To play or not to play: that is not a question

Entrepreneuring as gendered play

Karin Berglund and Malin Tillmar

Abstract

How can play be used to unravel the discourse of the gendered hero entrepreneur and instead describe mundane entrepreneuring? Further, how can the doing of gendered social orders be problematized when entrepreneuring is equated with play? In this article we answer these questions by engaging with the French social theorist Roger Caillois' (1961) conceptualization of play as being at the heart of all higher culture. Two ethnographic cases act as our vehicle in analysing play as entrepreneuring. From a rich description of these cases we find that it is not a question of playing or not playing, but about how to play. All four forms of play described by Caillois are present, which illustrates the variation of entrepreneuring and the richness of activities conducted in the 'doing of entrepreneurship'. Further, both ways of playing discussed by Caillois are found. Whilst these two ways are interrelated on a continuum in the theory of play, they have been separated in entrepreneurship discourse, where they underpin the tendency to differentiate between the hero entrepreneur and ordinary people. Finally, we engage in a more interpretive and reflective discussion on entrepreneuring as performative acts through which social orders can be not only reproduced but also transformed.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has attracted considerable interest in recent decades, in line with a society that cherishes an enterprise culture, giving prominence to the creative human being (Meier Sørensen, 2008). Entrepreneurship discourses pander to entrepreneurs as creative, masculine, competitive and energetic frontrunners that undertake innovative actions in their pursuit of prosperity and development for all of us (c.f. Ogbor, 2000). Entrepreneurship is thus typically presented as indispensable, and entrepreneurs as creative and admirable, whilst the mundane doing of it - entrepreneur*ing* – is obscure and mystified. In this article, we return to what Gartner (1988) had already argued is the right question, i.e. the focus on what entrepreneurs really do, hence contributing to the theoretical development and understanding of entrepreneuring (c.f. Steyaert, 2007; Rindova, Barry & Ketchen, 2009; Johannisson, 2011; Tobias, Mair & Barbosa-Leiker,

2013). Central to this movement is the acknowledgment of process - creating knowledge of entrepreneuring (the verb) rather than reconstructing mainstream understandings of entrepreneurship (the noun).

It has been suggested that entrepreneuring involves passion, creation, discovering and dreaming which together act towards emancipation with a broad change potential (Rindova et al., 2009). However, even though emancipation is proposed to be inherent in entrepreneurial processes of social change, the entrepreneurship discourse has for a while been criticized for being gender-biased, ethnocentrically determined and excluding entrepreneurship discourse (Mirchandani, 1999; Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2004; Calás; de Bruin, Brush & Welter, 2006; Smircich & Bourne, 2009; Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Wee & Brooks, 2012). Whilst the heroic man has become synonymous with the entrepreneur, the woman has become synonymous with the non-entrepreneurial being (Ahl, 2006). Criticizing the excluding heroic entrepreneurship discourse has coincided with organizational scholars' critique of mainstream entrepreneurship research to reproduce naïve and narrow understandings of why some may be referred to as entrepreneurs and why others may not (e.g. Hjorth, & Steyaert, 2004; Jennings, Perren & Carter, 2005; Jones & Spicer, 2005; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009). It has been claimed that talk of entrepreneurship is often far too abstract, leaving out the richness of mundane everyday life with its privations and hardships, as well as its joys and bright moments (Bill, Janssen & Olaisson, 2010). Not only does entrepreneurship grant inadequate attention to women entrepreneurs, but it also tends to mythicize entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship and entrepreneuring. Common to this research is its efforts to de-mystify entrepreneur/ship. Entrepreneuring, emphasising the unfinished character of entrepreneurial processes and acknowledging social creativity and playful adventuring, is thus pointed out as a promising path to recognizing contrasts, oppositions and alternatives of entrepreneurship.

Even in his early writings, Schumpeter described the entrepreneur as an "Action Man" motivated by the power and joy in breaking the mould, which he referred to as 'creative destruction' (Swedberg, 2006). This is now echoed in the emphasis of the creative entrepreneurial human being. In Schumpeter's description, entrepreneurial activity is mainly seen as liberating – as the emancipatory act Rindova et al. (2009) point to, or as a

tactical process that operates from the margins (Hjorth, 2004: 428). Furthermore, play is sometimes referred to as unstructured and emotional, which runs contrary to the rational view of entrepreneurship typically portrayed in popular management books (Sarasvathy, 2001). To better understand entrepreneuring, it has therefore been proposed that entrepreneurs should be seen as creative and playing human beings; as *homo ludens* in contrast to *homo economicus* (Hjorth, 2004; Johannisson, 2010). In this article, we turn to French social theorist Roger Caillois (1961) to further explore how play can be used to unravel the discourse of the gendered entrepreneur, analyse mundane entrepreneuring, and problematize how social orders may be challenged and/or preserved in entrepreneuring. For Caillois, play is not to be dismissed as frivolous or peripheral, but is at the heart of all higher culture. The discourse of entrepreneuring could be enriched through the conceptual framework of play, where Caillois (1961) distinguishes between *ways of playing* and *forms of play.*

Hence, two types of questions drive our motivation for writing this paper. One is the lack of discourse that, instead of reifying the 'creative human being', addresses how play is involved in everyday and mundane entrepreneuring. To answer this first question we use Caillois' (1961) conceptual framework of play as a theoretical lens. Two ethnographic cases work as our vehicle in analysing play as entrepreneuring. The cases provide close observations on how entrepreneurial processes are enacted in situ as well as over time. Our second question concerns the paradox of ascribing entrepreneuring an emancipatory potential at the same time as entrepreneurship is criticized for being excluding. Through conceptualizing entrepreneuring as play we also problematize how social orders are gendered in entrepreneuring. In response to our second question, we engage in a more interpretive and reflective discussion on entrepreneuring as performative acts through which gender is constituted (Butler, 2006/1999; Davies, 2003).

Next, entrepreneuring, play and doing gender are further elaborated. Then follows a section on methodology, outlining how the case studies have been longitudinally conducted, as well as the inspiring and illustrative role of the cases in this paper. Subsequently, both cases of entrepreneuring, the Freja Midwifery Clinic and the Moon House Project, are discussed from a play perspective, showing how all of Caillois' forms

and ways of play are enacted in entrepreneuring. Our conclusions on entrepreneuring as gendered play are outlined at the end of the article.

Entrepreneuring, play and doing gender

In 2007, Steyaert proposed turning entrepreneuring into a "conceptual attractor" to make a breakthrough towards a more generally visible and accepted processual theory of entrepreneurship underpinned by a social ontology of becoming (e.g. Chia, 1995). Even though this concept had been put forward earlier, theorizing entrepreneuring had been largely neglected. To change the situation, a number of processual approaches are introduced by Steyaert (2007), who discusses their potential to break with the traditional "discovery view" which speaks of entrepreneurship as equilibrium based. It is argued that entrepreneurship has mainly been studied through an entitative approach, treating it as a "thing or entity with distinct features which are independent of the process or context" (p. 473). Entrepreneuring is seen as a theoretical concept with potential to 'shake' this view:

> I see the term entrepreneuring as a travelling concept, as a potential space for theorizing and undertaking conceptual experimentations in relation to the idea of process, rather than freezing or stabilizing the thinking that has just begun. (Steyaert, 2007: 471).

The concept of entrepreneuring has, seven years later, been picked up to conceptualize entrepreneurial processes in different ways. Rindova et al. (2009) theorize entrepreneuring as acts towards emancipation through which entrepreneurs can free themselves and others. Uhlaner, Kellermanns, Eddleston, & Hoy (2012) suggest that "the entrepreneuring family" can form a new paradigm for family business research. Mair, Battilana, Cardenas, (2012) develop a typology of social entrepreneuring models based on social, economic, human and political capital. Johannisson (2011) links entrepreneuring to the emerging approach of practice theory and Tobias et al. (2013) use entrepreneuring to unpack the mechanism through which entrepreneurial processes "may transform lives of 'ordinary' entrepreneurs in settings where economic and social value creation are desperately needed" (p. 728).

Entrepreneuring has thus inspired the theorizing of entrepreneurial processes following both Steyaert's and Gartner's call. However, the lack of studies building on in-depth qualitative research that grasp the course of everyday practices made available through the "creative process theories" as suggested by Steyaert (2007: 471) continues nonetheless. Harnessing the conceptual possibilities to play with and to concretize entrepreneurial processes, Steyaert argues, requires "access to the thickness of the mundane" (p. 471 ff). The cases provided in this article gives access to how entrepreneuring took form through play over a period of ten years, in mundane everyday life.

From the discussions of entrepreneuring, there is an argument for viewing entrepreneurship as an intersubjective activity, rather than talking about growth and/or the number of growing companies, rising productivity, sets of entrepreneurial traits, or any other quantifiable variable that tend to emphasize the contemporary view on human beings and the variables that are significant for a society in progress. Entrepreneurship is regarded as a human activity, undertaken in interaction and in different contexts where "spaces for play" are enacted to mould the new (e.g. Hjorth, 2004, 2005; Johannisson, 2011). Authors explicitly discussing "play" are King Kauani et al. (2010) who describe how more spiritually connected and holistically oriented entrepreneurs "are likely to provide a more creative and playful work environment" (p. 64). As well Johannisson (2010) compares entrepreneurs with playing children. Further, Godwin, Stevens & Brenner (2006) ask whether women are forced to play by the rules in entrepreneurial processes and argue that women entrepreneurs should partner with a man to provide women with enhanced legitimacy in a male-dominated culture. They write that "[g]iven the challenges that women entrepreneurs face in securing (financial) resources, we argue that one potential tactic for surmounting the hurdle posed by sex-based stereotypes is not to fight the system, but to play by its rules" (Ibid: 630). Entrepreneurship is here seen as intertwined with gendered rules that need to be played with differently, depending on in which gender category a person is positioned.

Whilst some explicitly theorize entrepreneurial processes from the notion of play, it is usually more fleetingly used to describe what is going on in entrepreneurial processes.

Even if there have been attempts to use play and the notion of "*homo ludens*" (Hjorth, 2004; Johannisson, 2010) to theorize entrepreneurial processes, we see a potential to further this through using Caillois' (1961) theory of play.

Sub specie ludi – from a play perspective

In order to analyse what play illuminates as well as makes invisible, we devote this section to discussing the theoretical foundations of *homo ludens*, which is also the title of the classic psychology book by historian Johan Huizinga (1949) who views the whole of life *sub specie ludi,* i.e. from a play perspective. According to Huizinga, seriousness is non-play, but play is much more than non-serious. In other words, seriousness excludes play, but play may well include seriousness. Huizinga concludes that the distinction between what is play and what is seriousness is ethical rather than analytical. For example, when play is exercised at the cost of another person's feelings or well-being, it can analytically be understood as play, but that would be ethically inappropriate. Just as with any other human activity, entrepreneuring can be regarded *sub specie ludi* – as more or less serious play.

While Huizinga analyzes the proportion of play in a given society, Roger Caillois (1961), author of another seminal work on play, *Man, Play and Games*, develops a typology of play, arguing that Huizinga's definition of play was at the same time too broad and too narrow (p. 4). Like Huizinga, Caillois is critical of utilitarian thinking about play, but in contrast to Huizinga he also includes material interests such as games involving money within a conceptual framework where he distinguishes between two *ways of playing* and four *forms of play*. The following four forms of play are identified as existing in all societies:

- *agôn* includes competitive games which require the intelligence and commitment of the player, who him/herself can affect the result. This can be exemplifies by chess.
- *alea* includes games of chance, independent of the player and where the result is outside his/her control. One example of *alea* is a lottery.

- *mimicry* includes play and games to escape oneself and become another. One example of mimicry is attending or participating in theatre.
- *ilinx* includes play where the stability and perception of reality is temporarily suspended. Merry-go-rounds and roller-coasters are classic examples of this form of play.

These four forms of play can be combined in various ways in practice. There are, for example, strong links between *agôn* and *alea*, which connect to competitive games of different sorts, and *mimicry* and *ilinx*, which are about temporarily escaping from or disturbing reality. In an analysis of how play is part of innovation work, Styhre (2008) found that science-based innovation is based on both *agôn* (skills) and *alea* (chance), which were strongly interrelated.

Whilst *agôn, alea*, *mimicry* and *ilinx* acknowledge the many forms play can take in life, the two ways of playing lie along a continuum between turbulent 'rule-less' play (*paidia*) and rule-bound play (*ludus*). Caillois writes that "rules are inseparable from play as soon as the latter becomes institutionalized" (p. 27). However, "a basic freedom is central to play in order to stimulate distraction and fantasy" (Ibid.). To re-shape existing cultures through play, he refers to the disrupting activity of *paidia,* which is seen as the liberty of improvisation and joy. On the other hand there is *ludus*, the disciplining contrast of paidia, which 'controls' and shapes the 'rule-less' paidia into 'rule-bound' ludus. This process, from paidia to ludus, Caillois sees as the perpetual transformation of culture.

This mix of rule-bound and rule-less play has stimulated theorizing in social psychology where Asplund (1987) termed rule-less play as play and rule-bound play as game. If the course of events and rules gradually develop in play, it is the opposite in a game. In a game, we are given clear descriptions of the framework in terms of particular assumptions, rules, and norms; thus, the expected behaviour is given beforehand. This is in contrast to 'true play', where the given rules are seldom questioned when we are playing a game. Whilst playing opens the door to unlimited responses, it is restricted by the rules already set in a game. Breaking the rules of the game would mean cheating. But in play you can never cheat, because there are no definitive rules. The distinction of play

and game is helpful in understanding the continuum of *paidia* (uncontrolled fantasy, according to Caillois, 1961: 13) and its disciplining contrast, *ludus* (binding *paidia* to tedious conventions, Ibid.).

In general, Caillois' definition of play as an activity without productive purposes certainly challenges mainstream entrepreneurship theory, and opens up for theorizing entrepreneuring as a social and creative process. Entrepreneuring as play can shed light on the complex and carefully organized game that, through tumult, upsets the status quo at the same time as it establishes new rules and conventions. Understanding that rules are inherently part of play, we will now proceed to discuss gender as an apparently inescapable rule of social games.

Gendered spaces for play

As stated in the introduction, the discourse of entrepreneurship is excluding, not only because of its emphasis on the "Action Man" as formulated by Schumpeter (Swedberg, 1996), but also because it idealizes the heroic entrepreneur in ways that exclude the average wo/men (Spicer and Jones, 2005). The gendered and ethnocentrically determined entrepreneurship discourse has however been scrutinised and 'other' identities, than the typical entrepreneur, have been voiced (Sundin & Holmquist, 1989; Berglund, 2006; Essers and Benschop, 2009). In addition to knowledge on how women are 'othered' as entrepreneurs, we also know how academic publishing practices in entrepreneurship seem to uphold the gender binary rather than challenge it (Ahl, 2006),; ~~how~~ women may "play with the rules" through cooperating with male peers to gain legitimacy (Godwin et al., 2006), and how the doing of entrepreneurship and gender is intertwined (Bruni et al., 2004). Despite a growing body of research on entrepreneurship as a gendered practice, there is still a scarcity of the subtle doing of gender in entrepreneuring.

Calás et al. (2009) seek to extend the boundaries of entrepreneurship theory and research through formulating entrepreneurship as social change. They call for research that study how the complex set of social activities and processes, which constitute entrepreneurial practices, are gendered (p. 564). Through taking the notion of entrepreneurship as play

serious and advance the development of play as a theoretical construct, we can provide a lens through which the messy 'nature' of entrepreneurship can be discerned. But, in order to extend our analysis to also include how this 'messiness' is gendered, play must be elaborated from a doing gender perspective.

Drawing upon gender from a constructionist and non-essentialist epistemological view (e.g. Ahl, 2006; Butler, 2006/1999; Davis, 2003; Harding 1986) implies turning away from individualistic and essentialist assumptions that guide mainstream entrepreneurship research, to study how entrepreneuring is gendered. This perspective is based upon the assumption that the male/female division does not have to be discursively structured in terms of an entrepreneurial, powerful and active man versus a non-entrepreneurial and powerless woman (Ahl, 2006; Wee & Brooks, 2012). In a world not polarised around the female/male binary, the individual could, through performative acts (Butler, 2006/1999), challenge social orders through constructing identities not limited by one's reproductive sexual capacity (Davis, 2003:12). Hence, analysing the gendering of entrepreneuring from a doing gender perspective highlights how people, men and women alike, take part in (re)producing gendered practices in their everyday lives. Doing gender is a routine accomplishment that becomes so interwoven in social interaction that it is inescapable (West and Zimmerman 1987, p. 127).

A few existing studies of adults explicitly link play to gender. Among adult men and women, all sorts of play exist in a number of combinations. A special form of *ludus* that arose with industrialization is the hobby, writes Caillois (1961). This is further investigated by Burch (1965) who links play and gender among adults; he paid attention to a variety of sociological types of play actions, focusing on leisure activity at a camping site. From his study, it was obvious that men took time and space to play. Women, on the other hand, were offered an arena for 'subsistence play' where they did not threaten the otherwise masculine play forms, prompting this reflection: 'For some action contexts in the play world of camping, the mythical American model of heroic masculinity is dominant. The less dramatic feminine role in this context is to sustain and encourage; to be an appreciative audience for masculine shows' (p. 607). This segregation, in which women are put aside in special places, has been discussed by the feminist historian Yvonne Hirdman (2001), and can also be applied to the labor market. For example, a

recent quantitative study in Sweden indicates that spaces for women entrepreneurs may be shrinking in the aftermath of public sector restructuring, as men are overrepresented as entrepreneurs in all industries except childcare (Sköld, 2013).

In an ethnographic study, Thorne (1993) uses play as a lens to study how boys and girls socialize in schools; she documents the same pattern of how boys and girls are socialized into different rooms. In her study, girls' rooms and boys' rooms were constructed according to prevailing norms (rules) in the educational context. When boys and girls start school, they learn that they should socialize with the same sex. Thorne's study discloses the complex nature of the process, illustrating the dynamics of separating gender (e.g. in lining up girls and boys for various activities), upholding an oppositional dichotomy, simultaneously neutralizing this dichotomy (e.g. girls and boys who are best friends outside school), which challenges the significance of gender. Most importantly, she gives an insight into how gendered structures are created at a young age, formed by adults and traditions, and not by children's own play. This links well to Bronwyn Davies' (2003) research on how children relate to different stories, showing how the incorrigibility of the construction of male-female binary is a central element of human identity where it is important to get its gender right to be accepted. That is; to be socially accepted girls and boys wanted to be recognized according to their gender and thus performed according to gendered norms. Doing gender studies thus shows that gender is constituted as a pervasive rule, and how it may be difficult to play with too many rules at the same time. However, rules of gender *can* be challenged through performative acts (Butler, 2006/1999). The question that remains to be answered is how playful entrepreneuring may challenge and /or reproduce entrepreneurship as a gendered activity.

Methodology

The two cases drawn upon here build upon ethnographic fieldwork, undertaken over a period of more than ten years. Neither of the cases has been anonymized. Both cases have been 'mobile' in the sense that the place and space for entrepreneuring has varied over time. Adopting a multi-sited approach (Marcus, 1998) has allowed the researchers to

follow the way in which entrepreneuring has shifted over time and has also created a scope for responding to the circumstances that have arisen, staying open to relationships that emerged and the interaction that has taken place (c.f. Vered, 2000: 10). The two cases share both similarities and differences. Both cases show a form of entrepreneurship that began in the public sector, associated with the entrepreneurs' respective professions. Due to problems associated with the public organizations, however, they both tried to find solutions for practicing their profession in more creative ways in private organizations. Both cases thus revolve around entrepreneurs that have changed a traditional occupation through searching for unorthodox pursuance. A broader societal intention, including willingness and ambitions to change societal systems is common to the entrepreneurs studied who both appear as charismatic, well-spoken, extrovert and self-confident. The two cases are however enacted in two highly gendered different settings, Freja in a female gendered area (obstetric care) and the Moon House in a male gendered area (space industry and technology development). Whilst these two cases are female and male gendered it should be noted that gender can not only (and should not only) be studied in a gender comparative framework, but can (and should) also be studied in single-gender cohorts. In these two cases, play is pronounced and cherished in the Moon House, but is silenced, yet visible by observation, in Freja. While contrasts inspired us to delve deeper into the conceptual worlds and intersections between play, entrepreneuring and gender, we also pay attention to the overlapping features between the cases and the variations that can be provided considering the aim to investigate whether Caillois' (1961) conceptual framework can be relevant to theorize entrepreneuring as play.

Regarding the Freja case, one of the researchers first met the entrepreneur in 2001, during the researcher's first pregnancy. During the spring of 2002, the researcher participated in the midwife's water aerobics classes for pregnant women, got to know her and explained her interest in women entrepreneurs in the health and care sectors. During this period, the researcher and the midwife started to conduct continuous dialogues about the entrepreneurship of the midwives, dealing with issues such as driving forces, aims and ambitions, opportunities and obstacles. The contact was kept up sporadically over the years, as the researcher encountered Freja and other contacts at the county council and at the labor union through her studies of public sector transformation. The contact with the Freja midwife was then revitalized in 2005/2006 during the researcher's second

pregnancy, when she again participated in the water aerobics classes, taking notes and conducting informal dialogues with the midwives about the entrepreneurship before and/or after the aerobics sessions. The researcher then conducted a more formal and (semi-)structured interview with the midwife during spring 2008 for the purpose of writing a book chapter and an article about boundary-crossing societal entrepreneurs. After that interview, the researcher continued to follow the expansion of the midwife's business through interviews conducted in 2009 and 2010.

The Moon House has been studied from 2002, when the idea was first made public, until today. The process has sometimes been pursued at a distance with occasional contacts, but for two periods (2002–2004 and 2008–2010) the process was followed more closely, during which time the researcher had almost daily contact with key actors. During the second period (2008–2010), the researcher also took part in initiating activity, e.g. two workshops. These activities involved not only the Moon House entrepreneur, but also many other entrepreneurs and artists, as well as people from marketing and advertising agencies, students, researchers, architects, engineers in general, and engineers from the space industry in particular. The Moon House has been followed in different ways over the years. During the initial period, the media coverage and key events were followed and during the later period key actors were interviewed to understand why they became part of the Moon House project. Moreover, during the latter period, the researcher followed the increasing international cooperation with, for example, NASA and thereby became acquainted with the space industry. The empirical material mainly derives from participant observation interviews and dialogues with the entrepreneurs and other people involved in the two processes that have been conducted continuously. Sometimes these occasions have been photographed and at times also filmed.

In both cases, the empirical material is vast, encompassing dozens of folders with documents, numerous interviews, and several books with field notes. In addition to this material, the self-reflections of the two entrepreneurs have been valuable for the insight into how play is part of gendered entrepreneuring. Whilst the fieldwork is rooted in everyday experiences, Caillois' (1961) framework of particular ways/forms of play has guided our analysis to focus on the subtle, yet prominent, practices of entrepreneuring in

everyday activities. This means that we will avoid positioning the 'studied' subjects, the entrepreneurs, as a particular kind of player, and instead analyze the life-worlds in the two cases to find out whether entrepreneuring as play is gendered and plays a part in producing exclusion/inclusion, subjugation, and inequality. The longitudinal focus also provides a unique opportunity to understand entrepreneuring over time. The daily activities taking place provide rich descriptions on how people do gender and how that links to the gendering of social orders.

An abductive process characterizes the overall research process, as well as the analytical work, where the empirical and theoretical sources of inspiration have interchangeably been in focus (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). The different role cases may have in interpretive studies has been discussed by Sigglekow (2007) among others. In this process, the cases have served as both sources of inspiration and as illustrations of theoretical points. The empirical cases in combination with a curiosity of doing gender and understanding entrepreneuring as potentially gendered were our initial sources of inspiration. As our analytical work proceeded, and the theoretical frameworks of *homo ludens* originally developed by Huizinga and Caillois came into focus, the theoretical discussions and reasoning became increasingly emphasized. As we revisited the empirical cases, they again became sources of inspiration for reinterpreting the relationship between playing, entrepreneuring and gendering (c.f. Ibid.). Through the framework of Caillois the variations became clearer to us.

Hence, the present article is a result of a long and playful process of moving back and forth in combination with interpretation and re-interpretation driven by the encounters of three theoretical fields of research and two inspiring cases. The role of the cases in the final product, i.e. the article at hand, is to serve as empirical illustration of our theoretical points (cf. Sigglekow 2007). We make no claims to having conducted a comparative study. Although there are many similarities between the cases (non-mainstream, societal entrepreneurs, basis in profession etc.), there are also major differences. In combination, however, the cases illustrate the broad variety of forms of play and modes of playing, and have to us, as authors, been inspiring food for thought.

Entrepreneuring from a play perspective

In this section, we discuss the play dimensions in each case, illustrating in what ways play is integrated in mundane everyday entrepreneuring. We begin with the Freja case, continue with the Moon House case, and then discuss the variety of play emerging in both cases.

Freja Midwifery Clinic

Since the end of the 1990s, Åsa Österberg has been employed by the women's clinic part-time while running the company part-time, and in both roles has been able to use her profession as a midwife as a point of departure to initiate change. When the researcher came into contact with Åsa Österberg, the entrepreneur behind Freja Midwifery clinic, the year was 2002. A midwife at a university hospital recommended that the pregnant researcher join a water aerobics group for pregnant women. This was not part of the publicly organized or funded maternity care, but through a private company at the patient's own expense. At the time, Österberg gave two classes a week, in daytime. This was not entirely convenient for a full-time researcher, but sounded interesting. Since it was payable per occasion (SEK 200), she decided to give it a go and see. Instantly captivated by Åsa Österberg's charisma, sense of humor and relaxed attitude, the researcher ended up taking approximately 20 sessions of water aerobics during her first pregnancy, and returned for the same number during her next pregnancy three years later. As she was simultaneously a researcher in a research program called "Entrepreneurship within and through the public sector", these sessions also became instances of participant observations, and the entrepreneur, Åsa Österberg, became an important informant.

During the water aerobics sessions, the play dimension was thus obvious to the participant observer. A water aerobics class with Åsa Österberg is so much fun! The instructors and the participants enjoy themselves greatly when jokingly demonstrating the exercises at the poolside. Moving into the water, with its capacity to relieve the body of weight is, for a woman with a heavy pregnant belly, a form of *mimicry* in Caillois terms, a way to escape reality and oneself. The instructors on the poolside made many jokes about this, clearly identifying with this feeling amongst the participants. The guided meditations, leading

the women to another form of consciousness beyond 'here and now', we regard as *ilinx*. The exercises and the design of the aerobics session are rule-bound, i.e. *ludus*. Yet, the humorous way in which it is carried out resembles the rule-less *paidia*. Humor is used to create both a trusting and relaxed atmosphere and distance from the upcoming delivery. For example, Åsa Österberg pretends to be a woman giving birth, in order to illustrate how someone may sound and act in that situation (*mimicry*). There is always laughter and joking, a balancing act on the border of what might be perceived as rude. Immediate social responsivity, in Asplund's terms, is continuously present.

Ever since Åsa Österberg began working at the local authority's women's clinic at the age of 16, she noticed repeatedly that there were things to be improved in maternity welfare. The importance of exercise and movement during pregnancy was given no place; neither was the need to talk about the worries that pregnancy entails or thoughts about the approaching birth. She further claimed that the need to talk felt by the fathers-to-be was also ignored under the auspices of local health care. The same applied to women who were frightened of giving birth or who wanted to have the baby at home because, for example, they were afraid of hospitals. The midwives wanted to offer pregnant women and their families all of these options, because they considered them important for giving the future families a good start. The motive behind Österberg's entrepreneurship is thus very serious. As Huizinga (1949) had previously noted there is, however, no analytical contradiction between seriousness and play (we will come back to the ethical distinction below). Here we take Huizinga's argument seriously and regard the activities *sub specie ludi,* i.e. from a play perspective.

As the aerobics became popular among pregnant women and the business grew, Österberg encouraged several like-minded midwives to join her. Freja Midwifery Clinic Inc. opened in September 2006 with five shareholding midwives. They offer a number of services (for example, massage and water aerobics) that the county council cannot afford and does not want to be involved in. All Freja co-workers organize their working life the same way as Åsa Österberg, combining part-time work on the labor ward with working for the Freja business. Running Freja thus requires an interlocking schedule like a jigsaw-puzzle to organize activities around the five midwives' shifts on the labor ward. The endeavour to take her ideas to the market in a business form was to engage in a competitive game,

which Caillois would have called *agôn*. Although the entrepreneurs were frustrated with the county council for not being able to fully accommodate Österberg's ideas, she has a smile on her face and a playful gleam in her eyes when she says that the county council pays attention when clients pay for her services.

Many other midwives working for the county council who began to recommend 'their' pregnant patients go to water aerobics confirmed afterwards that those who did so were often stronger before giving birth and recovered faster, both physically and mentally, after delivery. In this way, the services offered by Freja relieve burdens and reduce costs for the county council. The midwives have had discussions with county council politicians which have at times been tough but fruitful. Currently, the midwives at Freja have good relationships with the maternity ward, but no contract. When the Freja midwives discussed the possibility of a collaboration with senior staff at the county council, they met with opposition. They talk about the bidding for tender as a mixture of skills-based competition (*agôn*) and lottery (*alea*), and have at times been annoyed by the rule-boundness (*ludus*) of the bidding process. Instead, they have found ways to realize their ideas through privately paying customers and part-time work for the county council.

In 2008, in addition to water aerobics and childbirth classes, the company offered classes for second and third-time mothers, supportive discussions, tactile massage, acupuncture, yoga for pregnant women, coffee meetings for mothers-to-be and new mothers, and theme evenings. The 30-minute visit to the midwife that the county council offers is not enough, according to Freja personnel. The Freja clinic offers 40-minute sessions, of which about 15 minutes are used for tactile massage. The encounter with mothers and also fathers-to-be is what is central for the Freja midwives.

Continuing to work on the labor ward is important not only from the perspective of competence development, but also for the Freja midwives as individuals: 'Being with a woman and a man when they have a baby is so fantastic … it is almost like being addicted to cocaine… You just can't stop'. The seriousness of the situation, which is about life itself, is obvious. In the life of the midwife, it is a captivating situation which offers *mimicry,* i.e. a possibility to escape from oneself. If the Freja midwives engage in business

activities that compete with services provided by the county council (*agôn,* see above), they may not be allowed to continue as part-time midwives on the maternity ward. This is perceived as a threat, and has prevented them from taking this step.

That the water aerobics – and the Freja Midwifery Clinic – have enriched the women's clinic and vice versa is clear. An example that amuses Åsa Österberg, who was triggered by the county council's initial reluctance to her ideas *(*a form of *agôn)*, is the use of Pilates balls during childbirth. Åsa recommends women to use large Pilates balls as support for moving their bodies during the early stages of childbirth. As early as 2003, Åsa had bought two such balls and donated them to the labor ward. That the county council would pay for these was something that Österberg considered too unlikely to even bother asking. Her midwife colleagues laughed and joked with Åsa about her 'crazy' ideas. Österberg's behaviour can be interpreted as *agôn* – professional skills used in a game. The way of playing we see as *paidia*, i.e. playing with the rules of the game. When more and more women who had been to the water aerobics used the balls and even bought their own and took them up to the labor ward when it was time to give birth, more and more of the midwives caught on to the idea. In 2007, even the maternity care provided by the county council started to include water aerobics for pregnant women. This water aerobics offering of the County Council competed with lower prices than Freja could offer, thus taking away some clients and having a negative impact on Freja's income. Still, Österberg is very pleased that the county council is adopting their ideas and sees it as a sign of impact and success. She had won the competitive game for her ideas. What happened is an example of how change was enabled by *agôn*, played out in the *paidia* form, in the intersection of the private market for water aerobics and the publicly-funded women's clinic. That is, by playing by, but also with, the rules of the game in a *paidia*-manner, the entrepreneuring resulted in changing the rules of the game within the public women's clinic.

Regarding competition as play, however, is a researcher's interpretation. Being concerned with appearing professional, as serious midwives, they would probably be reluctant to assume such an interpretation. The foundation of evidence-based treatment methods is, and must be, communicated to clients, colleagues, doctors, politicians, and heads of departments. The entrepreneurs' professional certificates as midwives and the associated

legitimacy are repeatedly referred to as the basis for all operations. The strong base in the profession and use of skills is why this is an example of *agôn*. Care professions of this type are also surrounded by many rules and regulations (such as HSL, the Health and Medical Service Act), making the play rule-bound (*ludus*). Thus, the seriousness portrayed should not be surprising. It is, rather, an expression of the ethical rather than analytical distinction between play and seriousness (Huizinga, 1949).

When they integrate methods such as massage and acupuncture, the Freja entrepreneurs often refer to education and scientific studies emphasising their profession (*agôn*). However, participating in the activities offered in Freja, as guided meditations, water aerobics it is mainly *ilinx* and *mimicry*, where play takes the form of escaping oneself and/or disrupting 'reality'. The playful entrepreneuring of *agôn* and *alea* have however been more difficult to recognize. Even if the Freja midwives do not intentionally hide the playful dimensions of their own entrepreneuring, it is not a coincidence that these dimensions are not salient for those who have not participated. This applies especially to the rule-less ways of playing, *paidia*. Still, the play is dominated by the rule-bound way of playing, *ludus*

The House on the Moon

In 1999, artist Mikael Genberg came up with the idea of putting a small red house on the surface of the moon. He had earlier built a red cottage with white gables in one of the oaks in the city park of Västerås, which became the Woodpecker Hotel. This was followed by another red house with white gables placed in Lake Mälaren, but with an underwater room below, a building which has become known as the Otter Inn. The two spectacular hotels have become a mark of distinction, not only for the city of Västerås, but also creating legitimacy for Genberg himself, both as an artist and an entrepreneur. To broaden his portfolio, Genberg tried to find another unusual location. A report on the Swedish moon expedition 'Smart-1' with the headline 'Sweden Now Goes to the Moon', led him to ponder the question, 'Why not put a small red house on the surface of the moon?'. After reflecting on the idea of the house on the moon for quite some time, he tried to reject it as ridiculous and move on. But one of his friends, who was tired of

listening to Genberg's 'inner thoughts', encouraged him to go ahead with the idea. Convinced, Mikael then made a phone call to Johan Marcopoulos, information officer at the Swedish National Space Board. Marcopoulos, who was responsible for spreading knowledge about space issues to contribute to research and development, seemed to be the right person to contact in the first instance. The following conversation is taken from the biography *Lunatic – Genberg and the Thousand Musketeers*:

> – Hi, my name is Mikael Genberg. I'm an artist and I want to put a house on the moon.
> – ???
>
> A more silent telephone receiver did not exist that day.
>
> Johan Marcopoulos could have hung up on him and it might not have needed more than that to make Mikael bury his Moon House in the ground of Västmanland. However, Marcopoulos did not hang up. He continued to listen. Then, he said:
>
> – Hey lad … would it not be easier if you were satisfied by doing a three-dimensional animation of the moon?
>
> Then he laughed and continued to listen patiently as Mikael talked about his vision. Finally he said:
>
> – You should probably talk to Sven Grahn about this …
>
> (Lif, 2008: 121)

This illustrates the common reaction when people hear about the idea for the first time. Mikael did not obtain a yes or a no, but was passed on to another person that Marcopoulos thought was the right person to listen to his idea. Sven Grahn, also described as the Space Nestor of Sweden, was thus next to be informed. At this time, in 2000, a network of involved people started to form as stories were told and the idea was passed on to other contacts. The concept of *ilinx*, the play which undermines stability and temporarily suspends reality, can explain what takes place here. People describe how they instantly reject the idea, but that they are simultaneously enticed to be part of it since it opens up for creativity and a way of becoming part of something that is larger than themselves. At the beginning of the process, only a few enthusiastic friends gathered around the idea, but after a while the network grew to include not only friends and Swedish organizations but also the US space organization NASA, which invited a delegation from the Moon House

in the autumn of 2008. In 2009, the 'Moon House network' was featured in the Swedish magazine "Fokus" as a power network that linked different spheres and connected several actors to each other in unexpected ways.

Creating a network of different actors and organizations has thus been crucial to keeping the project alive and on the move. Several cocktail parties have been arranged over the years, and many meetings and workshops have taken place in the 600-square-meter art studio close to ABB headquarters. Entering the Moon House studio, with all its paintings, illustrations, and symbols of the Moon House, reminds one of an exhibition. In one corner stands a bar counter, where people hang out at cocktail parties. The flair of 'fun' and 'oddness' is striking and invites you to try 'escaping oneself to become another' (*mimicry*) and to temporarily suspend the perception of reality (*ilinx*). *Mimicry/ilinx* often go hand in hand, as when the county governor, on the day of the inauguration by Christer Fuglesang (the Swedish astronaut) of the two Moon House hills at both highway entrances to Västerås, wore a small red paper house on his head (as a tiara) and allowed journalists to take photos. The county governor, former CEO of Swedish Radio and editor of a national newspaper, is not known for making practical jokes. On the contrary, this is a sober man who takes his profession seriously and who seems to find a role model in Dag Hammarskjöld, the second secretary-general of the United Nations, about whom he has also written a book. Another example of *mimicry/ilinx* was when one political strategist, who has done a lot of work for the Social Democratic Party, borrowed an electric motorbike (which happened to be in the studio) during a meeting and drove around inside the studio. Photography was allowed on both occasions and the results were published in *Lunatic*, a book about Genberg and the Moon House project (Lif, 2008).

In 2007, the non-profit organization Friends of the Moon House was established. While the project's business and economic affairs have been administered by Luna Resort, a private limited company (owned by Mikael Genberg), activities have been promoted by the Friends of the Moon House. Revenues consist mainly of sponsorship funding, sometimes because the Moon House is seen to spur an interest in acquiring technology and engineering skills (*agôn)* and sometimes as part of a sponsorship package, including Moon House reproductions produced in a limited edition which is presented as an opportunity to become part of a historic event (*alea*). A preliminary study was made by

the Swedish Space Corporation (SSC) in 2004, in which it was stated that the project was not only technically possible but also economically viable, since they all had the skills and experience to realize the project (*alea*). SSC also received SEK one million from Luna Resort Inc. to start up the first phase of the Moon House project, which turned into a project that attracted engineers. They usually described how they were offered space to think and experiment in new ways within this project.

Whilst spectacular events are often highlighted in the official Moon House story, mundane activities have also been salient. A great deal has revolved around meetings regarding the construction of the Moon House. In 2009, the engineering work was redirected from SSC to Luna Resort as the first part of the project was completed. Accordingly, workshops were initiated and tests were conducted (over a beer and a sandwich), using, for example, popcorn as an expanding material. In addition, a prototype house was 'built' from a special kind of sailcloth, using scissors and Scotch tape to put the pieces together before it was mounted on a steel scaffold. In another workshop, channels were made in the sailcloth and connected to an air compressor to see if the house could expand from a small folded package to a house of about six square metres. In contrast to the idea of detailed plans, the workshops turned out to be quite hands-on, opening the door to experiments and new ideas about how to move the house construction one step forward. This can also be seen as a shift from *agôn*, competing with skills, time and with limited resources, to *alea* (games of chance) trying out new materials to come up with technical solutions for the construction of the house.

Genberg describes how, at Moon House meetings, he has sometimes found himself thinking like a space engineer, and how space engineers sometimes think like an artist. Hence, the different people involved start to imitate each other's professions (*mimicry*). Space engineers look for the most beautiful location to place the house on the moon and the artist becomes involved in developing technical solutions. At one meeting, the idea was born of asking Swedish astronaut Christer Fuglesang to take a small red house with him on his next space trip to the international space station. Accordingly, in August 2009, Fuglesang smuggled a small red cardboard house inside his logbook on his second trip to the ISS, resulting in a spectacular picture of a red cardboard house floating in space with

Earth as a beautiful background (*mimicry*). When the whole crew was invited to Stockholm in December 2009 to watch the traditional Lucia Day celebrations at the Globe Sports Arena, the astronauts described how tricky it had been to take the photos and make a movie of the house floating together with the Swedish astronaut at ISS. Despite this, they had taken a whole day to make the final pictures and the movie come true, because 'it was so much fun!' floating around in ISS with the house (*ilinx*).

Whilst *mimicry/ilinx* is part of mundane entrepreneuring, the stories about the Moon House draw upon play by emphasizing unique creative opportunities and competitive advantage for participants and the potential of the project to bring about a new world. This grand narrative of the Moon House represents the project in the play form of *agôn*: a competitive game that requires the intelligence and commitment of the selected few who give legitimacy to the project, but who also gain legitimacy from it. This grand narrative of the Moon House represents the project in the play form of *agôn*: a competitive game that requires the intelligence and commitment of the selected few who can give legitimacy to the project, but who also gain legitimacy from the same. *Alea* is also present in the stories, but often told in passing and in private. In these stories, the success of the Moon House is described as being outside the control of the individual. It resembles the dream of winning the lottery. Some of the individuals involved have admitted that they do not dare to exit the project, since it might become a reality after all, and leaving it would mean losing your place, not only in the lottery, but in the historiography of the Moon House itself.

Activities become part of the Moon House through spontaneous interaction and are shaped in the context of the people who, at the time, are most involved in the project The Moon House can itself be seen as a symbol of play; it is indeed an artistic project that challenges our perception of reality. However whilst mundane activity illustrates *mimicry/ilinx* (escaping reality), the grand story tells of *agôn* as a competitive game that requires the intelligence and commitment of the players (the powerful men who have made the Moon House visible and, themselves, been made visible through it, thus given and gaining legitimacy thereby), but with the subtext of *alea* (the chance of becoming part of history). There are seldom any repetitive activities, and those necessary, such as

paying the bills, take place on the sidelines, often at the artist's dinner table. Thus, obvious routines, structuring and rule-bound activities (*ludus)* are suppressed and hidden away in favour of a story permeated by excitement, adventure and playfulness. The way of playing in the Moon House is thus characterized by *paidia*, rule-less play.

Variations of play in entrepreneuring

In this part of our analysis, we have focused on highlighting the variation in what entrepreneurs *do* (Gartner, 1988; Steyaert, 2007; Johannisson, 2011), and of entrepreneuring from a play perspective. Our two cases together illustrate the variation of play that is involved in entrepreneuring. The analysis shows how play is part of mundane entrepreneuring in the two cases. Using Caillois' framework has proven useful in illustrating that play is, in fact, a useful metaphor for capturing the variation of activities in entrepreneuring. This suggests that it is vital that a comprehensive framework of play is used in such an analysis, ranging from *paidia* to *ludus*, and involving all four forms of play. Otherwise, our understanding of entrepreneuring will be deprived of its multifaceted character.

The two cases contribute to illuminating the variation of forms of play and ways of playing by complementing each other, the variation within each case and, hence, the overlap in forms of play between the cases, are intriguing. The table below serves the purpose of illustrating that all forms of play could be identified in both cases, although the visibility of the different forms varied. Games of competitive nature (*agôn*) or games of chance (*alea*) were more pronounced in the Moon House case. Play taking the form of escaping oneself and/or disrupting 'reality', i.e. *mimicry* and *ilinx*, are more pronounced in the Freja case. However all forms are present in both cases.

- Insert Table 1 here -

In both cases, entrepreneuring was characterized by a flexible approach and openness to emerging strategies and opportunities, much like what Sarasvathy (2001) calls an

effectuation strategy. Yet, some activities and ideas were still 'core' to the entrepreneurial ventures. In the Freja case, creating a relaxed atmosphere through jokes and humor, and helping the women escape parts of their bodily reality (see *mimicry* and *ilinx* above). In the Moon House case, the sponsorship activities and the technological games (see *agôn* and *alea* above), for example, were at the core of the project. When applying Caillois' framework to the entrepreneuring taking place, we note that the forms of play are about these core issues. In other words, to the extent that there existed 'business ideas' a priori in the two illustrative cases, the activities undertaken to realize these 'business ideas' (or rather 'entrepreneurship ideas'[1]) are closely interlinked with the playing that we observed, and can be understood in more detail using the concepts of *agôn /alea* and *mimicry/ilinx*.

Concluding discussion: Entrepreneuring as gendered play

At the outset of this research, we were intrigued by the idea of understanding the gendered consequences of seeing the entrepreneur as *homo ludens* and entrepreneuring as a creative process of playing. Inspired by two ethnographic case studies, it is our preliminary contention that Caillois' theoretical frapmework of ways and forms of playing is potentially fruitful in disclosing a variation in entrepreneuring. This also answers our first question of this paper, where we wanted to address the lack of discourse that, instead of reifying the 'creative human being', addresses how play and creativity are involved in everyday and mundane entrepreneuring. Recognizing that entrepreneuring is constituted through these varieties of play, mainstream entrepreneurship discourse, which diminishes entrepreneurship as a rational management practice, can be challenged. Using *homo ludens* as a lens, a new discourse on entrepreneuring can develop our understanding, and to some extent thus also de-mystify what is taking place in entrepreneurial processes. It relocates the focus from the heroized individual to the social setting in which entrepreneuring takes shape. We will now further our reasoning on how *paidia* and *ludus* can conceptually be linked to entrepreneuring. From there, play can be problematized from an understanding of social orders as gendered.

[1] As mentioned above, the actual business is a means rather than an end for these entrepreneurs, who are using the business as an organizational form for their entrepreneuring.

The entrepreneur has long been recognized as a masculine individual, in power to actively create and change his surrounding (e.g. Ogbor, 2000). In his description of the entrepreneur as an "Action Man" (Swedberg, 2006) he may very well have the social rules of his time, when women were still fighting for suffrage. But the focus on the man nevertheless highlights the way in which the entrepreneur is historically constituted through a male discourse. Schumpeter described this Man of Action as someone who does not accept reality as it is, but who wants to challenge static behavior through breaking out of equilibrium. This person is further portrayed as spontaneous, since s/he feels no inner resistance to change and is able to make intuitive choices among a multitude of new alternatives. Moreover this person is "motivated by power and joy in creation". This activity - to be spontaneous and to basically 'let go' - resembles Caillois' description of *paidia,* i.e. characterized by a primitive power expressed by turbulence, free improvisation, and carefree gaiety (e.g. Ibid. p. 13 and p. 27). *Paidia* constitutes the manifestation of a play instinct which Caillois sees as an elementary need for disturbance and tumult and thus an impulse to do something which "readily can become a taste for destruction and breaking things" (p. 28). The *paidia* way of playing links well to the Schumpeterian view of entrepreneurship as an act of "creative destruction" where something is destroyed in the creation of something new. Entrepreneuring from a *paidia* perspective thus involves the playful breaking with the mould through seizing a new combination, pushing it through in reality by sheer willpower and energy.

Who and what is then constructed as the opposite of the Man of Action and *paidia*? According to Schumpeter, the non-entrepreneurial person constitutes the antithesis of the Man of Action. Here we find the description of a person who willingly accepts existing ways of doing things and who feels a strong inner resistance to change. The non-entrepreneur is further portrayed as a passive person who is exclusively motivated by needs and who stops when these are satisfied. This person thus follows other people and repeats what has already been done. The tendency to repeat and follow would arguably require a substantial amount of effort, patience and skill or ingenuity, which can be linked to the *ludus* way of playing. Whilst *paidia* characterizes spontaneous, 'crazy' and boundary-breaking activities, *ludus* rather exemplifies the tendency to follow imperative

and tedious conventions (Ibid: p. 29). Following Caillois' reasoning, *ludus* is actually what may discipline *paidia*:

> What I call ludus stands for the specific element in play the impact and cultural creativity of which seems most impressive. It does not connote a psychological attitude as precise as that of agôn, alea, mimicry or ilinx, but in *disciplining the paidia,* its general contribution is to give the fundamental categories of play their purity and excellence. (Caillois, 1961: 33, our emphasis)

Whilst Caillois recognizes that both *paidia* and *ludus* are ways of playing which are interrelated on a continuum, Schumpeter draws a sharper line between those we call entrepreneurs (the Man of Action) and those we call non-entrepreneurs. Where one way of playing (*paidia*) assumes the other way (*ludus*), the entrepreneur is put in opposition to the rest of the world since s/he is perceived to fight static and threatened people who prevent development from taking place. The entrepreneurial and the non-entrepreneurial are thus constructed as opposites, but the two ways of playing are constructed on a sliding scale. This notion is important, in particular if entrepreneuring invites us to turn Caillois' gliding scale into entrepreneurial/non-entrepreneurial opposites rather than acknowledging their interaction and entwinement.

What this exercise of discussing *paidia* and *ludus* shows is how the male gendered entrepreneurship discourse may adopt the langue of *paidia* whilst ignoring the language of *ludus*, and thus continue to construct entrepreneuring as a male activity whilst ignoring 'othered' ways of entrepreneuring. Both ways of playing are interconnected and interdependent, but in entrepreneurship theory and discourse they risk becoming separated.

Further, it is vital to acknowledge the dimension of serious/non-serious play in order to avoid the idea of entrepreneuring as play becoming reductionist in a gender biased way. Recalling Huzingas distinction, serious activities can analytically, if not ethically, be regarded as play. Portraying an image of being a *homo ludens* when the business idea is to assist people in vulnerable situations would be crossing, or balancing on, the border to

the unethical. In this paper, the midwives, who were indeed playful in many ways but also very keen on portraying a serious image, have illustrated this.

Following Caillois, it is reasonable to assume that there is space to play everywhere, but the space is larger where basic assumptions and ethical expectations are met. Consequently, we need to be aware that in industries related to personal services, such as, for example, care of various kinds, the spaces for playing rule-less *paidia* may be more difficult than indulging in rule-bound play, *ludus*. In welfare states like the Scandinavian, health and care services are funded and administered by municipalities and county councils in a manner that is surrounded by many formal rules and regulations.

It is equally important, or perhaps even more important, to embrace a broad enactment of what play can be. In order to avoid the pitfalls of a reductionist view of entrepreneuring, researchers and practitioners embracing the idea of 'entrepreneurs as *homo ludens*' also need to acknowledge serious play. Recognizing the serious play has major implications on the gendering of entrepreneuring as play. The majority of the human service sectors are female gender labelled. Furthermore, in many western countries, the vast majority of the employees in organizations (public or private) dealing with humans in pre-schools and schools, hospitals, primary care and eldercare, are women. We know from many previous studies that the notion of entrepreneurship is male gendered. Things that women do, things that can be seen to belong to the "reproductive" sphere, whether done at home or in the public sector, do not count as entrepreneurship but rather contribute to making women's entrepreneuring even more invisible in the entrepreneurship literature. In this article, we have shown how Caillois' framework of play can open up the black-box of entrepreneuring. However, a note of caution needs to be raised to avoid juxtaposing *ludus* and *paidia*, as well as serious and non-serious play, since this may reinforce gendered orders rather than opening up for the potential of emancipation in entrepreneuring.

To conclude, the rules of play are not fixed, but socially and discursively constructed. Play cannot only be rule-less or rule-bound, but might also be an exercise of playing *with* these very rules through which entrepreneurship changes institutions in society. Butler (2006/1999) writes and exemplifies how feminism continues to require its own forms of

serious play focusing on wo/men's subversive play with language and gendered attributes, but the line of thought opens up for viewing feminism as a playful entrepreneuring practice. Put differently, entrepreneuring as play can, in practice, be part of the feminist project, just as it can be part of challenging or even subverting rules of e.g. management, the market or the belief in economic growth as the engine of progress of our society. Hence, play theorized in connection with the 'rules', e.g. institutions, arguably constitutes a powerful means of studying subversive actions aiming for change. This applies not least to feminism as such (Butler, 2006/1999). That discussion is outside the scope of this paper but an intriguing issue for future research.

Final reflections

The iterative and abductive research process resulting in this paper has made it very clear to us as authors that there is a great deal to explore in the theoretical intersection between the entrepreneuring play and gender. Studying entrepreneuring from a play perspective has also made it possible to 'play with' our material (of course within the rules of the game), which made the more subtle and gendered doings in entrepreneuring visible. Since "play tends to remove the very nature of the mysterious" (Caillois, 1961: 4), 'playful research' on entrepreneurship could contribute to establishing the criticality called for area of research in entrepreneurship (Calas et al., 2009; Tedmanson, Verduyn, K., Essers & Gartner, 2012; Verduijn, Dey, Tedmanson & Essers, 2014). However, the intersections need further exploration, both theoretically and empirically. Our aim has been to contribute to entrepreneurship theory by relating to Caillois' theory of play and to doing gender studies. Combining these three perspectives in different ways also has potential to contribute to the research fields on gendering as well as on play. Furthermore, our approach here has been to use the cases as sources of inspiration for our theoretical reasoning and as illustrations of our theoretical points. Qualitative and quantitative empirical studies designed to systematically investigate the dimensions of play in men's and women's entrepreneuring in male and female gendered industries respectively, would be interesting avenues for future research.

References

Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K. (2000). Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research. London: Sage.

Ahl, H. (2006) Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30(5), pp. 595-621.

Ahl, H. & Marlow, S. (2012) Exploring the dynamics of gender, feminism and entrepreneurship: advancing debate to escape a dead end? , Organization, 19(5), pp. 543-562.

Asplund, J. (1987). Det sociala livets elementära former [The basic forms of social life] Göteborg: Korpen.

Berglund, K. (2006), Discursive diversity in fashioning entrepreneurial identity, I: Hjorth, Daniel and Steyaert, Chris (Eds.) *Entrepreneurship as Social Change – A Third Movements in Entrepreneurship Book,* Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar, 231-250.

Bill, F., Jansson, A., & Olaison L. (2010). The spectacle of entrepreneurship: a duality of flamboyance and activity. In F. Bill, B. Bjerke, & A.W. Johansson (Eds.), *(De)Mobilizing the entrepreneurship discourse: Exploring entrepreneurial thinking and action* (pp. 158–178). Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Bruni, A., Gherardi, S., & Poggio, B. (2004). Entrepreneur-mentality, gender and the study of women entrepreneurs. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *17*(3), 256–268.

Burch, W.R. (1965). The play world of camping: Research into the social meaning of outdoor recreation. *American Journal of Sociology*, *70*(5), 604–612.

Butler, J. (2006/1999) Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity. New York: Routledge.

Caillois, R. (1961/2001). *Man, play and games*. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press.

Calás, M.B., Smircich, L. & Bourne, K.A. (2009), Extending the boundaries: Reframing 'entrepreneurship as social change' through feminist perspectives, Academy of Management Review, 34(3), 477–491.

Chia, R. (1995). From modern to postmodern organizational analysis. *Organization studies,* 16(4), 579-604.

Davies, B. (2003) Frogs and snails and feminist tales: preschool children and gender. Rev. ed. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton press.

de Bruin, A., Brush, Candida G., & Welter, F. (2006). Introduction to the special issue: Towards building cumulative knowledge on women's entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and* Practice, 30(5), 585–593.

Essers, C. and Benschop, Y. (2009), "Muslim businesswomen doing boundary work: the negotiation of Islam, gender and ethnicity within entrepreneurial contexts", *Human Relations*, Vol. 62 No. 3, pp. 403-423.

Gartner, W. B. (1988). "Who is an entrepreuer?" is the wrong question. *American Journal of Small Businnss*, *12*(4): 11-32.

Godwin, L. N., Stevens, C. E., & Brenner, N. L. (2006). Forced to Play by the Rules? Theorizing How Mixed-Sex Founding Teams Benefit Women Entrepreneurs in Male-Dominated Contexts. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *30*(5), 623-642.

Harding, S. G. (1986). *The science question in feminism*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.

Hirdman, Y. (2001). *Genus: om det stabilas föränderliga form* [Gender: about the changing form of the stable], Malmö: Liber.

Hjorth, D. (2004). Creating space for play/invention – concepts of space and organizational entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, *16*(5), 413–432.

Hjorth, D. (2005). Organizational entrepreneurship: With de Certeau on creating heterotopias (or spaces for play). *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *14*(4), 386–398.

Hjorth, D. & Steyaert, C. (eds) (2004) *Narrative and Discursive Approaches in Entrepreneurship*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Huizinga, J. (1949). Homo ludens: A study of the play element in culture. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Jennings, P. L., Perren, L., & Carter, S. (2005). Guest editors' introduction: Alternative perspectives on entrepreneurship research. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *29*(*2*), 145–152.

Johannisson, B. (2011). Towards a practice theory of entrepreneuring. *Small Business Economics*, *36*(2), 135–150.

Johannisson, B. (2010). In the beginning entrepreneuring. In F. Bill, B. Bjerke, & A. W. Johansson (Eds.), *(De)Mobilizing entrepreneurship – exploring entrepreneurial thinking and action*. Cheltenham, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Jones, C. & Spicer, A. (2005). The sublime object of entrepreneurship. *Organization*, *12*(2), 223–246.

King Kauanui, S., Thomas, K.D., Sherman, C.L., Ross Waters, G. & Gilea M. (2010) An exploration of entrepreneurship and play, *Journal of Organizational Change Managemen*t, 23 (1): 51-70.

Lif, A. (2008). *Mångalen: Genberg och de tusen musketörerna*. Västerås: Sportförlaget i Europa.

Lindgren, M., & Packendorff, J. (2009). Social constructionism and entrepreneurship: Basic assumptions and consequences for theory and research. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, *15* (1), 25–47.

Mair, J., Battilana, J. Cardenas, J. (2012) Organizing for Society: A Typology of Social Entrepreneuring Models, *Journal of Business Ethics*, 111:353–373

Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *24*: 95–117.

Meier Sørensen, B. (2008) 'Behold, I am making all things new': The entrepreneur as savior in the age of creativity, *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 24, 85–93

Mirchandani, K. (1999). Feminist Insight on Gendered Work: New Directions in Research on Women and Entrepreneurship. *Gender, Work and Organization*, *6*(4): 224-235.

Ogbor, J. O. (2000). Mythicizing and reification in entrepreneurial discourse: Ideology-critique of entrepreneurial studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, *37*(*5*), 605–635.

Rindova V., Daved, B., & Ketchen D. J. (2009). Entrepreneuring as emancipation. *Academy of Management Review*, 34(3), 477–491.

Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation and effectuation: Toward a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency. *Academy of management Review*, 26(2), 243-263.

Siggelkow, N. (2007) Persuasion with Case Studies. Academy of Management Journal, 50, 20–24.

Sköld, B. (2013). Strukturerna och företagandet: En longitudinell studie av kvinnors och mäns företagande i spåren av offentlig sektors omvandling. [Structures and Business-ownership: A longitudinal study of women's and men's business-ownership in the wake of Public Sector transformation.] FiF-avhandling 108, Linköping: Linköpings Universitet.

Steyaert, C. (2007). 'Entrepreneuring' as a conceptual attractor? A review of process theories in 20 years of entrepreneurship studies. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development 19*(6): 453–477.

Styhre, A. (2008). The Element of Play in InnovationWork: The Case of New Drug Development. *Creativity and Innovation Management, 17*(2), 136–146.

Sundin, E., & Holmquist, C. (1989). *Kvinnor som företagare. Osynlighet, mångfald, anpassning.* . [Women entrepreneurs: invisibility, diversity, adjustment] Malmö: Liber.

Swedberg, R. (2006). Social entrepreneurship: the view of the young Schumpeter. In C. Steyaert and D. Hjorth (eds.) *Entrepreneurship as social change* (pp. 21-34). Cheltenham. Edward Elgar.

Tedmanson, D., Verduyn, K., Essers, C., & Gartner, W. B. (2012). Critical perspectives in entrepreneurship research, *Organization*, 19(5) 531-541.

Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Tobias, J.M., Mair, J., Barbosa-Leiker, C. (2013) Toward a theory of transformative entrepreneuring: Poverty reduction and conflict resolution in Rwanda's entrepreneurial coffee sector, *Journal of Business Venturing* 28: 728–742.

Uhlaner, L.M., Kellermanns, F.W., Eddleston, K.A. & Hoy, F. (2012) The entrepreneuring family: a new paradigm for family business research, *Small Business Economics*, 38:1–11.

Verduijn, K., Dey, P., Tedmanson, D., & Essers, C. (2014). Emancipation and/or oppression? Conceptualizing dimensions of criticality in entrepreneurship studies. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 20(2), 98-107.

Vered, A. (Eds.) (2000). Constructing the field: ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary world. London: Routledge.

Wee, L. & Brooks, A. (2012). Negotiating gendered subjectivity in the enterprise culture: Metaphor and entrepreneurial discourses. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 19(6), 573-591.

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society, 1*(2), 125–151.

Table 1: Ways of playing and forms of play in Freja and the Moon House

	Freja	**Moon House**
WAYS OF PLAY		
paidia (rule-less)	Downplayed, Illegitimate	Dominating, Legitimate
ludus (rule-bound)	Dominating, Legitimate	Downplayed, Illegitimate
FORMS OF PLAY		
agôn (competitive games)	Competition for tender on the market. Competition of ideas in seeking to have own ideas implemented in the county council maternity care.	Preliminary study stating the project is technically possible and economically viable. Investing in technology and engineers of next generation. Engineers competing with time and with limited resources.
alea (games of chance)	Giving Pilates balls to the labor ward, to see it they would be used.	Success of Moon House is outside a person's control. Sponsor package (Moon House paintings value can increase). Engineers using experimental methods to find new materials and technical solutions.
mimicry (play to escape oneself)	Assisting in a delivery situation. Demonstrating moves at the pool-side. Identify with and joke about the heavy pregnant bellies.	County governor wearing red paper house on his head. Political strategist driving an electric bike in the studio. Astronauts playing with a small cardboard house at ISS.
ilinx *(*play where stability and perception of reality is temporarily suspended)	Meditating and guiding meditations. Simulating a woman giving birth.	Enticing people to take part in project work. Events, meetings, dinners, merry-go rounds, parties and cocktails. County governor wearing red paper house on his head Political strategist driving an electric bike in the studio. Red house floating in space.