mostly — except for one.
IMAGE ON TOP LEFT: unclear. Black / darkness — yellow floral image overlaid. Could be a continuation of image on the top right.
IMAGE ON TOP RIGHT: A hand reaching out. Black and white / grey. A faceless character, cannot determine race or gender.
IMAGE ON BOTTOM LEFT: A set of charts / graphs in black & white. Image itself is rectangular, but the charts appear to be on screens arranged at an angle. Charts seem to be about stocks / financials (based on images that show up in pop. culture). Movement, ups & downs. Clarity in the foreground vs. blurred in the background.

IMAGE ON BOTTOM RIGHT: phases of the moon (in colour) as it climbs the sky. Shadows vs. light. Red moon.
→ Overlaid with an analogue clock & a cursor. Clock is set at 3 o'clock.
↓
A pause or "to be completed."

SIZING — hand in background (top RHS) is bigger than central figure — yet "feels" smaller? Very big relative to central body.

COLLAGE #3 : INVENTORY/SEGMENTATION




Start reading from L to R, top to bottom — Western assumption.

FOCAL POINT — larger proportionally, in the centre, surrounded by white space = Femme figure, black skin, natural hair. Wearing a tie & blazer. Pensive / contemplative facial expression. Hand on hip

ON EQUAL FOOTING WITH A LARGE SILVER TROPHY. Trophy = victory.

TOP LEFT IMAGES: Informal vendors / business women. Black women. Boxes of produce.

BOTTOM LEFT:

"Wealth is not just measured by what you have, but also by what you give" + "SUPPORT THE COMMUNITIES"

CENTRE : From top to bottom.

"DREAM CATCHER" — At the top, centre of the page. A possible headline

Linked to? Adjacent to?
"Tomboy"

Appear within the same segment (compositionally) as our focal point.

Next to the trophy: a small cartoon character, playing the guitar & singing. + the number one (red) + under the trophy & our femme figure, a feminine person doing yoga / pilates on an orange ball, wearing crisp, white gear.

Community-focused words follow linearly from informal business women — a possible link

We also see another femme figure, also dressed in stereotypically masculine / male apparel: red blazer + bow tie. Wearing her long hair down. Wearing a bra / waistcoat? over her shirt.

TOP RIGHT

A collection of words:
- "New" — in same format as promotional labels.
- Fresh
- Be more [YOU]
- Work out like a warrior
- Dark and lovely

MIDDLE-TOP RIGHT: A young, black figure — unclear gender. Wearing a beret, blazer, collared shirt, bowtie. Striking a pose — a quintessential "business person" pose. Posed on a background of what appears to be a formal event

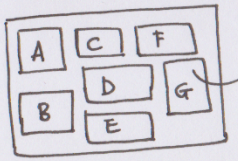
BOTTOM RIGHT:

"Connecting Africa to its own shear brilliance!" with an icon of the African continent & what appears to be a building / tower.

assume a pun from the magazine from whence it came.

Overall composition:
- Horizontal format / layout
- Filled up to all four corners
- Abundant movement
- Frequent white / open space

COLLAGE #4 : INVENTORY & SEGMENTATION

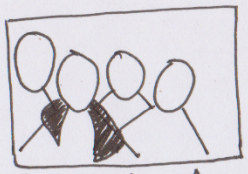



comprises 7 individual images

Reading the composition from L to R & top to bottom, due to a Western convention.

(A) A group of women / femmes hanging out with each other. Wearing stylish outfits, very casual. All people of colour. Striking a pose / in action. Tones of grey and pink / soft colours. Standing at various heights.

(B) Group of friends / classmates. x 4 people, Black people. Mixture of femme & masc individuals. Facial expressions vary —



LHS: a Vanderbilt University sign on a rainbow background.
↳ pride flag?

smiling "serious" smirking laughing

Person second from the left is wearing a purple scarf / shawl. Two of the individuals have heart-shaped stickers stuck to their faces. All but one wear glasses.

(C) A cartoon image with a pink background. The subject matter: a brown hand painting a rainbow over a speech bubble full of black scribbles.

(D) Group of people pouring a fizzy beverage at a table.
↳ Assume that the fizzy beverage is alcoholic? — A social occasion, a celebratory occasion.
Smiling faces in the background.
More than two people = socialising? planning?

(E) Foreground: Black woman / femme, wearing hoop earrings, natural hair, yellow shirt, arm raised in air. Appears to be dancing.
In the background: white guy + a Black / brown woman / femme. Also appear to be dancing.
Image seems like this is a group of people socialising, dancing, enjoying each other's company.

(F) Open road, very sunny. Surrounded by greenery on both sides of the road. No traffic, no sign of life. No clear direction of road.

(G) Vertical poster: Queer x design (queer by design) on a vertical-stripe background. Stripes are in rainbow colours. Appears to be a book cover.

COLLAGE #5 — INVENTORY & SEGMENTATION.



Takes up approx. 1/3 of the composition

IN THE CENTRE, BEHIND THE ♡ = A GIANT, COLOURFUL FIST & FLASHES.

Reading from L to R & top to bottom — Western assumption/convention.

However: a clear focal point. In the centre: a heart shape, filled with colourful stripes in rainbow colours. Heart has a pink outline.

On top of the heart, text that reads: "Heteronormativity blows"

Top Centre right — Two individuals. Appear to be business people, in a library or office environment. one black person/dark skinned — other individual not easy to tell.

Underneath this pic: an individual perched on a stool. Dark background. Person of colour (non-white) + likely trans → wearing a "trans is beautiful" T-shirt. Patterned pants — an African print?

At the centre of the collage, as a "foundation" (?) for the 'heteronormativity blows' heart. It is LARGE — proportionally the largest individual image in the composition. The fist is comprised of colourful stripes — rainbow colours. Fist is surrounded by "flashes" or sparkles or sprinkles or dashes, of many different colours — the same colours as the fist itself. The rainbow colours running up the arm & into the fist run in vertical, parallel lines.

Image on the right, in the middle (bottom):
Colourful silhouettes of people walking, looking busy. Same male-presenting, some female-presenting. Appear to be business people: carrying briefcases, folders/books, cellphones to their ears, handbags.
Moving in different directions — same to the left ("backward"?) & same to the right.
Different colours of the silhouettes are in "rainbow" order, starting at red on the left & blending through the spectrum to violet on the right.

TOP LEFT CORNER: single image, possibly a poster. Predominantly white background with rainbow-coloured/ordered stripes on the R.H.S. 3 sentences on the white background, simple & straightforward: "Be true. Be brave. Be proud."

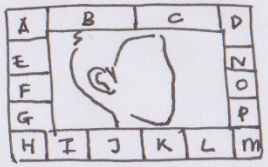
On the right of this image: two individuals, white, appear to be women — wearing feminine clothing & accessories. Smiling in the sunshine. Appear to be in conversation, in a social setting, outdoors.

Bottom left: Black & white photo of a group of people. Appear to be women/femmes → wearing skirts, stockings, flamboyant jewellery/accessories. There are five of them — appear to be socialising — smiling, laughing, possibly even dancing? Some of the clothing is patterned — possibly traditional African print?

Image on the right, in the middle: Two individuals w/ dark skin. Appear to be women/femmes. Smartly dressed. One is taking notes, while one is working on a laptop. All with darker skin — Black? Certainly not white. Appear to be working in an office or business environment together.

Bottom right: There are three individuals who appear to be focused on the same area — possibly a work task. Two people of colour on either side, with a white woman in the centre. The three individuals appear to be women/femmes or femme due to feminine apparel & presentation. These three individuals may be friends, although — given their facial expressions, which are serious & focused — they are more likely to be co-workers.

Collage #6 INVENTORY & SEGMENTATION – P1




Read from L to R & top to bottom = Western convention
↳ However, images have been placed to create a frame – so could also "read around the frame."

From TOP LEFT:

(A) An elderly individual with dark skin and a greying beard. Holding a can of spray paint while standing alongside a concrete wall / structure that has been sprayed with neon pink paint to say, "push loca". Wearing a white shirt and blue pants. Appears to be in an informal housing environment.

(B) Group of four individuals who appear to be at an event (formal scenic signage in the ~~bdg~~ background)
↳ "QWB" = Queer Women in Business.

(C) Five image segments, each with their own background colour & individual. Colours = magenta, orange-yellow, green, teal, indigo — "rainbow colours" Assume these individuals are queer icons — can identify Marsha P. Johnson & Laverne Cox.
(3) must investigate others.
Stripes are arranged vertically, with colours running from left (magenta) to right (indigo)

(D) A teacher — appears to be a woman / femme — pointing at a blackboard, explaining something. Wearing zebra print + spotted print.

↳ Clearly very different personalities ~~swing~~ shining through — different outfits + facial expressions. Appear to be "dressed up".

(E) A Black individual — could be masc or femme — ambiguous. Smiling. Wearing glasses. Appears to be wearing a collared shirt + blazer.

(F) In the foreground, an older Asian-looking individual – wearing red glasses & a blue shirt with red/blue/white printed patterns. Wearing a name badge. Appears to be at an event or exhibition. Gender of individual is unclear. There is another person in the background – Black, young, woman / femme.

(G) Black individual wearing braids in their hair + white collared shirt + brightly-coloured print waistcoat + green tie. Appears to be at a formal event / exhibition, due to framed artwork in the background. Mouth shape & hand gesture indicate that this person is mid-conversation.

(H) A black and white line drawing of a femme individual, bathing in water underneath a crescent moon & stars. She / they are holding plants to their body and neck. Eyes are closed, facial expression is restful. Long, dark hair is dipping into the water. Small spirals / swirls emerge from & envelop them. Glimmers of light radiate from the crescent moon. Individual is not clothed.

(I) Individual with short dark hair + light brown skin, wearing a black T-shirt that says "HOPE" with wavy patterns above it. Individual is hanging upside down / is suspended. Individual's face is painted in multiple colours, with wavy patterns on their right side of their face. Wearing a light green lipstick. Paint splatters on their arms. Facial expression as though this person is singing a shanty.

(J) A tall Black individual wearing cut-off jean shorts & black high-heeled shoes. No shirt – Chest is adorned by paint or tattoos. Face paint in blue & white stripes on the person's face. Standing against a blue backdrop, appears to be a shipping container. Person is striking a pose – one hand in the air, the other on their hip. Legs are straight & spread apart in a "power pose." Chest markings appear to be gender symbols.

COLLAGE #6 — INVENTORY & SEGMENTATION — P2

(K) Gender nonconforming / genderfluid individual posing & smiling for a picture. Wearing an orange skirt & a yellow crop top with tan cowboy boots. Large / chunky teal necklace + dangly earrings. Individual has a beard & a hairy chest / torso — traditional / normative signs of masculinity. Hair is short and bushy, and bleached a lilac colour. Person is standing on a porch outside of a face brick building. Individual is holding a small lilac package in their right hand.

skirt has 3 buttons, vertically

(L) Black individual standing tall with hands on hips. Head is turned to the right. Wearing a long, billowy, dark blue dress — appears to be made of velvet / a similar fabric. Individual is wearing large hoop earrings & a short necklace. Head is shaved. Appears to be wearing sunglasses. Also wearing white gloves. Posing in front of a crisp, white background.

(M) A masculine-presenting Black individual standing in front of a shop counter, hand up on the right while left hand is down & carrying a water bottle. Wearing a red T-shirt with some print on it (not discernable) + baggy dark blue jeans + beige / white sneakers. Hair is done in locs.

(N) Feminine-presenting individual wearing a brightly-coloured hijab. Wearing eye makeup & red lipstick. Head scarf colours = red + yellow + green. Facial expression appears indifferent / blank / speechless. Individual has light brown skin.

(O) Same individual as in (K). Light-Brown-skinned individual with hairy shoulders & chest wears a strappy top (or dress) as well as red lipstick & nail polish. Individual is smiling without showing teeth. Holding a brown bottle with a turquoise label with the word "HUM". Individual is positioned in front of a bookcase. Image feels like a close-up — face fills most of the frame. Also has a nose piercing!

(P) Appears to be the same person as in (G). Black individual sitting down on a plum-coloured sofa, wearing a purple top (dress?) as well as: purple & lime doek / headscarf, beaded ring, beaded bangles, large earrings & a beaded "shawl." All adornments are brightly coloured. Individual is posing for the camera with their right hand to their chin. A demure / gentle facial expression.

CENTRE IMAGE = clear focal point

Close up of the face of an individual with typically east-Asian features. Extensive face makeup:

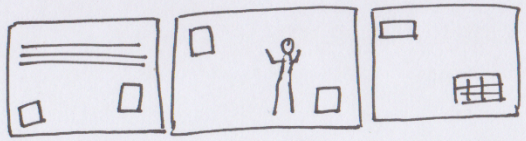
- Bold, black, winged eyeliner
- Long false eyelashes
- Red / coral lipstick

+ "face art"
↳ a painting of fluffy clouds & stars painted on a spectrum of blue + purple + pink + yellow + orange background.

Face art covers the entire face except for a rectangular band across the eyes, running from ear to ear.

This individual has short, dark hair that appears to have been textured with product. Individual wears a small diamante earring in their right ear. Facial expression is soft and calm.

COLLAGE #7 — Inventory & segmentation — P1



NB READING THE THREE PAGES TOGETHER

3 PAGES

↓

Reading one page at a time, in the order in which they were sent — assuming a chronology of thought.

↓

Reading from L to R, top to bottom → Western convention to do so (assumption).

ON PAGE ONE

At top: a long list of words — combination of adjectives, verbs, nouns. A mixture.

ADJECTIVES —

collaborative & collective.
creative. unapologetic.
exciting. cool. playful.
unique within the noise.
value-driven.
sustainable

NOUNS — (bright) colours dark skin.

? hope
origins
nature

VERBS —

hope, normalise

Unpacking the images...

Top left — three images of queer couples

- One couple in bed with a pet, smiling & chatting
- One couple lying on the grass, cuddling
- One couple holding up bunches of heart-shaped balloons.

↳ Different portrayals of queer love.

Bottom left: femme-presenting individual wearing blue lipstick, striking a pose. Image is not particularly well-lit, appears to be a deliberate photographic style. Individual is Black, with

Centre: Two images of young Black individuals, male / masc, with children. Both images, subjects are focusing on entertainment (book, phone / tablet). Appear to be bonding / spending quality time as parents.

⊕ image of young Black scientist in the lab, working with a microscope.

Small kid wearing jeans holding up a placard that reads, "AGEISM, SEXISM, RACISM, DISCRIMINATION, HOMOPHOBIA... have no place in the world I want to live in"

Top right: a masculine individual with a beard, brown / tan skin, wearing a red kurta (long shirt). Appears to be sitting on a bench, in the sun.

ON PAGE TWO.

Words at the top read: " being different in the workplace = [h]ow you think about gender constructs and fluidity.

First image, top left → appears to be a man, working out. Black & white image. Man is wearing a vest that has words printed on it:

NO HOMOPHOBIA
NO VIOLENCE
NO SEXISM
YES KINDNESS
YES PEACE
YES EQUALITY
YES LOVE

Next to this image, on the right: a white (?) man / masc individual appears to be working in a workshop — wearing an apron, standing at a wooden bench / table, writing & looking at a digital tablet.

Also: A bee dipping into honey comb, bright yellow image, solitary bee.

Presumably a worker bee, because it's working on the comb ∴ it's a male.

COLLAGE #7 — INVENTORY & SEGMENTATION — P2

PAGE TWO:

Bottom left → a Black athlete, man / masculine (short hair, broad shoulders, muscular). Very strong-looking, focused, serious.

~~Middle~~ Centre, top → an individual wearing a pink polo shirt & apron, arms crossed, standing in front of racks of plates / bowls / dishes. A chef? A potter?

↓

All of these male / masc individuals have been grouped together in the collage + the bee

= typically "men's" jobs

Centre / right: pile of green beans / pods, with one of the pods open to show six peas.

Centre, middle —

Brown-skinned doctor / physician (stethoscope around their neck). Could be a woman, or somebody presenting as more feminine. Holding up a sign that reads,

"Queer women can be CEOs, Doctors, Entrepreneurs, Scientists, Teachers, Artists or anything else and be EXCEPTIONAL!"

↳ standing next to them, is another brown-skinned individual, feminine. Smartly dressed in black slacks, a white collared shirt & a black waistcoat. Long wavy hair = a "signal" of femininity. Hands are positioned as if holding a tray or asking, "So what?"

Centre, bottom — A colourful hot air balloon in dark reds, oranges & yellows, floating above a blue-grey landscape with a hill or mountain in the background.

Top right — Basket baller hanging off the hoop, yelling, appears victorious. Black, masculine.

Bottom right — standalone block that reads,

" LOVE is LOVE is LOVE is LOVE is LOVE is LOVE "

⇩

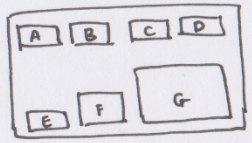
All of the images here on PAGE TWO speak, in some way, to careers / success.

+ predominantly Black / brown individuals.

G: collection of corporate logos that have been pride-aligned w/ rainbow colours (campaign)

ON PAGE THREE:

A grid of images only, no words used.




A: Two older women? Chatting / socialising, being affectionate with each other — being authentic? open?

B: Group of LGBTQ+ business leaders — [redacted] Chris Hughes (Facebook) + Arlan Hamilton + Megan Smith + Peter Thiel — in different colours, on a yellow background & stylised.

C: Original "Queer eye for the straight guy" team

D: New "Queer Eye" team

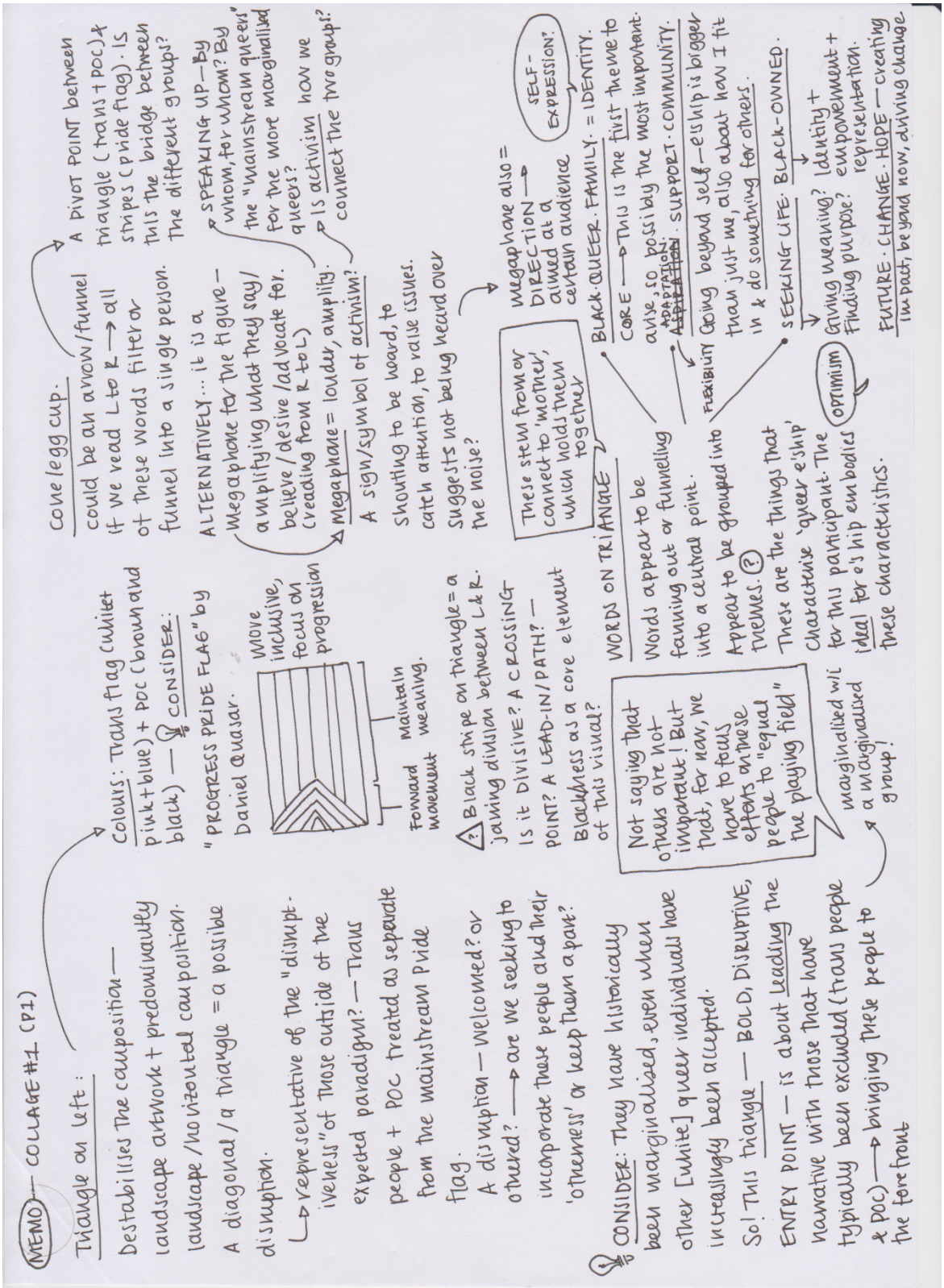
E: (Prince) symbol merging male & female symbols

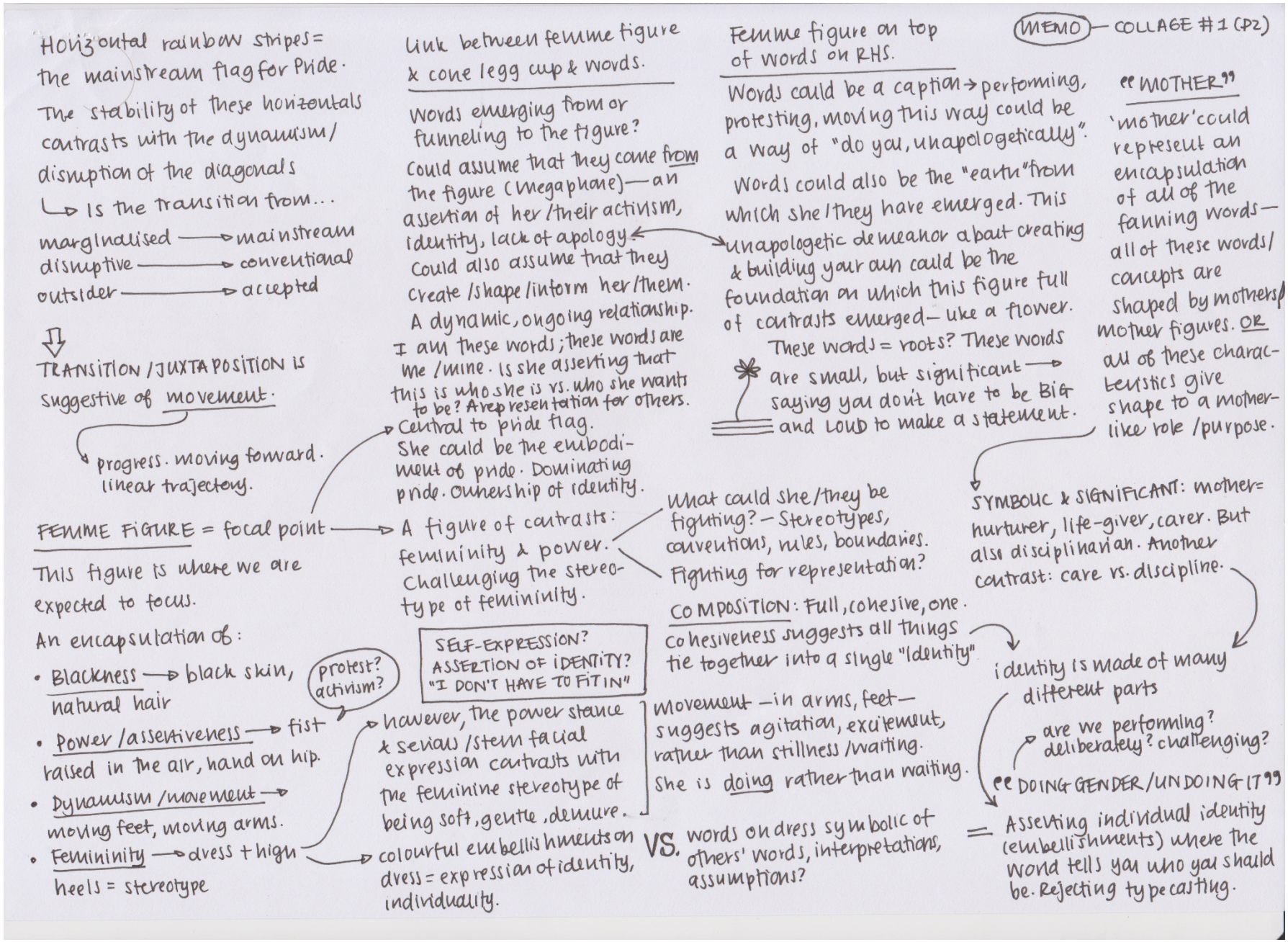
F: making of Prince's symbol

## COLLAGE 7 -C


COLLAGE #7 — INVENTORY & SEGMENTATION- P3
All of the images on
PAGE THREE:
Speak to recognition
queerness beyond age
queerness in business
progress made in
accepting queerness
commodification of
queerness?

## COLLAGE 1 – A


MEMO — COLLAGE #1 (P1)
Triangle on left:
Destabilises the composition — landscape artwork + predominantly landscape/horizontal composition.
A diagonal / a triangle = a possible disruption.
↳ representative of the "disruptiveness" of those outside of the expected paradigm? — Trans people + POC treated as separate from the mainstream Pride flag.
A disruption — welcomed? or othered? → are we seeking to incorporate these people and their 'otherness' or keep them a part?
CONSIDER: they have historically been marginalised, even when other [white] queer individuals have increasingly been accepted.
So! This triangle — BOLD, DISRUPTIVE, ENTRY POINT — is about leading the narrative with those that have typically been excluded (trans people & POC) → bringing these people to the forefront
Colours: Trans flag (white+blue) + POC (brown and black) — CONSIDER:
"PROGRESS PRIDE FLAG" by Daniel Quasar.
Move inclusive, focus on progression
Forward movement
Maintain weaving.
Black stripe on triangle = a jarring division between L & R.
IS IT DIVISIVE? A CROSSING POINT? A LEAD-IN/PATH? — Blackness as a core element of this visual?
Not saying that others are not important! But that, for now, we have to focus efforts on these people to "equal the playing field"
marginalised w/ a marginalised group!
cone/egg cup.
could be an arrow/funnel if we read L to R → all of these words filter or funnel into a single person.
ALTERNATIVELY... it is a megaphone for the figure — amplifying what they say/ believe/desire (ad vocate for. (reading from R to L)
megaphone = louder, amplify.
A sign/symbol of activism?
Shouting to be heard, to catch attention, to raise issues.
suggests not being heard over the noise?
WORDS ON TRIANGLE
Words appear to be fanning out or funneling into a central point.
Appear to be grouped into themes. (?)
These are the things that Characterise 'queer e'ship' for this participant. The ideal for e's hip embodies these characteristics.
optimism
These stem from or connect to 'mother', which holds them together
megaphone also = DIRECTION → aimed at a certain audience
BLACK-QUEER-FAMILY = IDENTITY.
CORE → This is the first theme to arise, so possibly the most important.
ADAPTATION/ALTERATION · SUPPORT · COMMUNITY.
FLEXIBILITY Going beyond self — e'ship is bigger than just me, also about how I fit in & do something for others.
SEEKING LIFE · BLACK-OWNED.
Giving meaning? Identity + Finding purpose? empowerment + representation.
FUTURE · CHANGE · HOPE — creating the path, be yond now, driving change
A PIVOT POINT between triangle (trans + POC) & stripes (pride flag). Is this the bridge between the different groups?
SPEAKING UP — By whom, for whom? By the "mainstream queers" for the more marginalised queers?
IS activism how we connect the two groups?
SELF-EXPRESSION?


Horizontal rainbow stripes = the mainstream flag for Pride.
The stability of these horizontals contrasts with the dynamism/ disruption of the diagonals
↳ Is the transition from...
marginalised → mainstream
disruptive → conventional
outsider → accepted
TRANSITION / JUXTAPOSITION is suggestive of movement.
progress. moving forward. linear trajectory.
FEMME FIGURE = focal point
This figure is where we are expected to focus.
An encapsulation of:
• Blackness → black skin, natural hair
• Power / assertiveness → fist raised in the air, hand on hip.
• Dynamism / movement → moving feet, moving arms.
• Femininity → dress + high heels = stereotype
protest? activism?
Link between femme figure & cone legg cup & words.
Words emerging from or funneling to the figure?
Could assume that they come from the figure (megaphone) — an assertion of her / their activism, identity, lack of apology
Could also assume that they create / shape / inform her / them.
A dynamic, ongoing relationship.
I am these words; these words are me / mine. Is she asserting that this is who she is vs. who she wants to be? A representation for others.
Central to pride flag.
She could be the embodiment of pride. Dominating pride. Ownership of identity.
A figure of contrasts: femininity & power.
Challenging the stereotype of femininity.
What could she / they be fighting? – Stereotypes, conventions, rules, boundaries.
Fighting for representation?
SELF-EXPRESSION?
ASSERTION OF IDENTITY?
"I DON'T HAVE TO FIT IN"
however, the power stance & serious / stern facial expression contrasts with the feminine stereotype of being soft, gentle, demure.
colourful embellishments on dress = expression of identity, individuality.
Femme figure on top of words on RHS.
Words could be a caption → performing, protesting, moving this way could be a way of "do you, unapologetically".
Words could also be the "earth" from which she / they have emerged. This unapologetic demeanor about creating & building your own could be the foundation on which this figure full of contrasts emerged – like a flower.
These words = roots? These words are small, but significant → saying you don't have to be BIG and LOUD to make a statement.
MEMO — COLLAGE #1 (P2)
"MOTHER"
'mother' could represent an encapsulation of all of the fanning words — all of these words / concepts are shaped by mothers / mother figures. OR all of these characteristics give shape to a mother-like role / purpose.
SYMBOLIC & SIGNIFICANT: mother = nurturer, life-giver, carer. But also disciplinarian. Another contrast: care vs. discipline.
COMPOSITION: Full, cohesive, one.
Cohesiveness suggests all things tie together into a single "Identity"
identity is made of many different parts
are we performing? deliberately? challenging?
"DOING GENDER / UNDOING IT"
= Asserting individual identity (embellishments) where the world tells you who you should be. Rejecting typecasting.
movement – in arms, feet – suggests agitation, excitement, rather than stillness / waiting.
She is doing rather than waiting.
VS. words on dress symbolic of others' words, interpretations, assumptions?

MEMO — COLLAGE #2 (P1)

Focal point: male-presenting POC holding flowers.

↳ At an angle — diagonal = more dynamic. Disruptive? Breaking away from the convention of linear horizontals.

This figure STANDS OUT / doesn't fit in — also because of colour breakaway. ≒CONTRAST≒

↳ showing true colours in a world that expects you to / tries to dull them. Standing out rather than trying to fit in.

↳ nakedness = vulnerability + softness in a dark, harsh, linear, rigid world +PRIDE?

↳ flowers = softness. more ORGANIC / NATURAL.

Softness, gentleness, colour & ≒LIFE≒ in a conventional, dull world. Flowers = femininity.

↳ Links naturally to the yellow floral graphic / outline.

Yellow floral = "head" of the masc. figure → softness where we expect "harsh" intellect to be?

Our eyes are led here naturally because it stands out so clearly (colour, angle)

BUT ALSO: guided by yellow floral graphic / outline. A "natural" diagonal.

Again, diagonal = dynamic. Suggests movement — esp. in an otherwise horizontal, linear, rigid composition.

VIBRANCY



shadows & depth

movement of eyes: fluid, organic — contrasts again with rigidity.

CONTRAST

STICKING OUT

NOT FITTING IN

SHOWING UP

BEING VULNERABLE / PROUD

COMPOSITION:

A full page, yet not cohesive — images all "fit together" (no spaces) yet feel apart from one another.

A deliberate separation? cold / dark / linear / rigid. Every body keeps to themselves. "Boxes to be ticked."

Yellow floral graphic = an outline, yet layered. "Simple yet complex"? Shows different stages of growth / emergence. + overlaid onto plain black background = growth despite (or because of?) the darkness. Life in the dark. Light from the dark.

Are these graphics an extension of the sunflowers held? or separate?

layering = time?

≒PALIMPSESTS≒

↳ what is on top takes precedence over what came from before

↳ A story telling mechanism.

COLOUR: the items in colour are more "natural" / organic than other subject matter — showing your true colours in a grey / b&w world feels more natural, more you.

Greyness suggests dullness, blending in, lacking colour or character. Lack of personality.

B&W suggests binary thinking: on or off; it is or it isn't. Non-negotiables. Rules-based. — So showing up in true, full colour is a rebellion. Showing up as your full, colourful self is a rebellion against the rules, the norms, the system.

Also: DARKNESS vs. LIGHT. Background images = dark, grey / B&W, heavy shadows. vs. our central figure + flowers + moon = "seeing the light", "being the light"

Is everything else in this composition lacking personality? Probably. A deliberate contrast of [who you are] colour & [who they want you to be] greyness / B&W.

Colour = life! Everything in grey = linear, rigid vs. colourful parts = vibrancy, energy, life.

LIGHT = symbol of knowledge, actualisation, optimism, the future. Inference: when you're your true, colourful self, there is LIGHT / HOPE / OPTIMISM / A FUTURE — esp. in a dull, dark, rigid world.

MEMO — COLLAGE #2 (P2)

Image on top left = black / blank.
No clear subject matter.
↳ Yet! Yellow floral graphic is overlaid. Growth coming from the darkness? Standing out despite / because of the darkness.
Dark will ordinarily kill life — but perhaps here, escaping the dark is what helped life to emerge.

Breaking away from the rigid darkness = a chance to blossom

Image on top right = hand reaching out. A calling? An invitation? or a threat?
↳ Figure is not identifiable — no clear race, gender, character. We could say "no particular type" — but more likely a symbol of the ≒ faceless ness ≒ of the rules, the convention, the system. Not knowing can create fear, uncertainty.

Image on bottom left.
Charts / graphs — assumed to be financial or money-based.
A possible suggestion that "the system" that we're expected to subscribe to is driven almost exclusively by money.
Charts appear to be on screens — lacking a human touch, an authentic connection — clinical, mechanical, technical, systematic.
Lacking warmth.
↳ emphasised by lack of colour.




COMPOSITION · our colour line of sight disrupts the black & white.

| | |
|---|---|
| COLOUR | GREY / B&W |
| LIGHT | DARK |
| ANGLES | LINES |
| MOVEMENT | RIGIDITY |
| ORGANIC | ARTIFICIAL |

Image on bottom right. Phases of the moon — suggest the passing of time, evolution, movement, change. The moon is also a symbol of femininity, mystery.
+ moon appears at night — a beacon of light in the dark.
Phases of the moon = climbing higher into the sky → elevation, rising.
Moon + analogue clock = the passing of time. Growth? Evolution? Movement?
↳ clock = daily, scheduled, finite.
vs. moon = longer-term, ongoing, infinite.

Red moon — a lunar eclipse? — many spiritual connotations. Beginnings & endings

moon & femininity — perhaps another contrast? light in the dark colour in the grey / black feminine in the masculine?

Why an analogue clock & not digital?
– Cyclical
– Symmetrical
– More movement
– More "natural" — not infringed on ~~then~~ by too many systems.

At 3 o'clock.
Time itself may not be relevant — but gives the image a sense of stability (due to right-angle).

+ there's a cursor — likely accidental / editing error but if not — a cursor = a pause, a break, "to be completed"

MEMO — COLLAGE #3 – P1

Focal point: Femme figure. Wearing a tie & blazer — a feminine figure bending gender norms by wearing stereotypically masculine attire. Androgynous.

↳ Subversion? Disruption?

Black femme, natural hair. Natural hair = owning their natural beauty, authenticity, unafraid.

Facial expression is contemplative. Possibly a smirk? Teasing the conformity with which she is expected to live?

Hand on hip — consider:
- Contrapossta (S-curve)
- Vulnerability / femininity
- Dominance / assertiveness

Shows up an equal level as a silver trophy. Trophy = victory, winning, coming out on top. So — being your authentic, non-conforming self = a victory. The most important, #1.

TOP LEFT IMAGES: informal business women, black women.

The role that they play in society = entrepreneurs. Are they possibly role models? A source of inspiration?

"The original entrepreneur" = black, women, informal.

↓

Don't have to wear a suit to be taken seriously.

→ QUESTION: are the blazer & tie necessary to be taken seriously?

Blazer & tie could signify masculinity, but also business attire.

MASCULINE ATTIRE = BUSINESS ATTIRE as a stereotype. Can we only be taken seriously as business people if we dress the part?

↙ =TENSION= Leaning into the stereotype to subvert it?

↘ Leaning into the stereotype to fit in?

DREAMCATCHER = something that catches dreams. E'neurs are people who catch their dreams; they are dreamcatchers

BOTTOM LEFT.

Words capturing two key matters:
— Wealth
— Community.

→ Emerges as something that is a part of e'ship, something you aspire to create.

BUT ALSO — something that you aspire to share / create for others as well.

Wealth > money, profit, self.
Wealth → creating value for others, "suppor the communities"

↳ Possibly a link to the informal business women — they are creating "wealth" for themselves & for their respective communities. They were the ones who did it first; it came naturally.

TOP CENTRE: "DREAMCATCHER"

This could be, given its placement:
— A headline / name for the entire collage
— A caption / label for the central femme figure

Dreamcatchers = talisman used for protection

But also

TOP CENTRE (well, off centre) = "TOMBOY" — connects to the two femme figures dressed in "men's" clothing. They are tomboys.

↓

"A girl who enjoys rough, noisy activities traditionally associated with boys"

↳ Women who pursue e'ship/ became e'neurs are getting involved in an activity typically associated with ~~men~~ men.

Red number one: number one = first, best.
+ red colour = bold, assertive, romantic? A very dominant colour.

Little cartoon playing guitar: Having fun, pursuing a hobby, creating something of value.
Cartoon = playful, childlike.
But tiny size = not so important or prominent.

↳ Fun, playfulness are important / part of winning (next to trophy) — but are not prominent or central.

MEMO — COLLAGE #3 – P2

Yoga figure:

Yoga / pilates = building strength, breathing deeply, relaxing. Still falls within the frame / heading / caption of 'dream catcher'

↳ rest, breathing, building up your strength is core to being able to catch those dreams.

So we have tiny cartoon yoga figure = making room for fun, downtime, breathing. Necessary to catch your dream, to win, to be #1.

Bowtie femme: Dressed in stereotypically masculine clothing: blazer & bowtie. Possibly a waistcoat (can't really see?).

↳ playing with gender norms / non-conformity?

↳ Dressing as a male / in male clothing in order to fit into a male-dominated space?

A RECURRING TENSION: Am I doing what I'm doing to fit in or to stand out?

TOP RIGHT.

"NEW" — a promotional label. Is being an entrepreneur new? Are we bringing new ideas? Newness = something never been done before.

↳ e'ship = never been done before. A new individual endeavour. A collection of new ideas. New hope. — & even though there are other entrepreneurs, I am the only one like me, I am new.

A constant rebirth?

"FRESH" — fresh thinking, fresh ideas, refreshing, ready to start, recent, new or different.

New + fresh = bringing new / fresh ideas to the fore + a new / fresh way of thinking about the world.

"Be more [you]" — linked to 'fresh'. = Own your authenticity as an e'neur. Being more you enables more freshness? Being more you is fresh, refreshing.

"Work out like a warrior"

WARRIOR = aggressive, combative, typically / traditionally male.

☆ Recurring theme: adopting masculine characteristics as a means of claiming identity / asserting oneself as an e'neur. OR flipping between masculinity & femininity — to fit in? or to stand out?

Working out like a warrior implies that being an e'neur is not about simply working, but working fiercely, aggressively. You fight for your success, your identity, your ideas.

"Dark and lovely" — very at odds with 'warrior'! Dark = blackness. Blackness is core to this person's identity as an e'neur & core to their understanding of e'ship. 'Lovely' = gentle, soft, feminine. Again, the juxtaposition / tension between masculinity & femininity — a strength or a challenge? A disruption or conformity?

MEMO — COLLAGE #3-P3

Young, black individual — wearing, again, stereotypically masculine clothing. Gender unclear. Gender queer?

Knowledge that this image is a self-portrait → Participant has included themself as core to defining a queer-inclusive / representative entrepreneurship →

"I am it; it is me" — reminds me of Kentridge's 'I am not me, the horse is not mine'.

The pose: a quintessential "business person" pose = a performance? A demand to be taken seriously? A parody?

AGAIN: mocking the norm by performing it, or are we conforming to it to fit in & be taken seriously?

Background — appears to be at an event, a release? Shaving up, an show, an display.

"This is what success looks like."

BOTTOM RIGHT:

"Connecting Africa to its ~~sheer~~ sun brilliance" —

→ word play [out of context] - but the gist is the same.

Connecting Africa = the role of the entrepreneur; to tap into & release & amplify the potential and talent of Africa. Playing a facilitation & activation role — not a 'wait and see' attitude. It is active, ambitious, intentional.

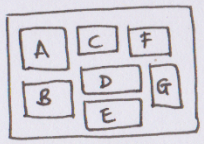
Overall composition —

appears not to have a single line of thought / "golden thread" that ties ideas together visually.

However a clear narrative link in the juxtaposition of the masculine and the feminine.

Page is filled up with some white space in-between: full of ideas, of various parts of a single identity. Parts don't necessarily speak to each other directly — but there are multitudes within them.

MEMO — COLLAGE #4 — P1




(A) Group of women /femmes.

A sleepover, a gathering. A squad? A group of friends?

Casual, stylish outfits — could be a sleepover or party? Shows a group of women /femmes enjoying each other's company.

All women /femmes of colour — a community? a family?

↳ familial if not family.

representative of e'neurs? Shared experiences?
- People with shared experiences.
- People enjoying time together.
- People creating new experiences.

Striking a pose /in action. Are they taking themselves seriously, or are they parodying the seriousness of expectations on women /femmes? By playing at being serious, are they ultimately just being serious? — Performance vs. parody?

Wearing soft greys & pinks. A representation of "the soft life" — a life of comfort, a life where they have overcome/ where things are easy.

= something we aspire to

↳ E-ship might not be only about the pursuit of $, but perhaps the comfort that it enables.

Working hard to overcome. Working hard for comfort

Standing at various heights = action, movement. This isn't about sitting down & being complacent in your comfort. These femmes are here to do things & have fun & be comfortable doing them!

(B) Group of friends /classmates.

4 Black individuals — appear to be playing around with each other / playing the fool — facial expressions, while varying, are playful, questioning, laughing. Shows enjoyment, playfulness, finding joy — heart stickers on their cheeks reinforce this childlike playfulness. Appears to be a group of friends, simply having fun & messing around. Finding joy in small moments.

↳ perhaps this is what we hope to get from pursuing entrepreneurship: to find fun, to have fun, to connect with people, to have a laugh, to not take ourselves too seriously, to find joy in small moments.

& if not to find it, then to create it.

↳ Also: something done together. It doesn't have to be a lonely endeavour. There are people with /behind you. Building a squad /community.

↳ We don't have to take ourselves so seriously as e'neurs, we can still have fun & have gentle moments — but, still, we move, we make things happen.

Holding a sign with the Pride flag — assumption that this group of people is queer/allies.

(C) Painting a rainbow:

Pink background: a stereotypically pink "female" / feminine colour — ALTHOUGH — see history of pink (WWII)

Painting a rainbow →
painting = artistic, leisurely, playful. This isn't an act of aggression or dominance. This is gentle, playful.

Painting a rainbow →
Rainbow symbolic of JOY, LIGHT, HARMONY & also, pride /queerness.

↳ painting over negative, messy things (black scribbles) that are being said with rainbows — overcoming negativity, confusion, mess with joy, pride, queerness

+ a brown hand painting = representation, because queerness is not reserved only for white people; it is all-inclusive.

Ⓓ Fizzy beverage.

Assume this is wine or champagne– socialising, an occasion, a celebration. Friends? Colleagues? getting together to share in a moment together.

↳ Assuming something joyful, given the smiling faces.

↳ In the context of entrepreneurship? Celebrating achievements, or even the small 'nothing' moments. Celebrating together – entrepreneurship, while perhaps an individual endeavour, is not always only an individual success. It is shared success, shared moments, worthy of celebration & joy.

Ⓔ Dancing.

People in this image appear to be dancing, socialising, having fun.

Bright colours also suggest energy, liveliness.

Ⓓ+Ⓔ = celebration, joy, occasion— This is e'ship: finding & creating joy for yourself and for others. Leaning in and enjoying it.

Ⓐ+Ⓑ+Ⓓ+Ⓔ

↳ People & joy are central.

In terms of e'ship, we see that this participant fosters an community + the joy that comes from connecting, creating, doing, being. Creating value / joy for others as well as for yourself.

Ⓕ Open road.

Open road = symbolic of freedom, space, exploration, opportunity.

↳ e'ship is an open road?

Gives you space to explore. Every new idea is a new opportunity, a chance to explore and navigate and find.

Sunny road = optimism, light, hope. This is driving towards something good, something promising. (driving or walking)

Greenery on the sides of the road = freshness, new growth.

Entire image conveys a sense of optimism, hope, promise. Movement. A journey, a process.

Ⓖ queer x design

Words "queer x design" / queer by design indicate intentionality.

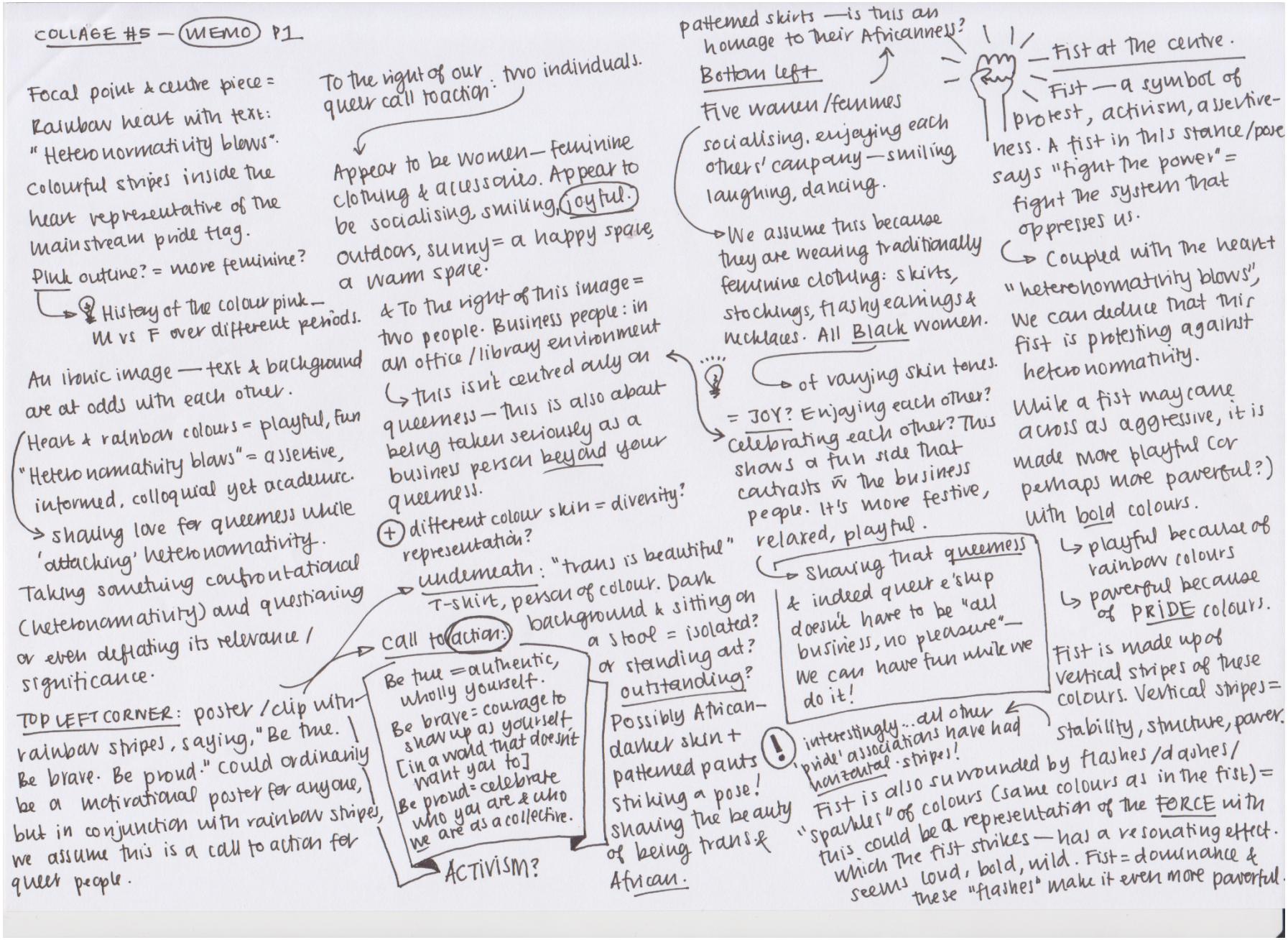
"By design". Perhaps this is not just about queer people, but about consciously choosing to 'queer' things on purpose.

OR the 'x' could indicate an intersection of queerness & design.

Rainbow stripes = pride flag.

Use of a book cover? — could be entirely unintentional — however, if deliberate? books / theory / discourse as a means to engage, a way to elevate unheard voices.

MEMO — COLLAGE #4 – P2


COLLAGE #5 — MEMO P1
Focal point & centre piece = Rainbow heart with text: "Heteronormativity blows". Colourful stripes inside the heart representative of the mainstream pride flag.
Pink outline? = more feminine?
History of the colour pink — M vs F over different periods.
An ironic image — text & background are at odds with each other.
Heart & rainbow colours = playful, fun
"Heteronormativity blows" = assertive, informed, colloquial yet academic.
sharing love for queerness while 'attacking' heteronormativity.
Taking something confrontational (heteronormativity) and questioning or even deflating its relevance / significance.
TOP LEFT CORNER: poster / clip with rainbow stripes, saying, "Be true. Be brave. Be proud." could ordinarily be a motivational poster for anyone, but in conjunction with rainbow stripes, we assume this is a call to action for queer people.
To the right of our queer call to action: two individuals.
Appear to be women — feminine clothing & accessories. Appear to be socialising, smiling, joyful. outdoors, sunny = a happy space, a warm space.
& To the right of this image = two people. Business people: in an office / library environment
this isn't centred only on queerness — this is also about being taken seriously as a business person beyond your queerness.
+ different colour skin = diversity? representation?
underneath: "trans is beautiful" T-shirt, person of colour. Dark background & sitting on a stool = isolated? or standing out? outstanding?
Possibly African — darker skin + patterned pants striking a pose! sharing the beauty of being trans & African.
call to action:
Be true = authentic, wholly yourself.
Be brave = courage to show up as yourself [in a world that doesn't want you to]
Be proud = celebrate who you are & who we are as a collective.
ACTIVISM?
patterned skirts — is this an homage to their Africanness?
Bottom left
Five women / femmes socialising, enjoying each others' company — smiling laughing, dancing.
We assume this because they are wearing traditionally feminine clothing: skirts, stockings, flashy earrings & necklaces. All Black women.
of varying skin tones.
= JOY? Enjoying each other? Celebrating each other? This shows a fun side that contrasts w the business people. It's more festive, relaxed, playful.
Sharing that queerness & indeed queer e'ship doesn't have to be "all business, no pleasure" — we can have fun while we do it!
Fist at the centre.
Fist — a symbol of protest, activism, assertiveness. A fist in this stance / pose says "fight the power" = fight the system that oppresses us.
Coupled with the heart "heteronormativity blows", we can deduce that this fist is protesting against heteronormativity.
While a fist may come across as aggressive, it is made more playful (or perhaps more powerful?) with bold colours.
playful because of rainbow colours
powerful because of PRIDE colours.
Fist is made up of vertical stripes of these colours. Vertical stripes = stability, structure, power.
interestingly... all other 'pride' associations have had horizontal stripes!
Fist is also surrounded by flashes / dashes / "sparkles" of colours (same colours as in the fist) = this could be a representation of the FORCE with which the fist strikes — has a resonating effect. seems loud, bold, wild. Fist = dominance & these "flashes" make it even more powerful.

COLLAGE #5 — memo — P2

This fist image = the background to all of the other images. Takes up ± 1/3 of the composition— this is central to defining queer e'ship for this participant.

↳ ✓ dominant
✓ confident
✓ commanding
✓ queer
✓ proud
✓ in protest?

"The two working women" — could be women or femmes. Appear to be working together / doing business. This is about the collaborative nature of entrepreneurship — queer entrepreneurship — can't do it by yourself. Do it together, to support each other, back each other, mentor each other. Your success = my success.

Rainbow silhouettes. We can assume that the rainbow spectrum = representation of queer pride. The silhouettes are people in motion / with direction— they are busy, intentional. No room to rest or get complacent or stagnant → ambitious, driven, motivated, hungry, determined.

→ Silhouettes = unclear who these people are or what they do. We can't judge them or make assessments based on their appearances or how they show up in the world.

↳ How we want queer e'ship to be — judged on what we're capable of, not our sexuality or gender — what we can do, not on who people think we are.

Bottom right:

Three women / femmes. Working together? planning together? Focused on the same task / goal / thing. Serious facial expressions = taking this shared task seriously.

↳ queer e'ship as a shared task? queering e'ship?

Natural hair of the one Black woman / femme = freedom to be herself, naturally? or could be a form of activism in a world that assumes whiteness as the norm.

Collage #6. — memo — P1

(A) OLD PERSON + "WORKER'S CLOTHES" + INFORMAL HOUSING.

This person's white t-shirt + blue pants = workers' clothes (thinking of blue canvas overalls). In a grey world, he/they have injected BRIGHTNESS & COLOUR.

↳ this is what queer e'ship is capable of doing & should do— bring brightness + disrupt with colour.

Older individual → shows that queering and/or e'ship is not limited to the young; anybody can.

Appears to be male → due to beard. (= "stereotype")

But also: PoC + living in an informal settlement → not from a position of [white] [high income] privilege.

↳ you don't have to be white or wealthy to be queer or to disrupt.

(B) Group of individuals at a (QWB+A) event. Distinguished guests? Mentors? Supporters? Partners? All dressed up for the event, but shaving up distinctively.

↳ unique, personality, diverse, standing out, being authentic.

(C) Panel of individuals on vertical, brightly-coloured stripes.

Stripes = an allusion to the pride flag (rainbow colours). Vertical – rather than horizontal — stripes give more structure, focus, stability, stature. These stripes serve as 'frames' for the individuals they portray.

Green stripe = Marsha P. Johnson → icon for gay rights, prominent activist. "transgender pioneer"

Indigo stripe = Laverne Cox → First openly transgender person nominated for an Emmy.

must investigate other icons.

Queer Women in Business + Allies.

These are people who have shown up as their true selves → courage, determination, focus, leadership, role models.

A business/industry event

"You can be successful just by being your true self"

(D) Teacher — a role model to the participant? Zebra print + spotted print clothes = African?

(E) A Black individual whose gender is unclear — androgynous — shaved head + wears a collared shirt and blazer. Could be male or female or both or neither. But! Still smartly dressed in "business attire."

↳ collared shirt & blazer — traditionally men's attire? but now in mainstream women's clothing as well.

↳ What this shows is that it doesn't matter your gender, you can still be a thriving, successful business person. Don't have to conform to a particular kind of performance. Just show up as yourself.

(F) Older Asian-looking individual → again, showing that e'ship is not restricted to a certain gender, age, colour/race, background. + can achieve success & recognition regardless of background.

(G) A smartly-dressed individual at an event. Gender not clearly discernable — but this is the point: that you can be glam and well-dressed and show up at important events without having to perform a gender. You can show up & be a success beyond any gender performance; you can be a success just by being 100% yourself.

(H) Feminine/femme individual in water. Water = cleansing, refreshing. Body emerges from the water & hair dips back in — a cycle? A cycle of cleansing. Holding plants close to body = holding growth close. Crescent moon — could this be a new moon? moon = cycles, time passing, life, spirituality.

↳ TBC

COLLAGE #6 — MEMO — P2

(H) Continued…

Soft, delicate spirals emerge from the body & surround it — representing energy, life, movement.

Water + spirals = cleansing your spirit. Water + moon = newness, rebirth. Water + moon + plants = movement, growth.

Light radiating from moon = dynamism, movement, energy. "A life force".

Individual isn't wearing clothes. Nudity as a symbol of:
- Innocence & rebirth
- Vulnerability
- Self assurance
- Comfort.

Peaceful facial expression — could be resting, but more likely meditating, absorbing new energy — being reborn.

↳ queer e'ship as a rebirth of yourself? As an opportunity to connect with your spirit? Cleansing, refreshing, energising.

(I) Upside down individual with face paint.

Upside down = transgression, going against the norm, doing things differently.

Shouting / singing facial expression → shouting from joy? Perhaps laughing? Could simply be a vocal expression, a loudness to reiterate transgression & uniqueness.

QUEER entrepreneurship = doing things differently, doing e'ship differently.

entrepreneurship as a way to give voice to your uniqueness. Entrepreneurship as self-expression.

→ LOUD & PROUD

+ PAINT SPLATTERS

Face paint → childish? or child-like? — playful, fun, self-expressive, creative.

↳ Queer e'ship needs to have fun, be fun. Can't take itself too seriously. Needs room to play & let go & just be.

T-shirt reads "HOPE" — hope is core to our success AND our survival as queer people, particularly as queer e'neurs.

Paint splatters = messy but creative → just like queer e'ship.

(J) Black individual in jean shorts & heels.

Transcending? Transgressing? Gender by wearing heels with a male body (no breasts). Wearing "women's" clothing — arms in air / hand on hips as a power stance, an act of defiance. Legs are straight but spread apart — the "Wonder Woman" pose, reimagined.

Tattoos / paint across this person's chest — is this how they are branding themselves as unique & outstanding? Gender symbols — both male & female are here. Another performative transgression, and an "up yours" to gender norms. Face paint is applied like war paint — this expression, this pose, this outfit = war against norms.

(K) This individual is playing with the performance of gender — wearing / showing "masculine" beard, hairy torso, hairy arms + "feminine" skirt, crop top, necklace, dangly earrings.

↳ don't have to conform to "one way"

(L) Individual is striking a power stance — two (white-gloved) hands on an elegantly-dressed pair of hips. Dress elongates & gives a sense of both grace and stature. Individual has turned their head to the side — elongating the neck further. Contrast of dark blue dress against crisp white background makes the dress (& person wearing it) stand out even more. velvet fabric = luxe

Shaved head & flat chest signal "masculine" while long dress + white gloves + hoop earrings signal "feminine". Again, meddling with — or perhaps transcending — gender roles / performances to create one's own distinctive performance, standing out by "doing you" & doing it well — no need to conform to norms to succeed.

COLLAGE #6 — MEMO — P3

Ⓜ Masc-presenting individual in a storefront. No big "gender performances" compared to other images used, quite plain — but likely still queering life in some way - by being an entrepreneur or small business owner.

Right hand up could be a wave (hello / goodbye) or could be a high-five.

Image shows that you don't need =BIG= - gestures, ideas, transgression, symbols — to be a successful e'neur. You can just be yourself, however that shows up.

Ⓝ Assume this individual is a woman / femme based on "feminine" traits — wearing eyemakeup & a red lipstick. Also wearing a hijab which is expected of women in the Islamic faith. Facial expression is indifferent / blank / speechless — could be striking a "model's pose" but also, could be letting her / their scarf do the talking.

Scarf wrapped around their head is brightly coloured — only red, yellow & green show, but we can assume this is a "rainbow" scarf - queer pride scarf.

→ interestingly... if it is a rainbow "pride" scarf, worth exploring the relationship between Islam and queerness.

Ⓞ This individual seems to be really happy - "glowing". A person in a stereotypically masculine / male body (lots of facial & body hair) wearing red lipstick and nail polish. The juxtaposition of masculine vs. feminine — not conforming to how society / heteronormativity expects your body to show up.

Close up perspective suggests this picture could be a selfie — perhaps something this person took as an expression of pride in what they have accomplished.

Worth noting that this person has light brown skin — likely to come from a background from SE Asia that is more conservative. BOLD ASSUMPTION. But if true, then this self-expression is bolder & even more 'daring' than before.

Both Ⓝ & Ⓞ an indication that your background doesn't necessarily have to constrain your self-expression.

↳ Freedom to shape your own identity.
Freedom to celebrate.
Freedom to be you.

Ⓟ This individual is wearing "traditional African" attire — headscarf + beaded bangles + large, decorative earrings + a beaded "shawl"

↳ Symbolism of such adornments? → INVESTIGATE!

This outfit would stereotypically be perceived as "feminine" because of large earrings + rings + bangles → Though this may vary in different cultures.

Facial expression is soft and demure — a typically "feminine" facial expression.

CENTRE IMAGE: This individual's make-up / face art seems like a fantasy-scape with its spectrum of soft colours, clouds & stars.

↳ a fantasy world, a magical world, one where you can be anything.

Individual's gender is not discernable — soft features, short hair — could be any / all / none.

↳ This is the point: not to be defined by your gender but rather by your beauty & the way you see the world.

"Cloudless" art / band across the eyes = clearing the fantasy land to see clearer? Seeing things for how they are vs. how you want them to be?

Why so close up? — It's personal, it's intimate. "See me and my vision up close" — to experience my truth / my reality, you have to get to know me.

Hiding behind a mask of fantasy?

COLLAGE #7 — MEMO — P1.

PAGE ONE

Long list of words at the top — verbs + adjectives + nouns? — not limited to one mode of thought.

ADJECTIVES → appear to be describing this person's "ideal" for e'ship or the kind of person they would like to be as a queer e'neur.

NOUNS → "bright colours" — used to signify brightness, character, vividness.

⚠ Assuming these words are used to describe the ideal of (queer) e'ship — it is the way to communicate that queer e'ship is not dull or shy or insipid — rather, bright, alluring, distinctive.

VERBS → "normalise" — stands out as one of the only verbs (may even be the only verb!) — clearly stands out for this individual that they would like their ideal e'neur/ queer e'ship to be normalised, accepted

Different portrayals of queer love = recognising that "love is love is love" + normalising queer people living very ordinary lives. Not foreign, not weird, just like any body else — desiring of love, happiness, ~~love~~ life.

"NOT EXCEPTIONAL"? — just like every body else?

OR celebrating queer love & queer joy because it is so exceptional.

Bottom left "models pose" image — Black, femme-presenting individual

"HOPE" as a noun — what we are looking for / "HOPE" as a verb — what we are doing

adding glamour? Blue lipstick = standing out, being unique, unexpected.

Young Black scientist in the lab = being able to pursue any field, freedom, not being confined to any particular job or career or role.

Centre images = portrayal of [queer] families living their lives, living full, 'normal,' healthy lives. Having families, experiencing love

Living fulfilling lives. Queerness doesn't have to be where life starts & ends. There is more than just our queerness.

We are seeing that this participant has created his 'ideal' for queer e'ship not as being shaped by the stereo-typical ideas of e'ship, but rather, of what such a pursuit can help enable: a stable, comfortable life, happiness, ability to live a life just as the heteros / cis people do.

Small kid holding up the placard — The placard itself makes explicit its meaning / intention

↓

Looking for a world free of bigotry & unfair discrimination.

But... a child is saying this — so we assume that this placard is describing an ideal future state — not reality as it is currently.

Also! Placard = typically used in demonstrations / protests → a sign of protest, activism

↓

outrage
making your voice heard
taking action
self-expression.

Top right: brown person, wearing a hijab — looks happy / content.

↳ Perhaps using a picture of a person of another race & culture to emphasise that the ideal is inclusive of everyone — everyone is welcome, free to be themselves, part of the collective. If you don't subscribe to the bigotry as highlighted in the placard, then you are welcome here.

COLLAGE #7 — MEMO P2

PAGE TWO

Words at top of the page set the tone for this part of the "triptych"

↓

✓ being different
✓ thinking differently
✓ challenging gender constructs.

↓

WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

Person working out: taking something often/stereotypically considered "masculine" (working out) & positioning it within a new framework/context — one that is anti-harmful labels. Inclusion of this image reinforces the placard in Page one: don't want to live in a bigoted/hateful/unfair world — particularly in the workplace.

White guy in the workshop = again, a stereotype of masculinity.

But: white workshop guy + working out guy + runner + chef/potter = reimagining "normative" gender roles in our careers/workplace.

↓

Shaking up the norm, pursuing your truth rather than fitting into a mould, challenging stereotypes, embracing yourself, freedom to do anything.

BEE & THE COMB:
Bees are predominantly understood to be social, collaborative creatures who work together toward a shared outcome, for the benefit of all

↓

Using the bee as a symbol of our collective efforts to make change happen, help each other out — for everyone's benefit

PEAS

Green ~~beans~~: we all look the same, but we're different. "peas in a ~~body~~ pod.". Being individuals, but still part of something bigger than ourselves.

Fresh. Crisp. Clean. Sweet.

Doctor holding sign — the sign states what it means, explicitly. Serves to state with confidence that queer women don't have to conform to a particular role or career, and are not subordinate to other non-queer (men or women) or queer men.

↓

ALSO/ALTERNATIVELY:
Queen bee = female, matriarch, in charge while worker bees = male, drones
↳ a challenge to the patriarchy of humanity
"role reversal" — disrupt, challenge how things are done, flip the system.



HOT AIR BALLOON — → standing out
A flash of colour & light amidst a dreary backdrop
↳ bringing light & colour to anything that we touch

⊕ seeing the world from a different perspective

⊕ taking risks to get to something extraordinary.
↳ worth it for the view!

Basketballer

A victorious baller — yelling in victory and glory. Active, energised.

↓

A symbol of what we can feel & what we can achieve. Passionate. Focused. Determined. Everybody can win.

↓

ADVOCACY for & REPRESENTATION of people who may not fit into any norms, but can still be successful

↓

don't have to hide themselves to enjoy successful lives & don't have to conform.

"Love is love...." image — anybody can win. be successful, enjoy a fruitful life just by being themselves, shouldn't have to qualify or explain. It is how it is. Success is success/love is love.

COLLAGE #7 — MEMO – P3

PAGE THREE:

Image of two older women
↳ to show that love, queerness, doesn't only apply for a certain age or a certain phase — it's just who you are, how you live

Business leaders who are queer / LGBTQI+ —
To show that being queer & being a successful business person are not at odds with each other.

↳ if anything? — being queer could be advantageous in business because of having different experiences of the world, seeing from a different perspective.

The two Queer Eye casts — show PROGRESS in how far we're come in recognising & celebrating queerness.
Not just for show or gimmicks, but a celebration of difference / diversity.

↳ old cast — show was radical at the time, but still "boxed" people in
vs. new cast — more open-minded, authentic.

Prince's "Love" symbol — at first, looks like a combination of male & female symbols — but there is more.
Deliberately kept organic & unrefined — to celebrate uniqueness & imperfection.
Also a combination of love vs. religion.
This symbol was designed to challenge, provoke, unite, inspire.

"Pride-ified" caporate logos — could be a celebration or could be a critique.

↳ Celebration: being publicly acknowledged / recognised by large, influential organisations = progress in history that shows openness & acceptance of queer people

↳ Critique: brands taking advantage of activism for queer people, appearing to celebrate & represent queer people in order to attract queer money — inauthentic, tokenistic
↓
Need more substantive, impactful support of queer communities.

## COLLAGE 1


CODING
COLLAGE #1
Destabilising conventions
Disrupting conventions
Representing those outside of the norm
Being bold
Being an entry point to a new way of thinking
Leading the narrative with the historically excluded
Including those forgotten
Bringing new narratives to the forefront
Focusing on progress
Moving forward
Being more inclusive
Embracing identity
Crossing identities / ideas
Equalising the playing field
Expressing myself
Building family
Being part of a family
Being taken care of
Giving back
Doing things for others
Supporting the community
Fitting in
Seeking life
Being Black
Finding purpose
Feeling empowered
Owning my identity
Being represented
Representing people like me
Creating impact
Creating the future
Driving change for the better
Catapulting from the mainstream
Moving
Progressing
Feeling powerful
Being assertive
Challenging stereotypes
Sharing individuality
Emerging
Being unapologetic
Asserting my identity
Embodying pride
Feeling proud
Owning my identity
Not feeling forced to fit in
Fighting conventions
Fighting stereotypes
Pushing boundaries
Doing, rather than waiting
Being made of many parts
Performing vs. challenging
↳ gender norms
e.g. WLP norms
Rejecting type casting
Rejecting being put in a box.
Giving life
Nurturing
96

# CODING

COLLAGE #2

Moving
Being dynamic
Being adaptable
Breaking from convention
Standing out
Contrasting from the expected / norm
Showing your true colours
Not trying to fit in
Being vulnerable
Being soft
Being put into hard places
Experiencing challenges
Being forced into a harsh world
Being natural
Being myself
Creating life
Having life
Being gentle

Being organic
Being fluid
Being flexible
Feeling vibrant
Contrasting with rigidity
Ticking boxes
Not fitting in.
Showing up.
Being vulnerable.
Keeping things simple
Challenging complexity
Emerging
Growing
Transforming
Evolving
Layering
Living in challenging spaces
Showing your true colours
Being natural
Being yourself
Not blending in /
Being asked to blend in
Rebelling against the rules / system

Breaking free from binaries & boundaries
Showing up in full colour
Rebelling against norms
Being the light
seeing the light
Storytelling
Actualising
Interfering
Being hopeful
Creating a future

# CODING

COLLAGE #3

Bending norms
Subverting
Disrupting norms
Owning natural beauty
Being authentic
Being unfraid
Teasing conformity
Being vulnerable
Challenging expectations
Being assertive
Winning
Being yourself is a victory
Coming out on top
Feeling inspired
Having role models
Being taken seriously
Leaning into the stereotype
Catching dreams
Building community
Creating wealth
Aspiring

Feeling ambitious
Creating value for others
Following the example
Challenging tradition
Playing with norms
Being the best
Being bold
Being assertive
Feeling dominant
Having fun
Finding balance
Being playful
Building strength
Building up resilience
Making room for fun
Taking a break
Playing w gender norms
Fitting in vs. standing out
Creating something new
Doing something never been done before
Collecting new ideas
Thinking fresh

Feeling ready
Thinking differently about the world
Being more you
Owning your authenticity
Claiming identity
Staking a claim
Flipping masculinity vs. femininity
Being a warrior
Working out
Fighting for your success
Being Black
Performing vs. conforming
Connecting
Finding opportunity
Amplifying potential
Growing Africa

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# CODING

COLLAGE #4

Gathering
Socialising
Being part of a group/squad
Enjoying each other's company
Building a community
Being a family
Sharing experiences
Creating new experiences
Taking action
Being playful
Performing vs. parodying?
Being soft.
Creating an easy life
Aspiring
Pursuing a good life
Working hard to overcome
Taking action
Doing things!
Having fun.
Playing
Finding joy

Connecting with people
Not taking ourselves too seriously
Finding joy in small moments
Creating joy when we don't find it.
Building community
Making things happen
Finding light/joy
Being colourful
overcoming negativity
Including everyone
Representing everyone
Sharing moments
Celebrating achievements
Celebrating life
Sharing success
Leaning in
Enjoying the experience
Doing
Being
Connecting
Creating

Feeling free
Exploring
Finding opportunity
Feeling optimistic
Finding hope
Working towards something promising
Feeling fresh
Growing
Taking a journey
Being intentional
Choosing to queer
Queering

54

# CODING

COLLAGE #5

Fighting heteronormativity
Fighting conventions
Challenging stereotypes
Being playful
Being funny
Being informed
~~Being assertive~~/asserting myself
Questioning the relevance of stereotypes.
Being true to yourself
Being proud
Being brave
calling people to action
Creating joy
Creating positive spaces
Being taken seriously beyond your queerness
Having diversity
Feeling represented
Including others
Standing out
Being authentic
Having courage
Celebrating Africanness
Experiencing joy
Celebrating each other
Sharing a fun side
Having fun while we're at it
Being laid
Being bold
Dominating
Claiming power
Being an activist
Being confident
Feeling proud.
Collaborating
Doing it together
Moving
Being intentional
Not resting
Not stagnating
Focusing on a shared goal
Feeling freedom to be myself
Being judged on what we can do, not our sexuality
Being ambitious
Being hungry.

(44)

# CODING

COLLAGE #6

Injecting brightness
Bringing colour

Disrupting
Not limiting to a specific age / income / living situation
Not having to come from the stereotype to disrupt

Being role models / mentors
Shaving up distinctively
Being unique
Bringing your personality
Being diverse
Standing out
Being authentic
Shaving up as your true self
Having courage
Being determined
Being focused
Shaving leadership
Being African
Being yourself

Thriving
Succeeding
Representing others
Not having to conform to succeed

Not being restricted by typecasting

Being recognised regardless of background

Transcending gender
Refreshing
Growing
Evolving
Feeling energised
Moving
Radiating
Shaving vulnerability
Being reborn
Feeling self-assured
Absorbing new energy
Connecting in yourself
Energising

Doing things differently
Giving voice to your uniqueness
Not conforming
Asserting power
Owning your identity
Contrasting / standing out
Meddling in gender
Transcending
Performing
Doing you & doing it well
Not needing to conform.
Glowing
Shaving up.
Expressing yourself
Feeling proud
Feeling bold & daring
Feeling free to be yourself
Being whoever you want to be
Being defined by what you can do / how you see the world.

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# CODING

COLLAGE #7

Being bright
Being distinctive
Normalising
Being accepted
Recognising diversity
Living a good life
Celebrating queerness
Standing out
Being unique
Being free to pursue your dreams
Feeling fulfilled
Being more than our queerness
Pursuing happiness
Hoping for a better future
Including others
Feeling free to be ourselves
Making everyone welcome
Making your voice heard

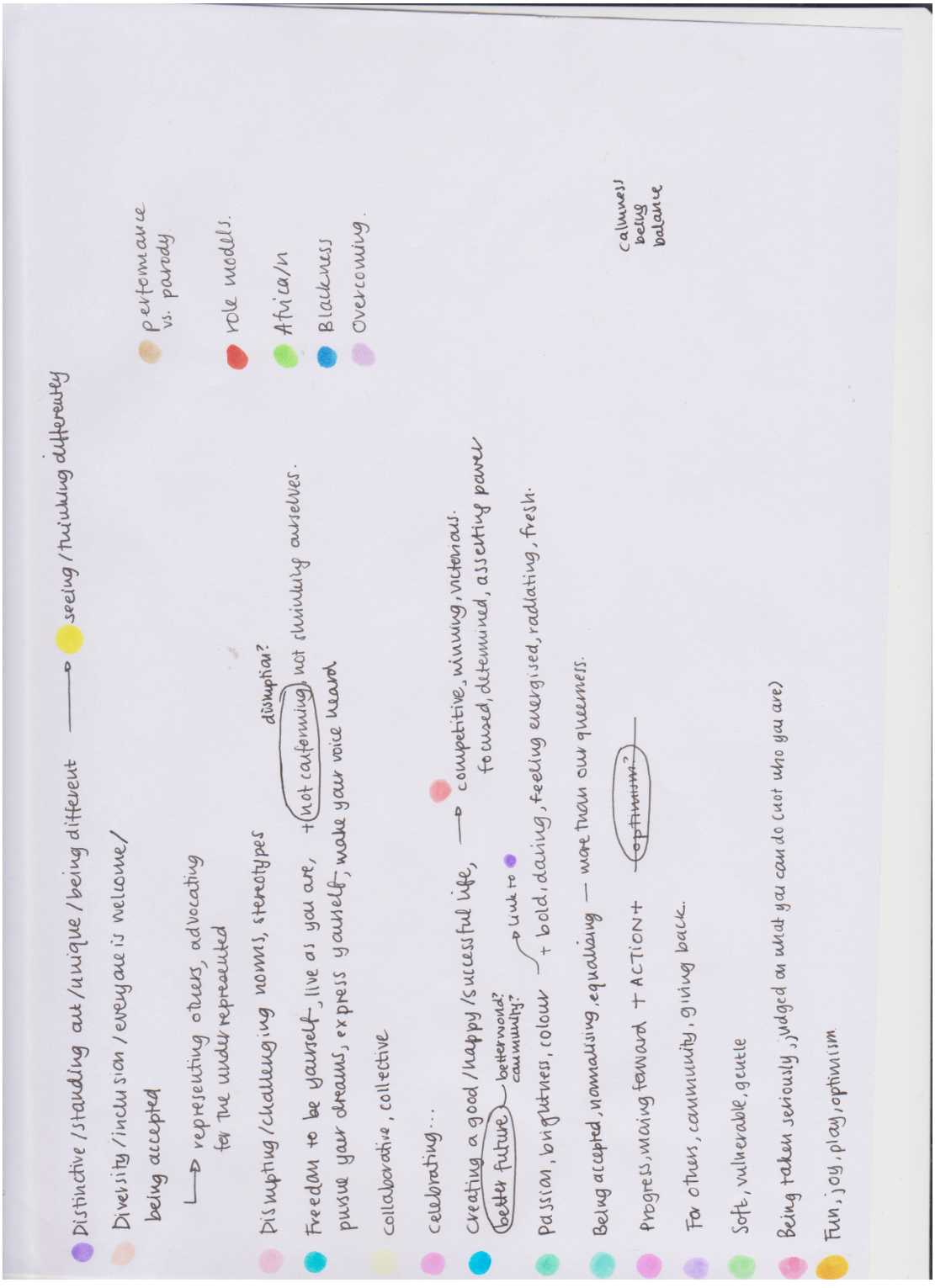
Expressing yourself
Being different
Thinking differently
Challenging constructs
Reimagining normative roles.
Shaking up the norm.
Embracing yourself
Being a collective
collaborating
Being an individual—within a collective
Being part of something bigger than ourselves.
Not conforming
Not shrinking ourselves
Challenging conventions
Disrupting norms
Standing out
Seeing the world from a different perspective
Taking risks for something extraordinary

Advocating for the underrepresented
Representing others
Achieving
winning
Feeling victorious
Being passionate
Having equal chances at success.
Not being restricted
Living as you are
Being queer is an advantage
Seeing things differently
Progressing.
Celebrating queerness
Celebrating love
Celebrating imperfection
Challenging.
Provoking.
Accepting more people & identities

54

## APPENDIX H: COLLAGE ANALYSIS – CATEGORISATION

### CATEGORY KEY



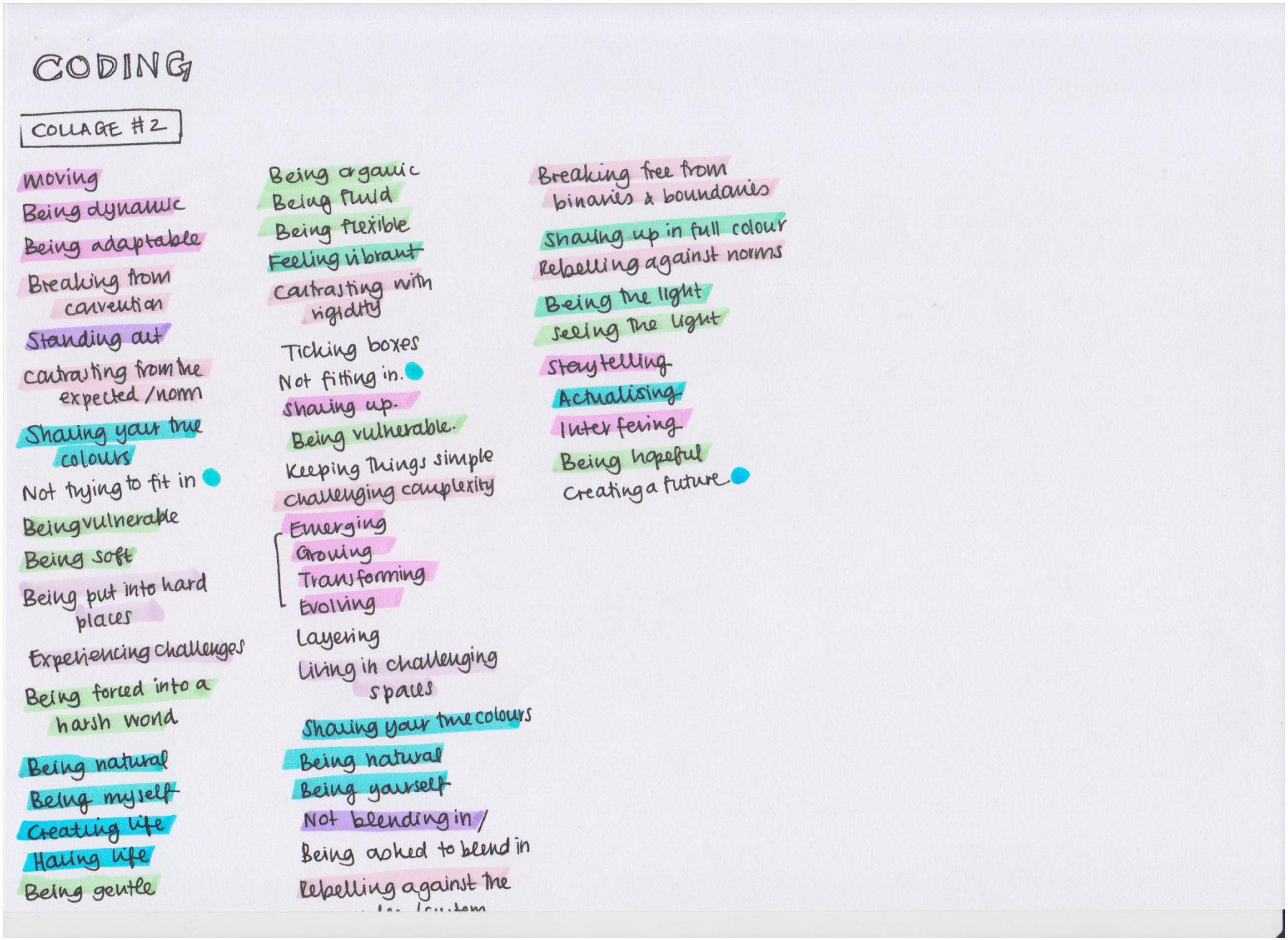
# CODING

COLLAGE #1

Destabilising conventions
Disrupting conventions
Representing those outside of the norm
Being bold
Being an entry point to a new way of thinking
Leading the narrative with the historically excluded
Including those forgotten
Bringing new narratives to the forefront
Focusing on progress
Moving forward
Being more inclusive
Embracing identity
Crossing identities / ideas
Equalising the playing field
Expressing myself
Building family
Being part of a family
Being taken care of
Giving back

Doing things for others
Supporting the community
Fitting in
Seeking life
Being Black
Finding purpose
Feeling empowered
Owning my identity
Being represented
Representing people like me
Creating impact
Creating the future
Driving change for the better
Contrasting from the mainstream
Moving
Progressing
Feeling powerful
Being assertive
Challenging stereotypes
Sharing individuality
Emerging
Being unapologetic
Asserting my identity
Embodying pride
Feeling proud
Owning my identity

Not feeling forced to fit in
Fighting conventions
Fighting stereotypes
Pushing boundaries
Doing, rather than waiting
Being made of many parts
Performing vs. challenging
↳ gender norms
↳ relationship norms
Rejecting typecasting
Rejecting being put in a box.
Giving life
Nurturing


CODING
COLLAGE #2
Moving
Being dynamic
Being adaptable
Breaking from convention
Standing out
Contrasting from the expected / norm
Sharing your true colours
Not trying to fit in
Being vulnerable
Being soft
Being put into hard places
Experiencing challenges
Being forced into a harsh world
Being natural
Being myself
Creating life
Having life
Being gentle
Being organic
Being fluid
Being flexible
Feeling vibrant
Contrasting with rigidity
Ticking boxes
Not fitting in.
Sharing up.
Being vulnerable.
Keeping things simple
Challenging complexity
Emerging
Growing
Transforming
Evolving
Layering
Living in challenging spaces
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Being yourself
Not blending in /
Being asked to blend in
Rebelling against the
Breaking free from binaries & boundaries
Sharing up in full colour
Rebelling against norms
Being the light
Seeing the light
Storytelling
Actualising
Interfering
Being hopeful
Creating a future


CODING
COLLAGE #3
Bending norms
Subverting
Disrupting norms
Owning natural beauty
Being authentic
Being unafraid
Teasing conformity
Being vulnerable
Challenging expectations
Being assertive
Winning
Being yourself is a victory
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Feeling inspired
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Leaning into the stereotype
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Building community
Creating wealth
Aspiring
Feeling ambitious
Creating value for others
Following the example
Challenging tradition
Playing with norms
Being the best
Being bold
Being assertive
Feeling dominant
Having fun
Finding balance
Being playful
Building strength
Building up resilience
Making room for fun
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Collecting new ideas
Thinking fresh
Feeling ready
Thinking differently about the world
Being more you
Owning your authenticity
Claiming identity
Staking a claim
Flipping masculinity vs. femininity
Being a warrior
Waking out
Fighting for your success
Being Black
Performing vs. conforming
Connecting
Finding opportunity
Amplifying potential
Growing Africa

# CODING

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Socialising
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Working hard to overcome
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Having fun.
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Including everyone
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Sharing moments
Celebrating achievements
Celebrating life
Sharing success
Leaning in
Enjoying the experience
Doing
Being
Connecting
Creating

Feeling free
Exploring
Finding opportunity
Feeling optimistic
Finding hope
Working towards something promising
Feeling fresh
Growing
Taking a journey
Being intentional
Choosing to queer
Queering

# CODING

COLLAGE #5

Figuting heteronormativity
Figuting conventions
Challenging stereotypes
Being playful
Being funny
Being informed
~~Being assertive~~ /asserting myself
Questioning the relevance of stereotypes.
Being true to yourself
Being proud
Being brave
calling people to action
Creating joy
Creating positive spaces
Being taken seriously beyond your queerness
Having diversity
Feeling represented
Including others
Standing out
Being authentic

Having courage
Celebrating Africanness
Experiencing joy
Celebrating each other
Showing a fun side
Having fun while we're at it
Being loud
Being bold
Dominating
Claiming power
Being an activist
Being confident
Feeling proud.
Collaborating
Doing it together
Moving
Being intentional
Not resting
Not stagnating
Focusing on a shared goal
Feeling freedom to be myself
Being judged on what we can do, not our sexuality
Being ambitious
Being hungry.

# CODING

COLLAGE #6

Injecting brightness
Bringing colour
Disrupting
Not limiting to a specific age / income / living situation
Not having to come from the stereotype to disrupt
Being role models / mentors
Showing up distinctively
Being unique
Bringing your personality
Being diverse
Standing out
Being authentic
Showing up as your true self
Having courage
Being determined
Being focused
Showing leadership
Being African
Being yourself

Thriving
Succeeding
Representing others
Not having to conform to succeed
Not being restricted by typecasting
Being recognised regardless of background
Transcending gender
Refreshing
Growing
Evolving
Feeling energised
Moving
Radiating
Showing vulnerability
Being reborn
Feeling self-assured
Absorbing new energy
Connecting with yourself
Energising

Doing things differently
Giving voice to your uniqueness
Not conforming
Asserting power
Owning your identity
Contrasting / standing out
Meddling in gender
Transcending
Performing
Doing you & doing it well
Not needing to conform
Glowing
Showing up
Expressing yourself
Feeling proud
Feeling bold & daring
Feeling free to be yourself
Being whoever you want to be
Being defined by what you can do / how you see the world.

# CODING

COLLAGE #7

Being bright
Being distinctive
Normalising
Being accepted
Recognising diversity
Living a good life
Celebrating queerness
Standing out
Being unique
Being free to pursue your dreams
Feeling fulfilled
Being more than our queerness
Pursuing happiness
Hoping for a better future
Including others
Feeling free to be ourselves
Making everyone welcome
Making your voice heard

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Being an individual within a collective
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Not conforming
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Seeing the world from a different perspective
Taking risks for something extraordinary

Advocating for the underrepresented
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Achieving
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Celebrating queerness
Celebrating love
Celebrating imperfection
Challenging
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Accepting more people's identities