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The moral of the story: 'populism' and 'activism' in entrepreneurship

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ABSTRACT

This paper engages with the concepts of 'populism' and 'activism' in entrepreneurial storytelling in order to explain how entrepreneurship may be both an individual and a collective endeavour. Through a case study of a moose park, we show how entrepreneurs move back and forth between individualism and collectivism with what seems to be little forethought. Our findings suggest that populism and activism function as a duality that essentially serves two purposes: populism reinforces the entrepreneur stereotype, highlighting the individual entrepreneur's business venture; whilst activism challenges stereotypes, initiating new meaning, and social and ecological value change. Embeddedness appears a necessary condition for both these processes – the social connections in context affect the possibilities to initiate change, whether individualist or collectivist. Thus, we contribute to entrepreneurship as practice by showing how storytelling both strengthens and changes social context; and how storytelling alters depending on the social context, and the different forms of embeddedness in it.

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Entrepreneurship as practice; rural entrepreneurship; activism; populism; storytelling

1. Introduction

> It all began with a phone call from his cousin. A moose calf's mother had been killed in traffic – could he help? Otherwise they would have to kill it. He made a quick decision: he would take care of the calf. He called his brother, borrowed a horse trailer, and went to pick up the calf. The calf died only a few days later, but the experience had made a long-lasting impression. The captivating mystery of moose needed to be shown to humans.

To what extent entrepreneurship is either an individual or a collective endeavour is contentious in entrepreneurship theory and practice. Does the above vignette capture the entrepreneurial story of a single male protagonist, or does it portray the individual and group aspects of an entrepreneurial process? In this paper we explore the idea of how entrepreneurial practice may in fact be *both* an individual and a collective endeavour. We conduct a case study of a moose park venture, as we believe it stands out for an unusually strong and multifaceted entrepreneurial narrative. This case is interesting because it shows, on the one hand, how a venture engages with entrepreneurial stories that lean towards individualism, e.g. by stressing the importance and uniqueness of one of its business founders, the male protagonist in the vignette. On the other hand, however, the park also highlights the importance of collective entrepreneurial practice and value creation (Anderson 2000) – it would never have become the myth it is today without the efforts of family, employees, friends, and others.

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We take on the quest of exploring entrepreneurship as both individual and collective through a study of entrepreneurial stories. Such stories are fundamentally important to entrepreneurs (Hjorth 2007; Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Pollack, Rutherford, and Nagy 2012), but what do they imply for how things get done in entrepreneurship? In our examination of this conundrum, we turn to the literature on narrative, embeddedness and Entrepreneurship as Practice (EaP). Through this theoretical lens, we see entrepreneurial storytelling as an embedded and embedding practice, influenced by the social settings in which it occurs.

In our investigation of how individualism and collectivism are enacted through storytelling in entrepreneurship, we have identified populism and activism as fundamental elements. The entrepreneur has been described as an actor who partakes in different 'language-games' (Dimov 2020), through which different forms of meaning (Weick 1995) materialize. Here, we introduce a populist-activist duality in order to study how the entrepreneur and others engage in these games, naturally moving back and forth between populist and activist narratives with little apparent calculation. Broadly speaking, we use populism to refer to individualistic positions; to self-serving stories told within existing structures that resonate with the meaning of the overarching meta-narratives and myths of the individual entrepreneur. We use activism to refer to storytelling of a collective nature; to narrative practice that breaks with the canonical storylines of individual heroes, moving beyond the individual towards new forms of value creation, change, collaboration and altruism. To explore to what extent entrepreneurship is either individual or collective, we illustrate and explain how populism and activism work as an inevitable but fundamental duality of entrepreneurship as practice, taking different forms depending on the social context.

Thus far, research has typically engaged with the connections of a limited number of actors and practices, e.g. how entrepreneurs 'legitimate', 'network', 'pitch', 'sell', et cetera (Johannisson 2018), in context. Our intention is to do things a little differently in this paper. We explore the moose park context through a twofold methodology, combining a critical narrativist approach with a practice-based approach to, in the first step, trace populist and activist forms of meaning (Weick 1995) that emerge in the practices of storying in our case. What happened, and who was involved in the creation of the park? How are the events that occurred accounted for, and how is meaning given to them through populist and activist stories? How can storytelling help us investigate the becoming of the park? In the next step, we put together the recurring events into a coherent narrative, and explain the populist and activist storylines that materialized. Through this recompositing analysis, we show how entrepreneurial storytelling consists of a spectrum of embedd*ed* populist practices that draw from the existing social context to the benefit of the actors in it; and embedd*ing* activist practices that bring change to context through a social process. Thus, we respond to Champenois, Lefebvre and Ronteau's (2020, p. 302) recent call to shift away from an 'entrepreneur-as-practitioner perspective' to a 'multiple-practitioner perspective within the entrepreneurial ecosystem'.

Against this backdrop, the following research questions materialize:

RQ1. How are 'populism' and 'activism' in entrepreneurship enacted through entrepreneurial storytelling?

RQ2. How do social settings and structures engender 'populist' and 'activist' storytelling in entrepreneurship?

By exploring these questions, we aim to contribute understanding to how entrepreneurship is both individual and collective. Our findings suggest that when entrepreneurs tell stories, i.e. partake in different language-games, they move back and forth between populism and activism. Entrepreneurs both strengthen and question socialized rules and structures, for the benefit of both themselves and others. The analysis suggests that embeddedness is a necessary condition for both these processes – one's position and connections in context affect the possibilities to initiate change, whether individualist or collectivist. Moreover, key events are important to any story, but how they are used, and what role they are given, may vary – the events will be 'calibrated' (Dimov 2020) depending on the language-game. This because stories are co-constructed. Storytelling is an ever-changing practice, altering depending on the social context of the language-game, and the different

forms of embeddedness in it. Consequently, we conclude that populism and activism function as a duality that facilitates the initiation of both individualist and collectivist change in different contexts.

To attain the above findings and contributions, the paper has been arranged according to the following design. Section 2 delivers a theoretical backdrop to our three chosen bodies of literature, that is narrative, embeddedness and EaP, as well as an elaboration on our populist-activist framework. Section 3 addresses the employed research design and methods. Section 4 introduces the moose park narrative and provides an empirical analysis. Section 5 summaries the study findings. Section 6 discusses the findings and draws a conclusion. Finally, Section 7 outlines an agenda for future research.

2. Theoretical framework

Our literature review borrows from writings in the social, narrative and practice turns of entrepreneurship. We begin by outlining the key aspects of the literatures with which we intend to engage. Thereafter, we depart from this theorizing in order to introduce a populist-activist frame, which we use in order to investigate entrepreneurial storytelling as a multidimensional practice, depending on the interconnections in the social context.

2.1. Narratives, stories and language-games in entrepreneurship

What constitutes narrative research is somewhat marked by confusion (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014). Yet, it is safe to say that 'narrative' is evolving into an increasingly important strand in entrepreneurship, offering new perspectives for exploring the 'prosaic aspects' (Larty and Hamilton 2011, 220) of our field of study (see Down 2006; Downing 2005; Gartner 2007; Hjorth and Steyaert 2004; Lounsbury, Gehman, and Glynn 2019). In fact, some have stated that we should speak about a narrative turn in entrepreneurship research (Hjorth 2007).

The emerging research field explores how meaning is brought about (Weick 1995). More specifically, narrative is the study of how retrospective accounts are used in order to explain surprises (Louis 1980), and how different accounts of an experience are connected into a larger whole (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014, 1181). This interconnection of accounts may contrast, depending on the context in which it is produced (Larty and Hamilton 2011). Thus, the narrative perspective does not begin with assumptions or hypotheses regarding the social setting that is being investigated (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014). Instead, it is devoted to interpretation of its place-specific relations and practices, to the 'standards and rules for perceiving, interpreting, believing and acting that are typically used in a given cultural setting' (Sackman, 1991, p. 33, quoted in Weick 1995).

Stories are crucial elements of the above interconnection practices. Stories link events 'in the interest of meaning' (Weick 1995, 129), reducing ambiguity and uncertainty (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001). By drawing on the larger social structures in which it is produced – e.g. accepted discourses, myths, meta-narratives, collective memories, etc. – storying has the potential to describe and attain meaning to both the past, the present and the future (Weick 1995, 111). In entrepreneurship, stories may be embedded in a variety of such structures (Larty and Hamilton 2011), helping in the creation of coherent identities for the entrepreneurs and their ventures (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001). Common examples here are myths of masculinity (Calás, Smircich, and Bourne 2009), supernaturality (Nicholson and Anderson 2005), individualism (Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson 2007), heroism (Garmann Johnsen and Meier Sørensen 2017) and self-improvement (Berglund 2013). Yet, as suggested by Watson (2009), entrepreneurs may not draw only on myths institutionalized in entrepreneurship. Although this appears less researched, it has been suggested, for instance, that emphasizing of the 'otherness' of rurality (Anderson 2000), and romancing of the idyllic landscape (Gaddefors and Anderson 2019), constitute strong storylines in rural entrepreneurship, thus again pointing to the importance of context in narrative research.

Narrative has recently connected the above interdependent practices to Ludwig Wittgenstein's idea of a 'language-game' (Dimov 2020), defined by the philosopher himself as 'language and the actions into which it is woven' (Wittgenstein 1958, 8). Wittgenstein's ontology is often described as 'relational' (Shotter 1997, 5) or 'practical' (Shotter and Tsoukas 2018, 82), offering a new perspective on 'our connectedness and relatedness' (Shotter 1997, 3). Reality is, in this line of thought, not *inherent* in individuals; it happens in the ever-changing spaces *between* them, and through their interactions (ibid.). Collective meanings become embedded in practices, not vice versa (Tsoukas 2018a, 27). By partaking in a language game, actors synchronize practice through the language they use, and the stories they tell, in the here and now (Dimov 2020). Reality is imbued with different meaning, 'calibrated' (ibid., p. 348) depending on the other actors in the language-game, and their interdependency: 'words provide a practical guide for action (. . .) from which meanings are to be made' (Rindova, Becerra, and Contardo 2004, 2004).

Thus, the language-game entails that accounting of entrepreneurial experiences may be enacted in different ways, creating different larger wholes through which different meaning arises (Dimov 2020). Entrepreneurs may mould and shape entrepreneurship in order to create value (Anderson 2000) and trigger action towards ever-changing goals (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014; Garud, Schildt, and Lant 2014), giving different meaning to events in the past: 'whatever is occurring at the moment will influence what is being discovered when people glance backward. (. . .) Meanings change as current projects and goals change'. (Weick 1995, 26–27) One common example of how experiences could be accounted for in language-games is through the ad hoc stories, the so called 'small narratives' (Hjorth and Steyaert 2004, 4) that entrepreneurs share and co-develop in everyday interactions with customers, employees, and other stakeholders. Another is the more scripted narratives, including formal business meetings with investors (Martens, Jennings, and Jennings 2007), business plans, press releases, web communication and pitches (Teague, Gorton, and Liu 2020). This also comprises the actions entrepreneurs perform together with others, such as customer cultivation, capital raising, and product development (Garud and Karnøe 2003).

Stories enacted in language-games may open doors in entrepreneurs' daily interactions with various important stakeholders (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001). Stories also appear to be significant for building legitimacy in entrepreneurship, facilitating the seizing of market opportunities and new capital (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Martens, Jennings, and Jennings 2007). For instance, the entrepreneur's ability to deliver a business pitch that captures both 'the what' and 'the how' correlates with how much funding she/he receives (Pollack, Rutherford, and Nagy 2012). As noted by Lounsbury and Glynn (2001, 549): 'Entrepreneurs must be skilled cultural operators who shape interpretations of the nature and potential of their new venture to those who may supply needed resources'. Thus, the credibility and legitimacy of entrepreneurs, and the perception of the value created through their ventures, seem to be related to how they partake in the language-game (Anderson 2000; Dimov 2020; Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Lounsbury, Gehman, and Glynn 2019); to their ability to position themselves as characters in a story (Larty and Hamilton 2011).

In sum, stories are important for many of the interdependent and continuously changing daily actions, practices and processes in entrepreneurship. Narrative attaches considerable importance to context, facilitating exploring these elements in detail. The perspective sees entrepreneurial storytelling as more than presentation of facts. Rather, stories are eloquent 're-presentation' (Smith and Anderson 2004, 127). This is done through fluid, shifting accounts (Martens, Jennings, and Jennings 2007) of the interconnected and interdependent events that entrepreneurs and others undertake in language-games in different contexts. Together, the various modes of written and spoken storytelling help entrepreneurs construct narratives that shape how others view and understand them, reveal who they are (Martens, Jennings, and Jennings 2007), and who they can become. This implies that entrepreneurs are neither accepting nor rejecting (a) reality. Rather, they are people that

contextualize entrepreneurship through written and spoken narratives. Reality is imbued with different meaning, which is 'calibrated' (Dimov 2020, 348) depending on the other actors in the language-game, their interdependency, and the smaller and larger social context.

2.2. Embeddedness in entrepreneurship

As the other actors in the entrepreneurial language-game (Dimov 2020) are important, as well as the shifting interconnections and interdependencies in the smaller and larger social context, we connect narrative with works on embeddedness. The concept was introduced by Karl Polanyi in his highly influential work *The Great Transformation* (Polanyi 1957), referring to 'top-down context effects' (Welter 2011, 175), more specifically the extent to which non-economic institutions constrain economic practice. Embeddedness was later elaborated on in sociology, as part of a critique of the 'under-socialised' nature of neoclassical economics (Granovetter 1985). Economic activity is not driven by 'atomised' (ibid., p. 482) individuals that 'start a business in a vacuum' (Aldrich and Cliff 2003, 577). Rather, it comes about through social and organizational interaction in context (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986). Thus, embeddedness, too, is relational (Shotter 1997, 5) and practical (Shotter and Tsoukas 2018, 82), stressing 'connections between organisational and institutional changes' (Tsoukas 2018b, 105).

In more recent decades, embeddedness has found its place in entrepreneurship studies, becoming an important player of the contextualized view on entrepreneurship (Welter 2011; Gaddefors and Anderson 2017, 2019; Korsgaard, Ferguson, and Gaddefors 2015). Studies on embeddedness have emphasized, inter alia, the smaller and larger social and societal structures, resources, sites and spaces in change processes (Jack and Anderson 2002; Kloosterman 2010; Smith and Stevens 2010), family considerations (Aldrich and Cliff 2003), the local links entrepreneurs must establish and maintain with stakeholders (Uzzi 1997) in and through their daily activities, and the importance of social context in the shaping of entrepreneurial practice (Welter 2011; Welter and Baker 2021).

Inspired by Granovetter's view (1985), embeddedness sees entrepreneurship as not merely enacted through the economic logic of a self-interested entrepreneur (McKeever, Jack, and Anderson 2015), conducting 'rational calculations of individual gain' (Granovetter, p. 482). In other words, change is not merely brought about by economic practice, performed in an isolated silo. Although this is important, the economic dimension is here also connected with, and interdependent of, localized and spatial dimensions, such as connections in the local social network, and people's position in it (Jack and Anderson 2002; McKeever, Jack, and Anderson 2015; Tsoukas 2018b, 115). This also includes moving social norms and values in the social context (Berglund, Gaddefors, and Lindgren 2016). If participants are to enact a social practice, they must engage with these local sets of rules: 'To be embedded into a background is to experience one's situation in terms of *already* (italics original) formed meanings and values'. (Tsoukas 2018c, 446).

Albeit rules can be concrete directions for conduct, they can just as often be abstract and subject to ongoing evolution and adaptation. How else can we pragmatically explain how 'bottom-up effects' influence context (Welter 2011)? As stated by Jack and Anderson (2002, 471), 'the capacity to modify the rule is an ever-present possibility'. This denotes participants of entrepreneurial language-games can *both* be guided by the rules in context, *and* bend the rules when they draw on them. Thus, since socialized rules and social networks guide practice, but simultaneously can be moulded and reshaped, we advocate an interpretation of everyday entrepreneurship as both 'reinforcing' (Roos 2019) and 'provoking' (Berglund, Gaddefors, and Lindgren 2016).

To sum up, the embeddedness view sees engagement with rules in context as a socialized process (Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson 2007; Gaddefors and Anderson 2017). Engaging with rules (either by playing or not playing by the book) is to collectively partake in a practice (Sandberg and Tsoukas 2018, 365) in context. Embeddedness shapes, directs and informs this practice, whether through restriction or facilitation. Thus, entrepreneurship is economic *and* social 're-entanglement' (McKeever, Jack, and Anderson 2015, 52) of values (Anderson 2000), brought about *both* by

entrepreneurs *and* their economic and social relationships with other actors, and the social context they are embedded in (Anderson 2000; Jack and Anderson 2002). Moreover, the links embedded in context are *local* connections (Anderson, Drakopoulou Dodd, and Jack 2012; Jack, Drakopoulou Dodd, and Anderson 2008), and thus the effects of embeddedness are highly space-specific (Jack and Anderson 2002). They shape the perceived room for manoeuvre in everyday entrepreneurship in the local, dictating the rules of the language-game, how stories could and should be calibrated, and thus the becoming of embeddedness.

2.3. Practice in entrepreneurship

Lastly, we bridge narrative and embeddedness with Entrepreneurship as Practice (EaP) in order to investigate how storytelling is embedded in everyday entrepreneurship, that is how the perceived room for manoeuvre is used on a day-to-day basis in the social context. EaP has subsequently gained increasing momentum over the last decade, and practice in entrepreneurship has been invoked in several other regards. Just as is the case with narrative and embeddedness, 'Entrepreneurship as Practice' may mean many different things. It is indeed a disparate strand of literature, drawing from, for instance, social practice theory, theory of practice, discourse theory, ANT approaches, social constructionism, and works in entrepreneurship studies on embeddedness, narrative and context (for an overview, see Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020). However, despite this heterogeneity, it is a distinct ontology (ibid.). It is possibly best described as 'Post-Wittgensteinian' (Schatzki 1996), as it is heavily influenced by Wittgenstein's idea of the agent as 'engaged in practices, as a being who acts in and on a world' (Taylor, 1991, p. 308, quoted in Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018). Society is as a practical relationship (Giddens 1993, 22), in which 'existence', 'being', 'becoming', etc., are interdependent of, and interconnected with, languages, practices, rules and relations embedded in context and consciousness (Schatzki 1996, pp. 147–157). Thus, as claimed by the practice theorists Bourdieu (1990) and Giddens (1984), whose works are proving influential in EaP, reality is organized around an understanding of agency and structure as liquid, co-dependent phenomena. Agency and structure interact with each other in different ways through a number of symbiotic practices, which are 'made durable by being inscribed in human bodies and minds, objects and texts' (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020, 283).

Because of this interdependency and interconnectedness, an increasing number of researchers have reached the conclusion that entrepreneurs can foresee very little in terms of what will emerge from their actions, and how said actions will shape structure in the future (see Fisher 2012; Keating, Geiger, and McLoughlin 2014). Today, scholars of EaP argue that entrepreneurship cannot be considered something that is performed by rational entrepreneurs who exercise agency, nor by 'script-determined agents' (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020, 284). Rather, entrepreneurs should be thought of as agents amongst others. Entrepreneurs partake in the language-game together with others embedded in the social context, collectively influencing outcomes (Sandberg and Tsoukas 2018) and creating values (Anderson 2000). This implies that calibration in language-games (Dimov 2020) is not an action of the individual entrepreneur, but rather a social process of collaborative nature. This reasoning is often anchored in the seminal works of Theodore Schatzki (1996, 2005), which postulates that individuals are informed and guided by local structures and actors. Entrepreneurs are people who know what to say or do regardless of the setting, although they do not necessarily know what they will say and do in advance. Thus, there is room for spontaneity (Tsoukas 2018b, 110), improvisation and ad hoc performance, e.g. engagement in small narratives. As argued by Goffman (1959, 80), another important thinker in the field of 'practice': 'The legitimate performances of everyday life are not "acted" or "put on" in the sense that the performer knows in advance just what he is going to do and does it solely because of the effect it is likely to have. (. . .) In short, we all act better than we know how'.

Thus, entrepreneurs are neither rational decision-makers, nor governed by culture. Rather, they say and do what makes the most sense to them at a certain time, at a certain place (McKeever, Anderson, and Jack 2014; Terjesen and Elam 2009). This understanding of the entrepreneur, and her/his role in entrepreneurship, has come to turn practices into activity entanglements (Nicolini 2012). Together, these entanglements (and re-entanglements) sum up daily life and organizational and societal change. This means that organization of practices – the narratives created through the many modes of storytelling, inspired by socialized rules – should not be seen as the property of individuals (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and Savigny 2001).

2.4. Explaining the connections

We borrow from narrative, practice and embeddedness in order to investigate how individualism and collectivism are enacted through storytelling in a moose park context. As we see it, there are several reasons for doing this. First, embeddedness (Jack and Anderson 2002) helps explain how and why action may take different forms, depending on the social context, and the entanglements of social relationships in it. Locally socialized rules direct and inform practice (McKeever, Jack, and Anderson 2015; Welter 2011), although there is always room for provoking them, embedding new rules in context. Second, a narrative view (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014) offers a basis for exploring practices and processes across contexts under this premise. This because the language-game (Dimov 2020; Shotter 1997) is seen as interdependent upon both the smaller and larger social context (Larty and Hamilton 2011). Lastly, incorporating EaP (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020), that is entrepreneurship as a social practise with many different participants and outputs, facilitates moving away from the individual storytelling entrepreneur towards collaborative processes and outcomes. Storytelling is about co-dependent entrepreneurial calibration, allowing for different meaning to arise, depending on the situation. We depart from this understanding of practice and context in entrepreneurship when we explore the various modes of storytelling entrepreneurs engage with. The language-game is not solitaire, but rather team sports. Entrepreneurs engage with a broad spectrum of practices in a social structure occupied by others (Aldrich and Cliff 2003), influencing social and economic values (Anderson 2000) in different ways.

2.5. Introducing a populist-activist duality

Informed by the above theorizing, we posit that entrepreneurial storytelling is ultimately two different things: it is (i) an embedded and (ii) an embedding practice. Stories are occasionally embedded in accepted rules. In other instances they provoke them, embedding change (new meaning and practice) in context. By holding onto this idea, we now introduce a populist-activist framework, which is henceforth used for exploring how entrepreneurial storytelling both draws and deviates from socialized rules when entrepreneurs participate in language-games.

2.5.1. Populism

Populism is, in political science, typically referred to as the pitting of one group – 'the people' – against another – 'the elites'. The populist strives to initiate resource allocation within context for the individualistic good of the former group (Morelock 2018, p. xiv). To us, populism refers to practices which entrepreneurs perform in order to change what happens within a given context, for individualistic purposes. It is thereby not about initiating change or new meaning, but rather about resource allocation, which is achieved through the exploitation and reinforcement (Roos 2019) of rules (Jack and Anderson 2002), i.e. embedd*ed* practice in context. To clarify, populism is, for instance, storytelling that steers the language-game by drawing on the accepted myths in entrepreneurship (see e.g. Berglund 2013; Calás, Smircich, and Bourne 2009; Drakopoulou Dodd and

Anderson 2007; Garmann Johnsen and Meier Sørensen 2017; Nicholson and Anderson 2005), influencing others, facilitating access to political elites (Tedmanson et al. 2012), and changing practice for what seems to be for the benefit of the individual entrepreneur.

Table 1. Illustrates how populism and activism will be employed conceptually.

Table 2. Gives empirical examples of how populism and activism may be used henceforth, as well as the explanatory value of the concepts.

Table 1. A populist-activist duality in entrepreneurial language-games.

Element	Populism	Activism	Together, they are ...
Context	Reinforcing	Provoking	Influence of structure, initiated by various actors
Practice	Embedded	Embedding	Co-dependent phenomena, inscribed in various actors
Stories	Individual	Collective	Re-presentation through fluid, shifting accounts
Essence	Rule-exploiting resource allocation, seemingly for individualistic purposes	Rule-bending and -changing practice that may facilitate structural change in context	A multifaceted duality, containing individualist and collectivist practice

2.5.2. Activism

Activism has been defined by political scientists as collective bottom-up change processes, as 'collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities' (Meyer and Tarrow 1998, 4). Typically, such action emerges through different groups embedded in context (Curtis and Zurcher 1973); it is initiated by collectives tied together by interpersonal networks with common goals, targets, and ideologies (Diani 1995; Gerlach and Hine 1970). In our interpretation, it is through such collective rule-bending (Jack and Anderson 2002) that new meaning primarily emerges in context, which by extension may re-entangle (McKeever, Jack, and Anderson 2015, 52) its structures. Thus, activism is embedd*ing* practice in context, provoking (Berglund, Gaddefors, and Lindgren 2016) societal norms and attitudes; initiating social, ecological and economic value change.

3. A methodology for studying the practice of narratives

Our methodology is based on a qualitative case study of entrepreneurial storytelling with a critical approach. Single case study analysis is now and again called into question, some of the most common criticisms being concerned with external validity and researcher subjectivity (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018, 27; Flyvbjerg 2006). However, as suggested by Flyvbjerg (2006, 223), 'there does not and probably cannot exist predictive theory in social science'. Consequently, producing context-dependent knowledge ought to be the goal; and digging into the subtleties and 'essentials' (Alvesson and Deetz 2000, 153) of a single case allows for the researcher to reach this goal.

By entertaining this notion, our overarching objective in this study has been to understand how individualism and collectivism materialize through storytelling practice by investigating the 'who' and the 'what' in context (Welter 2011; Welter and Baker 2021). Our intentions have not been to measure phenomena, develop hypotheses, nor make statistical generalizations, but rather to reveal and use the 'rich ambiguity' of a case (Flyvbjerg 2006) in reflexive interpretation (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018).

Table 2. Populism and activism in entrepreneurial language-games.

Lens	Descriptive		Analytical
Element	Populism	Activism	Together, they amount to . . .
Entrepreneurship	'My determination and perseverance are what have made it, why I succeed in many things. It is not just the moose park, although it is the most famous'. 'If you have an idea, you must not listen to too many others. You have to have it somewhere; you have to be so strong in yourself'. 'I felt I should be the best'.	'She (Charlotte) and I have done this together. (. . .) I could not have done this myself. It's a dream team'. 'Focus: moose. The moose should feel good, and that's the important thing. People see this'. 'I'm a big part of this, but they (the visitors) do not come here for me. They come here for the moose'.	Meanings of 'entrepreneurship'
Embeddedness	'Everyone who said that about my moose park, that "this is not possible, this will never work", made me even more determined. (. . .) "Damn, you'll see, this will work!" I got so turned on that I probably did not run on two legs, I probably ran on four legs. I became a moose'.	'Animal rights in society have become more and more important. (. . .) People come here and see that the animals are well'. 'You get so much energy from people (visitors)'.	Embeddedness influencing entrepreneurship
Practice	'I told them (the local authorities) that "you have handled this damn badly (the permission process). You have been the worst! (. . .) This is the Moose Man; you have met the completely wrong person! He never gives up". "We have come to understand that", they said'. 'People may come and say, "today there will be money earned". "Yes", I say, "today there will be money earned". It's this jealousy, this Jante law. (. . .) Those who say this do not dare anything. It is the small, small people who only have their small, small things'.	'There's no circus out here. The animals are here, and they live here. They come forward and greet us if they want to. That's the important thing, I think'. 'It's a blessing to make people on the waggons happy. They must not leave here and be dissatisfied'. 'I have known my moose since they were little and have therefore created a special bond with each of them. They are all different individuals with different personalities, and I want to convey that to the visitors'.	Nature of day-to-day entrepreneurship
Structure	'And why did I buy a yellow Corvette. I wanted to show that I can afford to buy this Corvette. My old woman said "Dare . . . " "Hell yes, I dare! I've worked for this money. And now I want a yellow Corvette"'.	'I really should have become someone who stands on the barricades, and actually was an animal rights activist'. 'I do not see it as a job (managing the park). I see it as a lifestyle. It's like for the cow farmers, they live with this. It's a lifestyle'.	Reinforcement/provocation of the 'rules of the game'.
Inquiry	How does the entrepreneur end up in the spotlight?	How does collective value change come about?	RQ1; RQ2
Illuminative value	How self-interests are facilitated by rules embedded in social contexts.	How collective practice embeds change in social contexts.	Why and how individualism and collectivism are enacted in entrepreneurship theory and practice.

3.1. Choice of case

We conducted a case study of a moose park venture located in a rural Swedish municipality, spanning between 2017 and 2021. Anderson (2000) suggests that entrepreneurial processes, practices, events, and the creation of new value, are often more clearly observed in the rural, e.g. owing to that context is less dense; and because rural entrepreneurship tends to include distinct and visible reshaping of heritage and tradition. As we wanted to explore how different forms of value come about through entrepreneurial storytelling, the case thus appeared a suitable choice for our specific

Table 3. Employed methods and material value

Method	Actor	Quantity	Year	Category	Value
Interviews	The Moose Man	3	2017–2018	'Small' stories (Hjorth & Steyaert, 2004)	How entrepreneurs shape entrepreneurial narratives on a day-to-day basis.
Digital observations	Facebook page	1	2017–2021		
Meetings' participation	The Moose Man	2	2017–2018		
Observations	The Moose Park	2	2017–2018		
Podcast episode	The Moose Man	1	2020		
News media analysis	Daily newspapers	10	2017–2021	'Scripted' stories (Martens, Jennings, & Jennings, 2007)	How entrepreneurs formally shape entrepreneurial narratives.
Website analysis	The Moose Park	1	2017–2021		

inquiry. Another reason for selecting the moose park was because it is known for its entrepreneurial narrative, offering us many 'small' (Hjorth and Steyaert 2004) and 'scripted' (Martens, Jennings, and Jennings 2007) stories about these change processes, and past, present and future meanings attached to them. The quotes reproduced in this paper, collected from these stories, have been translated from Swedish by us, the authors.

Primary empirical material was gathered from a series of interviews and formal and informal meetings with the 'Moose Man', and through observations in the park (Alvesson 2003). Additional material was collected through news media, podcast and website analyses, and digital observations (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018; Czarniawska 2007), including material from the moose park's website and Facebook page, and from interviews with the Moose Man in some of the most well-known daily newspapers in Sweden. Table 3. details what, how, when and why material was collected.

3.2. Gathering a rich case

When gathering and gaining an initial understanding of our case material, we employed practice theory and methodology. In line with a practice approach, we used a range of techniques and methods, including interviews, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, and participant observation, to capture activities and processes, and the meanings attributed to them (Nicolini 2012). Helped by this literature, we departed on a moose tour through time and space, wondering how it came to be that a moose park was built in rural Sweden.

Thereafter, the material was deconstructed. What had happened, who was involved, and who had done and said what? Or expressed in another way, how had the moose park used retrospective accounts in order to explain what had happened (Louis 1980), and how did it give meaning to these events (Weick 1995) through individualism and collectivism? In other words, how were the entrepreneurial language-games (Dimov 2020) being played? In order to explore these questions more deeply, we chose specific stories that met at least one of the following criteria:

(i) The story was concerned with altruism and social value change and/or self-centrism;
(ii) The story raised interest or entertained;
(iii) The story was concerned with individual and/or collective experiences.

3.3. Material analysis

Our analysis was guided by a critically reflexive approach (Alvesson 2002; Fletcher 2006; Gartner 2007). This ensured that insights from the field were brought forward in the final results, rather than being passed over in favour of established theories and publishing traditions (Duberley and Johnson 2009; Parker and Thomas 2011). The analysis was based on formulating storylines (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2018), linking what was said and done inside the entrepreneurship discourse, and the social context, with insights and theories from the academic discourse. This analysis began with

Table 4. How storylines developed in the analysis process.

Stories to be analysed	1st-cycle coding	Phase 2 coding	Phase 3 coding	Storyline
'Everyone I talked to said 'you're completely stupid. What the hell are you going to start up that for? Not a single person will show up'.	• Creativity • Individualism • Opportunity perception • Risk-taking • Stubbornness	• The entrepreneur as a hero, possessing unique individual abilities of determination and creativity.	Rule-exploiting through myths embedded in entrepreneurship.	*Successful moose business, and beyond*
'Getting so close to the mighty moose does something to us. Maybe you even get to touch them. And get to be touched (moved) yourself'.	• Wildlife • (New) perception of moose • Passion • Romanticism	• Entrepreneurship as social and ecological value creation.	Rule-bending and breaking, embedding change in entrepreneurship.	*Changing the meaning of moose, wildlife and entrepreneurship*

a first-cycle multiple coding of the stories, followed by two cycles of theorizing to arrive at an analytic storyline (Saldana 2013). Table 4. shows two examples of how a storyline materialized throughout the analysis process.

Through this analysis, we arrived at six distinct storylines. Thereafter, we used a narrative approach (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014) for sorting and putting together the storylines around recurring events, creating a single, coherent 'case narrative' that depicted how it came to be that a moose park was established in rural Sweden (Langley 1999). Table 5. illustrates how the case narrative emerged from our six storylines.

Narrative methodology is often used by researchers employing 'contextualist' or descriptive ('realistic tales') perspectives. The strategy involves the construction of 'a detailed story from the raw data' (Langley 1999, 695), with notable works including Pettigrew (1985, 1990), Johnson (1987) and Dawson (1994). Inspired by these readings, we aimed to reproduce a detailed but concise summary of the key anchor points of our six storylines in all their subtlety and ambiguity, facilitating explanation of the social context in which the storylines emerged. Our strategy deliberately evaded commitment to any specific recurring event – our intentions were to allow the reader to judge for her/himself whether or not the ideas could be transferred to other situations (Flyvbjerg 2006; Langley 1999). Our hopes are that our case narrative, together with the more detailed storylines, made it possible for readers to, through richness and complexity, understand the meanings (Weick 1995) of the many entrepreneurial phenomena we have seen and heard (Lincoln and Guba 1985, 359).

3.4. Reflexive comments on writing up 'the tale of an amoosement park'

We are rural entrepreneurship researchers. Our primary material here was initially collected for another project of rural entrepreneurship that we carried out between 2017 and 2021. However, as we dug deeper into the Moose Man's rural context, some interesting albeit unexpected aspects of the entrepreneurial process revealed themselves. We observed movement back and forth between individualism and collectivism, seemingly with little calculation or forethought. Intrigued, we decided to conduct further research in this context, revisiting the material collected for another purpose.

When conducting this study, we frequently discussed what actually makes a good story. We came to agree that even in a story told by a lone maverick (which we do not believe the Moose Man is), it is everything in between. Yet, society often finds it difficult to move past the individual. Habitually, focus is steered to the entrepreneur, when the story may in fact also be entangled with, and embedded in, a broad spectrum of collective processes and actors. We wanted to pay more attention to this. How could we capture individualism *and* collectivism in entrepreneurship as practice? With this question in mind, we decided to broaden our analysis, looking for answers in literature on populism and activism, where individualist and collectivist change processes are often addressed.

Table 5. How the case narrative developed in the analysis process.

Storyline						Narrative	
	Moose as business facilitator	*Breaking rules together with others*	*Moose entrepreneurship in practice*	*Changing the meaning of moose, wildlife and entrepreneurship*	*Moose as individuals*	*Successful moose business, and beyond*	*The tale of an amoosement park*
Recurring event	The moose calf experience; annual moose hunt with father	The Moose Man meeting Charlotte; scepticism in the local context	How the park was operated on a daily basis; the unique methods of the Moose Man	Moose as mythical creatures; near-spiritual experiences of visitors; agricultural legacy	The moose Amelia	Scepticism in the local context; the moose Amelia; the unique methods of the Moose Man; international media coverage	The moose calf experience; the Moose Man meeting Charlotte; scepticism in the local context; the unique methods of the Moose Man; moose as mythical creatures

In one sense, what we saw and heard was a classic tale of the business success of a single male entrepreneur. However, although the Moose Man was important, the results also suggested that so were the 'others'. The stories captured a collaborative process embedded in the moose park context. Change occurred, and value was created, through the efforts of other actors – brothers, wives, cousins and farmers – and because of existing social structures, such as hunting regulations and agricultural schools. We even came to experience how change was brought about by the moose themselves. Indeed, the unique life stories of the moose in the park have forever changed our perception of 'the king of the forest'. Through an empirical illustration, we re-enact what we have seen and heard in our study. We will now tell the story of how a moose park came into existence in a rural community, eventually becoming a local, regional and national phenomenon.

4. Case narrative and analysis

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first, we present an empirical illustration of how a moose park came into existence in rural Sweden, i.e. our own interpretation of the case narrative (Langley 1999). In the second section, we present six distinct storylines (Duberley and Johnson 2009; Parker and Thomas 2011) that, in our understanding, facilitated the development of the moose park's entrepreneurial narrative.

4.1. The tale of an amoosement park

Some 20 years ago, the Moose Man received a moose calf whose mother had been killed in traffic. The Moose Man's cousin worked as a police officer in the region and thought that he should take care of the calf – otherwise they would have to kill it. The Moose Man called his brother, borrowed a horse trailer and went to pick up the calf. Unfortunately, as is often the case when calves lose their mothers, the calf died only five days later. Yet their brief acquaintance came to make a long-lasting impression.

Soon, the idea of bringing moose into contact with humans was born. The Moose Man's then-wife thought the idea was complete and utter lunacy, as did the people in the village. Although his friends and acquaintances made the Moose Man hesitant about whether he should go ahead with it, he could not let go of the idea.

Fifteen years ago, the Moose Man met his current wife, Charlotte, with whom he came to realize his dream of creating a moose park. The couple were lucky to have attended agricultural school, and to have experience with animals from their upbringing in agricultural environments. Together, they applied for permission to start up the business, and they took a few necessary courses. In the mid-2000s, after much struggle with bureaucracy and practicalities, the couple finally opened up the park.

With time, the park has developed an understanding of what managing moose amounts to. In the wild, moose cows are deadly if someone gets between her and her calf. Thus when the moose are first born, the Moose Man makes sure to be with the moose calves around the clock; he visits them continuously during the first weeks and watches how the cow behaves towards her calf. This method guarantees that moose come and greet every guided tour, giving the visitors a unique experience.

When all is said and done, it is not surprising that the rumour about the business has spread, and that a myth has come to surround it. In the park, people and moose are part of each other's lives. Together, they are friends, herd, and family – something that, after lengthy hesitation, seems to have finally convinced the local citizens, too.

4.2. Case analysis

This paper displays how various degrees of individualism and collectivism may materialize through storytelling when people decide to create a moose park in a rural Swedish community. Six distinct storylines emerged through the analysis of the empirical material, namely: 'moose as business

facilitator'; 'breaking the rules together with others'; 'moose entrepreneurship in practice'; 'changing the meaning of moose, wildlife and entrepreneurship'; 'moose as individuals'; and 'successful moose business, and beyond'. Helped by our populist-activist duality, the storylines were thereafter categorized and analysed in terms of prevalence of populism and activism.

4.2.1 Moose as business facilitator

In the stories depicting how the idea of a moose park came into existence, our analysis suggested that the Moose Man's experience with the moose calf was the fundamental recurring event connected into the larger whole (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014) that was the moose park narrative. These stories were typically observed in the interviews we conducted, and in newspaper articles. It was also prevalent on the moose park's website, as captured in this quote:

> It all started many years ago when the Moose Man, who was a hunter at the time, was asked to take care of a moose calf that had lost its mother in a traffic accident. He brought the calf home and took care of it for a week, but then it unfortunately died, despite all the care. There the dream of a moose park was born within the Moose Man.

In the interviews, the Moose Man elaborated on his brief acquaintance with the moose calf. He had been interested in animals, particularly moose, since early childhood. As a little boy, he left school to accompany his dad on the annual moose hunt, although he cried every time his father shot a moose. His fascination for the animals was always greater than his interest in the hunt; and he had always harboured great fascination for the majestic and rare animals that can only be found in a few countries in the world. Subsequently, when he took care of the calf, the Moose Man came to appreciate how difficult moose were to understand: 'A captivating mystery surrounded them'. Thus, this seemingly life-changing event appeared to ascribe meaning (Weick 1995) to the development of this (at least to some) rather unorthodox venture. In these stories, moose, and more specifically the moose calf, 'touched' (Shotter and Tsoukas 2018, 84) us, facilitating development of the park. It was only after the experience with the moose calf that the Moose Man began to question whether he should continue pointing his rifle at moose.

As the storyline stressed the importance of other actors, and serendipity, in entrepreneurial processes, the storyline drew towards activism. Yet, the Moose Man had remained its key protagonist – a caring, creative and determined individual. Thus, the analysis also suggested that the story about the moose calf may simultaneously have served populist purposes, e.g. legitimacy construction (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Martens, Jennings, and Jennings 2007).

4.2.2 Breaking rules together with others

Another storyline that emerged through the analysis was rule-breaking, also primarily observed in the interviews and newspaper articles, the podcast episode, and on the moose park's website. When the Moose Man launched the idea of creating a moose park he was met with scepticism and confusion, both from his then-wife, and in the larger social context he was embedded in: 'Come on, not a single customer will show up!' Yet, despite the established social rules (Jack and Anderson 2002) – *one does not simply walk into moose business* – the Moose Man could not let go of the idea, once again pointing to his individual determination. However, as was the case in the 'moose as facilitator' storyline, other actors were depicted as fundamentally important for the business development (Aldrich and Cliff 2003) – here namely the Moose Man's second wife, Charlotte. A direct quote from the moose park's website:

> Then it took many years and a new woman in his life before the Moose Man and Charlotte were able to open the moose park in 2007, with Lucas and Isabella, born in 2006, as the first inhabitants of the 16 ha fence.

Charlotte did not actually believe in the project either, but she was prepared to help. Together, they applied for permission to start up the business, and they took a few necessary courses – another empirical example of the importance of 'others' in entrepreneurship, and how they may facilitate entrepreneurship in practice (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020).

4.2.3 Moose entrepreneurship in practice

Speaking of practice, another storyline that surfaced was how entrepreneurship was enacted on a day-to-day basis. We collected these stories through interviews, meetings, observations and web analysis – as previously explained, these methods are suitable for tracing practice (Nicolini 2012). Seemingly, this storyline was activist. Everyday activity in the park was described as a collective process, involving several actors and outcomes (Schatzki 1996, 2005; Sandberg and Tsoukas 2018). A few examples of practice (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020) often brought up as key in the park, include: the Moose Man and one of the employees drive the visitors around and take care of the tours; Charlotte is the multi-tasking coordinator, managing organization and administration, finance, online marketing and social media; an employee handles bookings and is responsible for the reception; another couple of employees sell coffee and help out in the reception; lastly, grandma bakes the pastries that they sell in the cafeteria.

However, 'moose in practice' was also depicted as a populist venture. Both the 'small' (Hjorth and Steyaert 2004) and 'scripted' (Martens, Jennings, and Jennings 2007) stories resonating with this storyline often paid considerable attention to the individual traits (Garmann Johnsen and Meier Sørensen 2017) of the Moose Man, and the unique methods he had developed over the years. Here is a direct quote capturing this individualism:

> The Moose Man does all the guided tours himself – unless he is ill, of course. He is a very committed and entertaining person who with life and desire speaks about his life and his company – it is difficult not to be smitten by his enthusiasm. And he's like a walking encyclopaedia when it comes to moose knowledge – you can ask about anything!

4.2.4 Changing the meaning of moose, wildlife and entrepreneurship

The next storyline that developed – primarily observed in interviews and through our digital observations – was resonating more strongly with activism than those brought up so far. In this storyline, the park seemed to strive towards ascribing new meanings (Weick 1995) to moose and entrepreneurship, on the basis of old ones (Anderson 2000). Through this, it was embedd*ing* new values in context. As the Moose Man put it:

> The moose is Europe's largest and heaviest member of the deer family, enchanting people from all countries, not least the Swedes. It is easy to understand why we are drawn to these grand animals. They stand out in the Swedish forests with their size, their broad, palmate antlers and their gracefully long legs. At the same time, they are mythical and there is a lot of emotional charge and mystery surrounding these animals within Nordic folklore, affecting us to this day. Unfortunately, few people get the chance to see a moose out in the wild.

The stories often departed from how the visitors noticed, and were heavily affected by, the Moose Man's closeness to the moose in the park – they were happy animals that enjoyed their lives with their keeper. Another quote from the Moose Man:

> Afterwards, they talk about a near-spiritual experience. I often hear it from older men who themselves are hunters, and who may have been a bit sceptical of visiting our park. By sharing all the knowledge I have accumulated over the years, I think they will get a new, deeper relationship with moose. I have known my moose since they were little and have therefore created a special bond with each of them. They are all different individuals with different personalities, and I want to convey that to the visitors.

Here are two comments from visitors, posted in the moose park's Facebook group, that resonate with this notion: 'Such beautiful and nice animals, one becomes completely ecstatic!'; 'One cannot help but be deeply impressed by these giant animals. It is purely magical since they live freely and can show up anywhere (in the park) when you are out in the woods'.

Another important part of this storyline was the importance of historical values (Anderson 2000) related to nature, wildlife, and agricultural legacy. Seemingly, the park saw it as essential to carry on knowledge about the rural (Gaddefors and Anderson 2019), e.g. how farm animals are cared for, and how land is managed. Thus, these stories easily steered towards other meta-narratives (Larty and

Hamilton 2011; Watson 2009) of 'life in the rural in a broader sense', as expressed by the Moose Man. A post in the Facebook group, highlighting this aspect: 'Discover the countryside (sic) there are many great places to visit when you are with us'.

4.2.5 Moose as individuals

The fifth storyline, emerging through the analysis of the interview and news article material, also depicted collective value change (Berglund, Gaddefors, and Lindgren 2016); or, more specifically, how moose should be understood as individuals in their own right. These, in our interpretation, highly activist stories, ascribing new meaning (Weick 1995) to moose, often circulated around one particular individual, namely the moose Amelia. When Amelia was five days old, she was dying. Her mother did not have enough milk, and thus abandoned her. When the Moose Man saw Amelia getting thinner, he made a decision: the family would take Amelia in and take care of her. The family set up Amelia in a playroom downstairs and this room became the moose's new home. Soon, the young moose had become like a member of the family. After four months, it was time for Amelia to move out and live with the other moose. In the beginning, she was terrified of the other moose in the park. With time, however, she became accustomed to the others, although she still wanted to check in on the family every now and then. As explained by the Moose Man:

> She thinks it's fun. Charlotte is equally scared every time and is terrified that Amelia will break something, but Amelia is like a ballet dancer. She walks around very carefully. She greets us for fifteen minutes, and then she goes out to the other moose. She likes to eat bread and apples, but above all, she likes flowers. If there are fresh tulips on the table, she wants them.

4.2.6 Successful moose business, and beyond

In contrast, the last storyline that came out of the analysis was strikingly populist, being based on the notion of the moose park as a successful business venture. This storyline was primarily observed in the news articles and the podcast episode, but also in our interviews. Here, the idea of how the moose park would take shape was typically depicted as 'always clear', albeit the family could never have imagined the magnitude of the business. Through the years, rumour about the business had spread: 'it has become a myth around the whole thing and then they (the customers) come here and get to see it in reality; "it is better than we thought, better than what we have seen"'. Another important facet was 'calibration' (Dimov 2020) of how everything began. Here the struggle of breaking with the socially established rules was given a stronger focus than in other storylines, emphasizing the Moose Man's individual traits of opportunity perception and risk-taking, as captured in this news article quote:

> There, the idea was born to show moose to tourists in a park. It was an idea that not even the Moose Man's wife wanted to believe. "Everyone I talked to said 'you're completely stupid. What the hell are you going to start up that for? Not a single person will show up."

Another important part of this success-oriented storyline, apart from mythologization, was the importance of looking beyond the here and now. When we collected our material, the moose park had been around for more than a decade, having become a 'landmark' in the community. Here, the Moose Man returned to how he planned to publish a book about the moose park, summarizing the journey Charlotte and he have been on for the past decade: 'We're going to sell a hell of a lot of books'. However, the Moose Man also told us how he favoured looking ahead, striving for continuous growth and development, no matter what form it would take. When we departed from the moose park for the last time, he was pondering what it would be like to have Siberian camels. Seemingly, the Moose Man was never afraid to embark on new entrepreneurial journeys (Garmann Johnsen and Meier Sørensen 2017).

5. Results

Six storylines were identified through the analysis process. Collectively these storylines, and the different meanings they generated, formulate what constitutes the moose park narrative. The analysis indicated that populism and activism were more extensive in some storylines than others, and that natural movement between populism and activism tended to occur. This implied that the concepts were to be considered positions on a spectrum, becoming observable in and through the enactment of entrepreneurial language-games (Dimov 2020; Shotter 1997). In other words, our analysis suggested that populism and activism may unfold as a co-dependent duality in entrepreneurship as practice (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020).

The park steers towards populism when the Moose Man tells classic success stories of individualism (Berglund 2013), most visible in the 'successful moose business, and beyond' storyline. Here, we learn how the Moose Man – against everyone else's better judgment – was able to identify an opportunity, take a risk, and thereafter create a successful and unique moose park. By virtue of his standout qualities and methods (Calás, Smircich, and Bourne 2009), he becomes a local and national symbol that American companies make movie deals with. Activism, on the other hand, is particularly prevalent in the 'changing the meaning of moose, wildlife and entrepreneurship' and 'moose as individuals' storylines. Here, moose are referred to as mysterious and loving beings with unique personalities. In our interpretation, the moose park here seeks to redefine the meaning (Weick 1995) of moose: we should point binoculars, rather than rifles, at the king of the forest; we should acknowledge moose as ancient and mystical creatures that are an important part of our cultural heritage (Anderson 2000), rather than as food. In addition to this, these storylines also ascribe new meaning to the notion of entrepreneurship. Yes, entrepreneurship is about business, but it is also about appreciation of nature and wildlife. Apart from the Moose Man's own reflections, other actors also contribute in this meaning-assignment process (Aldrich and Cliff 2003), as brought forward in the 'moose as business facilitator', 'breaking the rules together with others', and 'moose entrepreneurship in practice' storylines: his cousin's call began it all, his wife Charlotte was fundamental in creating the park and later running it, grandma and the employees made important contributions in its daily operation, and, lastly, the moose Amelia was key in introducing the park to a global audience and in forever changing these researchers' perceptions of moose. Table 6. illustrates how the storylines were distributed with regards to populism and activism, and the meaning attached to them.

Table 7. Gives more detailed examples of how populism and activism were enacted in the observed language-games, and how context engendered populism and activism.

Table 6. Positioning populist and activist storylines in the narrative of a moose park.

Element	Populism	◄			►	Activism
Context Practice Meaning as . . .	Reinforcing Embedded Accepted					Provoking Embedding Emergent
Storyline	*Successful moose business, and beyond*	*Moose entrepreneurship in practice*	*Moose as business facilitator* *Breaking rules together with others*	*Changing the meaning of moose, wildlife and entrepreneurship*		*Moose as individuals*
Meaning	The entrepreneur as a determined risk-taker; entrepreneurship as continuous development	The importance of 'others' in entrepreneurship; unique traits and methods of the entrepreneur	The importance of 'others' in entrepreneurship; the entrepreneur as a caring and determined individual	Entrepreneurship not merely about business; appreciation and acknowledgement of nature and wildlife		Moose as creatures with unique personalities

Table 7. 'Populism' and 'activism' in entrepreneurial language-games.

Element	Populism	Activism
RQ1. How are 'populism' and 'activism' in entrepreneurship enacted through entrepreneurial storytelling?	*Establishing* moose as Swedish culture (not only for the elite hunters); *assembling* of resources for the moose park; *creating* local jobs – growth, books and movie deals; *emphasizing* 'cuteness' in Amelia's story and escapades; *positioning* the individual entrepreneur and the moose park as a local business landmark.	*Establishing* that moose do not need to be shot to be enjoyed; *working* around regulations and developing new knowledge; *providing* people with experience of local wildlife in controlled conditions; *changing* people's perception of nature and wildlife; *seeing* Amelia as an individual, worthy of saving and respecting.
RQ2. How do social settings and structures engender 'populist' and 'activist' storytelling in entrepreneurship?	Agricultural schools, entrepreneurial meta-narratives, and news and film industries as business facilitators and (individual) legitimacy constructors.	Traffic accidents and hunting regulations as business initiators; family and 'others' as markers of collectivism in entrepreneurship; social media as outlets for collectivism; meta-narratives on wildlife and rurality as (new) meaning assigners.

Thus, this paper shows how social settings are never totally fixed (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014; Jack and Anderson 2002) – their socialized rules can be used and exploited by the actors embedded in them, and change (new practice) can also be embedded in them. Similar observations have previously been made in other studies of rural entrepreneurship. As concluded by Gaddefors and Anderson (2017, 274): 'Rather than being individual or social, entrepreneurship appeared simultaneously to be both. Entrepreneurship can and does exist in multiple states regardless of the observer and the observation'. In this paper, we have captured the co-dependency of these different states of individual reinforcement (Roos 2019) and collective provocation (Berglund, Gaddefors, and Lindgren 2016) through a study of entrepreneurial storytelling. Our findings suggest that stories and narratives (co-) constructed in the 'language-game' (Dimov 2020; Shotter 1997) contain dualistic phenomena, fundamentally important to these change processes. First, stories and narratives play into the stereotypical understanding of the terms entrepreneur and entrepreneurship to varying extents. They build legitimacy (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001) and surround the entrepreneur with an aura of business acumen and myth (Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson 2007), which may turn the entrepreneur into a safe bet in the eyes of stakeholders and others who value such abilities (Martens, Jennings, and Jennings 2007). Second, stories and narratives may do something else, also to various degrees, namely ascribe 'entrepreneurship' with new meaning (Weick 1995) and thus new values other than opportunity perception and risk-taking, initiating societal transformation (Alvord, Brown, and Letts 2004; Anderson 2000). Seemingly, this also holds true for other notions; in our case primarily 'moose', 'nature' and 'wildlife'.

Accordingly, entrepreneurs and others partake in language-games by moving back and forth between populism and activism; they both strengthen and question rules and social structures dictated by the social settings (Jack and Anderson 2002) the games occur in. Stories are key in this. On the one hand, the entrepreneur uses storytelling to reinforce context and highlight her/himself by drawing on accepted entrepreneurial meta-narratives, discourses and myths. This seems to be done in order to initiate resource allocation for individualistic purposes. On the other hand, entrepreneurs collectively (Shotter 1997; Sandberg and Tsoukas 2018) use storytelling for provoking social structure and initiating different forms of value change. Stories thus also play into modification and substitution of normative behaviour regarding certain issues (Garud, Gehman, and Giuliani 2014), and allow for new meaning (Weick 1995) to emerge.

Moreover, our findings indicate that seemingly any story will usually serve *both* social and transactional purposes: 'without a supplied context, objects and events have equivocal or multiple meanings'. (Weick, p. 52) Thus, how the game is played depends on the current context. As there is no such thing as a fixed meaning (ibid., p. 132), context informs and guides entrepreneurs (Schatzki 2005). This is most evident when we consider the functions of legitimacy construction (Lounsbury

and Glynn 2001) with regard to a certain story. Even a peculiar story about a non-professional social encounter – be it about a moose stealing tulips, or something else – can facilitate legitimacy construction in some respects. First, the entrepreneur constructs her/himself as a competent professional who is capable of managing challenging and demanding situations. Second, the stories portray her/him as an empathetic and engaging person, which is good both from a business perspective and in terms of value change – in this case for changing one's perception of moose. Thus, stories may serve both populist, transactional objectives, as well as activist agendas that embed, or even actively draw in, both 'the other' and 'the what' in entrepreneurship.

6. Conclusions

Scandinavian scholars have had a tendency towards entrepreneurship in practice since the very first issue of *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* (Johannisson and Nilsson 1989). In following this tradition of Scandinavian rural entrepreneurship research, we have explored a longstanding dispute in entrepreneurship theory and practice; namely to what extent entrepreneurship is either an individual or a collective endeavour. This paper shows the need to consider entrepreneurship as both.

Conceptually, our contribution lies in the strand of EaP (Champenois, Lefebvre, and Ronteau 2020). Through our practical and relational lens, we contribute understanding of how change comes about through narrative; more specifically, how stories function as both individualist, embedded practice, and collectivist, embedding practice. The conclusion has been reached through operationalization of a populist-activist duality with regards to a moose park narrative. Broadly speaking, populism comprises individualism that reinforces and resonates with embedded socialized rules, whereas activism denotes collectivism that breaks with them, embedding new practice and thus new value in context (Anderson 2000). Importantly, however, our findings indicate that the populist-activist duality is not a dichotomy. Populism and activism should instead be considered positions in the game that constitutes entrepreneurship in practice. We have shown natural movement back and forth between reinforcement (Roos 2019) and rule-breaking (Jack and Anderson 2002), seemingly with little calculation or forethought. The 'right' action depends on the setting in which the entrepreneur, for the moment, is embedded.

Thus, embeddedness should be considered a necessary factor for how individualist and collectivist entrepreneurship unfolds on a day-to-day basis; embeddedness facilitates 'calibration' (Dimov 2020) of individualism and collectivism together with, and with regards to, the other actors in context. This has theoretical value for how embeddedness may be perceived in future practice studies of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is, in practice, essentially both an individual and collective venture. Exactly how the process materializes depends on where it occurs, and who it involves. Moreover, embeddedness explains how other forms of social value creation come about through mundane, everyday activities. Depending on where and with whom entrepreneurship occurs, it may influence other social notions such as nature and wildlife. In the end, the moral of our story is thus that the game of entrepreneurship is played by the individual, but the individual cannot play by her/himself (Aldrich and Cliff 2003).

7. Implications for future research

We have explored rural entrepreneurship – a peculiar phenomenon. Rather than being about the creation of 'material' modes of business, rural entrepreneurship tends to focus the 'experiential' (Anderson 2000), in the likes of the park in this study. Thus, further research of how populism and activism emerge under other conditions, and from other viewpoints, is needed. More specifically, we suggest that future studies of entrepreneurship investigate (i) how populism and activism function in other contexts, rural or urban; (ii) how populism and activism come into play in 'material' ventures; (iii) how populism and activism elicit reactions from others in context; and (iv) how the dualism can be 'heard at different volumes' as it materializes, i.e. when populism and activism are more explicit, or

more difficult to perceive and capture. In particular, populism and activism on high volume seems to have become a pertinent factor in our daily lives, and thus is an urgent topic for future research.

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