



JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY

*Jönköping International
Business School*

Let's Get Physical: Investigating How Social Movements Continuously Enable New Venture Creation & Vice Versa

A Theoretical Contribution to the External Enabler Framework for
New Venture Creation in the Context of the Fitness Movement

BACHELOR THESIS WITHIN: *Business Administration*

NUMBER OF CREDITS: *15 ECTS*

PROGRAMME OF STUDY: *Marketing Management*

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JÖNKÖPING May 18th, 2023

Acknowledgements

Before diving into this thesis, we would like to acknowledge the people who helped and guided the entire process of this research.

Firstly, we want to send out a big thank you to Madeleine Meurer for being an amazing tutor throughout this project. It has been a challenging but fun and rewarding process to write this thesis and Madeleine has been a great supporter in every aspect of it.

Secondly, we want to thank everyone who agreed to let us borrow their precious time by letting us interview them. All interviewees were of great help in the process of this research, and it was a great pleasure to get the chance to talk to all of them.

Thirdly, thank you to all the participants in the seminar group for interesting and helpful insights and suggestions.

Finally, we want to thank Anders Melander, examiner of the thesis, for giving us clear guidelines in this new and challenging process.

Jönköping, May 18th, 2023
Linn & Hugo

Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration

Title: Let's Get Physical: Investigating How Social Movements Continuously Enable New Venture Creation & Vice Versa
Authors: Linn Johannesson and Hugo Wedmark Hermansson
Tutor: Madeleine Meurer
Date: 2023-05-18

Key terms: External Enablers, Entrepreneurship, Social Movement, Fitness Movement

Abstract

This thesis presents an inductive, qualitative approach to exploring the connection between entrepreneurship and social movement theory in the context of the fitness movement. This was achieved by applying the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation which looks at how changes to the macro environment, such as sociocultural shifts, enable entrepreneurial processes by activating mechanisms on the venture level (Davidsson et al., 2020). A loop derived from social movement literature is implemented as a contribution to the framework that presents a perspective in which ventures not only are influenced by the social movement but also contribute to the movement's momentum. The loop was found to occur as ventures enlarge the scope of the social movement and thus change its characteristics. This insight provides two theoretical contributions. Firstly, the loop originating from social movement theory is better defined and explained. Secondly, the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation has been connected to the loop, which provides a more nuanced view of how social movements and ventures interrelate. This is deemed important since it helps us understand how social movements can grow with the influence of ventures and how this leads to the continuous enablement of new ventures.

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1. Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the research question for this thesis. Additionally, the problem formulation, purpose, and delimitations of the thesis are presented.

1.1 Background

The External Enabler Framework of New Venture Creation (Davidsson et al., 2020) introduces a perspective on how macro-environmental changes, so called external enablers, influence entrepreneurial processes. This occurs as the external enablers activate mechanisms on the venture level (Chalmers, MacKenzie, et al., 2021; von Briel et al., 2018). This framework sheds light on several categories of disequilibrating shifts and classifies these by their origin, one of them being socio-cultural shifts. Social movements are one part of socio-cultural shifts that can affect society at large and one previously largely overlooked social movement is the fitness movement, which has grown tremendously during the last couple of decades. The fitness movement is predicted to continue to grow vastly, and this continued growth of the movement and the connected industry presents an interesting context for research whilst applying the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation.

1.2 Problem Formulation

However, as much previous entrepreneurial research has focused on the influence of macro-environmental changes on entrepreneurial processes, research on how the ventures, in turn, influence the macro-environmental shifts, and specifically social movements, is lacking. It is crucial to address how ventures, in turn, influence social movements from both the perspective of entrepreneurial research and social movement theory. The evident loop introduced in social movement literature has not yet been considered as a component of The External Enabler Framework of New Venture Creation (Davidsson et al., 2020), which opens a vast possibility for improvement. Entrepreneurship research could benefit from understanding ventures' influence on social movements as it will shape the movement and influence the market in which they operate. Furthermore, social movement research will benefit from a better understanding of the relationship between social movements and entrepreneurship, as entrepreneurship is seen as a tool for creating social change.

1.3 Purpose

Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate how social movements enable entrepreneurial processes, as well as the particularly interesting aspect of how the ventures influence social movements. Specifically, how ventures and markets shape social movements' characteristics. The research question has thus been formulated: How do Social Movements Continuously Enable New Venture Creation & Vice Versa? The perspective of how ventures influence movements can suggest a development of the External Enabler Framework of New Venture Creation, which will be of interest for entrepreneurship research. Additionally, the idea of the loop, which presents ventures' influence on social movements, is justified as a contribution to the existing knowledge within the field of entrepreneurship, which needs to be further investigated (Brieger et al., 2019).

1.4 Delimitations

To investigate the loop where ventures are not only enabled by social movements, but also influence the movement, a context is needed. The context chosen for this thesis to investigate the loop's presence and function is the fitness movement. The reason for choosing this movement is that it has been present for an extended period and is believed to continue to grow vastly. This is a prerequisite for answering the research question regarding how social movements continuously enable new venture creation and vice versa. Thus, the lengthy fitness movement will enable us to reveal how social movements and ventures continuously enable each other.

2. Theoretical Background

The theoretical background presents the reader with a description of how the systematic search of the literature was conducted. Additionally, the main points from the relevant literature streams are presented. The relevant literature streams regard socio-cultural shifts, social movements, entrepreneurship, external enablers, and the loop concept stemming from social movement theory. This chapter aims to provide the reader with the existing body of knowledge that connects to this thesis's scope. This is for the reader to gain insights and understanding of the following chapters of the research paper.

2.1 Systematic search of literature

This literature review was conducted through a systematic search in Elsevier's Scopus. The criteria for articles to be considered for review was a ranking of ABS 4*, 4, or 3, with 4* being the best quality. This criterion was implemented to ensure high quality of the articles laying this paper's foundation. The systematic search was conducted by using the keywords suggested by Kimjeon and Davidsson (2022). Some additional keywords were then added to widen the scope of articles. One example was that the keywords "change" and "shift" were added to not only understand the triggering aspect of sociocultural changes, which Kimjeon and Davidsson (2022) have focused on. The exact keywords used can be found in Table 1 in the appendix.

Further, articles chosen for review were limited to the years of 2000-2023. This time frame chosen was from 2000 and onwards, as this is said to be the year of the emergence of research within the field of entrepreneurship. This is due to 2000 being the year Shane and Venkataraman (2000) presented the initial framework for entrepreneurship.

In certain instances, cross-referencing was implemented when this was deemed to add value to the paper. For example, this was the case for the research paper by Weber et al. (2008), which was evaluated as significant for review.

The systematic literature search generated 115 results, of which 29 were deemed relevant after a more in-depth investigation of context and quality. The reason for not including specific articles was that

they either focused too narrowly on the entrepreneur as an individual or that the research paper generally was too niched to gain relevant insights.

An additional search was also conducted using the keyword "external enabl*" where articles connected to entrepreneurship were chosen for review. Finally, the articles were again classified based on their ABS ranking, where articles from journals ranked 3 or higher were chosen for review. It all resulted in 12 additional relevant articles being included in the literature review leading to a total of 41 articles that lay the foundation for this thesis.

2.2 Social Movements & Entrepreneurship

Four themes have emerged from the filtered literature on social movements and entrepreneurship. These are how entrepreneurship and social movements interrelate, social movement theory (SMT), social movement organizations (SMOs), and social entrepreneurship. These themes will be further explained for the reader to gain insights into the topics and for clarification purposes of this section.

Research on entrepreneurship is built on a historical foundation that is rooted in economic change (Cornelius et al., 2006). It has been described as a process of creating innovative solutions or value (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2021). Social movements originate from the idea that there is a need for institutional change in order to address a problem perceived by specific individuals or groups (Jain et al, 2023). Social movements have been described as collective enterprises which aim to create new orders of life, as well as being "initiated by coalitions of individuals or organizations with shared goals that promote changes in cultural, social, or business practices" (Pacheco & Khoury, 2023, p. 2). Social movements are further explained by social movement theory which looks at how relatively small groups of individuals can change how society works. SMT describes how social movements are connected to changing the cultural frames in society to attract other supporters and participants to the movement (Jain et al., 2023). In recent decades there has been an increase in new ventures with the aim of creating moral value and, by doing so, generating social change (Chatterjee et al., 2021; Hedberg & Lounsbury, 2021). Entrepreneurship can thus also be seen as a tool for creating social change. If this is the venture's objective, it requires stakeholders' participation (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2021).

Moreover, social movements can work as a component of human empowerment, and thus a form of stakeholder, which enables and motivates people to achieve broader social goals in connection with

the venture (Brieger et al., 2019). Different actors within the social movement can be media or associations, for example, that all have varying interests. As these different actors pursue their interests, they give entrepreneurs the needed resources and legitimize the formation of new markets, which is important for new ventures in this context (Akemu et al., 2016). Social movements and ventures are thus argued to combine its efforts to address major challenges (Johnson & Schaltegger, 2020). Social movements are also argued to reduce entry barriers for new ventures as they create a foundation for these new industries, especially by making the resources needed more easily available (Hiatt et al., 2009).

New ventures that aim to generate social change related to those of a social movement can be categorized as social movement organizations, which are explained as "organizations with goals that address the interests of a movement" (Pacheco & Khoury, 2023, p.1). It is further argued that SMOs have two ways of changing the market. One is to change consumers' preferences, and the other is to convince other ventures of a shift in consumers' preferences, incentivizing them to alter their product offerings to fit the audience (Dubuisson-Quellier, 2013). Furthermore, the growth of new inspiring sectors in the industry can fundamentally challenge consumption patterns and consumer preferences. Examples of movements regarding sustainability could be fair trade coffee and organic food, which gives consumers options to make good choices (Sine & Lee, 2009). Furthermore, some companies go toward more nascent niches rather than the dominant logic (Kim & Shifeling, 2022). Additionally, saturated markets can benefit from social movement organizations that stand out on the market, thus aiding in the continued growth of the market. It is also argued that SMOs can enable more niched firms to enter the market and take away some of the market dominant's power. It is also deemed easier to enter markets when the social movement is larger (Pacheco & Koury, 2023). This means that SMOs encourage more specialized firms to enter the market to reach the goals of the social movement (Hiatt et al., 2009; Pacheco & Khoury, 2023). In summary, SMOs can arise to contribute to the social movement. This is also the goal of social entrepreneurship, which is explained as the process of using resources in innovative ways with the goal of creating social change (Montessori, 2016; Akemu et al., 2016). Nevertheless, it has been claimed that "social entrepreneurship" and "economic entrepreneurship" differ drastically. The only thing they are considered to have in common is the root of entrepreneurship, which means that both forms need profit to survive. Nonetheless, this is not the main objective for social entrepreneurs which entails that the entrepreneur works towards serving a social mission (McMullen et al., 2021). It is further stated that entrepreneurs do not view themselves as elitists but rather as part of a broader social movement, where they are part of a greater story.

Movement sympathizers may thus see opportunities in untapped segments and thus a chance to enter the market as social entrepreneurs (Cunningham et al., 2022). This results in positive social change and, potentially, the successful generation of the new venture (Hiatt et al., 2009). One may thus believe that social entrepreneurship is the only type of entrepreneurship that can result in positive social change. However, social change can also come as a by-product when pursuing other goals. Thus, even economic entrepreneurship can result in social change (Chatterjee et al., 2021). Moreover, even though contributing to positive social change drives social entrepreneurship, it has been overlooked how these ventures impact the community and society (Lumpkin et al., 2018). Little research has been conducted on how large-scale social movements impact entrepreneurial processes which provides an interesting area for future research (Sine & Lee, 2009).

2.3 Social Movements & External Enablers

2.3.1 External Enablers

In the later 20th century, several structural changes in society led to increased internationalization and political changes, which created disequilibrium and uncertainty. This context ignited interest in entrepreneurship as a field of research since the changes contributed to increased innovation and entrepreneurship (Cornelius et al., 2006). **External changes** to the business environment are undoubtedly a trigger for economic activity to flourish (Davidsson, 2015), and it has been recognized that entrepreneurs do not create opportunities themselves but rather identify and evaluate these as **disequilibrating shifts** occur. Changes to the environment in which agents operate have thus been described as raw materials for entrepreneurs to **enable** several entrepreneurial actions (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). This and factors like risk and innovation are also mentioned as key dimensions in entrepreneurship literature (Luke & Chu, 2013).

Past research claim that social movements can have unexpected effects for the marketplace in the form of entrepreneurial opportunities and that "Important remaining questions are (...) how social movement organizations affect the persistence and growth of new industries (...)" (Hiatt et al, 2009, p.28). Moreover, it is argued that the effects of sociocultural environments on venture formation are interesting areas for further research (Johnson & Schaltegger, 2020). This, in turn, suggests an interesting area for further investigation regarding how social movements continuously enable new venture creation and industry formation (Johnson & Schaltegger, 2020; Montgomery et al., 2012).

The External Enabler Framework was presented by Davidsson et al. (2020) as a development upon the idea of **External Enablers** that previously have been introduced to the literature on

entrepreneurship (Davidsson, 2015). The External Enablers are described as "single, distinct, external circumstances, which- by affecting supply, demand, costs, prices, or payoff structures- can play an essential role in eliciting and enabling a variety of venture development attempts by several actors" (Davidsson, 2015, p.11). The External Enabler can originate from positive or negative occurrences, and its favorability on the venture level is subject to various circumstances. This means that an EE can be enabling in certain contexts but not all. Furthermore, EEs may be dependent on other external changes to work to facilitate new venture development. Not to be forgotten, is that EEs also need to be identified and recognized, which is connected to an individual's evaluation of opportunities for new ventures (Davidsson, 2015). Additionally, entrepreneurially oriented firms are stated to have a more significant chance of recognizing and acting upon opportunities (McGee & Terry, 2022). Another aspect of EEs is that agents do not necessarily need to be aware of or reflect on these, but they undoubtedly have the potential to play a role in the venture's outcome (Davidsson et al., 2020).

EEs are categorized by a range of subcategories in the ways they may work by enabling entrepreneurial processes. These are, for example, the implementation of **new technology**, **regulatory changes**, **shifts in demographic**, **sociocultural trends**, and more. It is important to note that EEs may occur simultaneously "as one enabler can cause another to occur, as when social movements trigger changed legislation" (Davidsson et al., 2020, p.28). In addition, social movements can contribute to the success of ventures both directly and indirectly. EEs can also work enabling for certain ventures but disabling for others (Hiatt et al., 2009). One example of this is the covid-19 pandemic which represented a vast disequilibrating environmental change that worked as an enabler for some ventures (Lucas & Park., 2023). For example, the pandemic was an enabler for home fitness equipment manufacturers while simultaneously working disabling for in-person fitness studios and gyms (Wood et al., 2022). Another external enabler is physical infrastructure, explained as an environmental shift, which can trigger entrepreneurial activities and is thus explained as an enabler for particular contexts. It has also been set out that digital infrastructure and technology can enable entrepreneurial action (Shade & Schuhmacher, 2022; Chalmers, MacKenzie, et al., 2021). This is not only by creating possibilities for new products and markets but also by influencing how ventures emerge, organize their operations, and formulate their competitive strategies (Morse et al., 2007).

2.3.2 Characteristics

The External Enabler framework for New Venture Creation presents **characteristics** of the EEs which show their potential to work in enabling ways. These characteristics further identify for which contexts and agents the EE could work as an enabler. The characteristics of the external enablers are

intrinsic properties described by the subcategories of **Scope** and **Onset**. Scope is described as the concept that refers to the "range of spatial, sectoral, temporal, and sociodemographic impact" (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022, p.645) and thus the boundaries the external enabler has, and in which contexts it will have impact and potential.

The **spatial** property refers to the geographic area where the external enabler provides entrepreneurial potential. For example, markets in which people are better off financially often express more interest in entrepreneurial endeavors, meaning that EEs have different abilities to enable entrepreneurial actions in different regions (Chen et al., 2020; Bennett, 2021). In addition, other economic, social, and region-specific factors are argued to play a crucial part in entrepreneurship activity (Bennett, 2019).

The **sociodemographic** property of the external enabler looks at if the external enabler is relevant to and will affect a narrow group of people or a larger group. Furthermore, the **temporal** property looks at the period for which the external enabler will have its enabling potential, and the **sectoral** property refers to the types of economic activity for which the EE can work as an enabler. The ability of agents to take advantage of EEs is dependent on their **Opacity** and **Agency-intensity** (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022).

Onset refers to the gradualness and predictability of the EE and thus focuses on the emergence of the EE in the business environment. Onset also regards how easy it is to identify a particular EE and its potential. Nevertheless, it is argued that individuals are more likely to recognize opportunities in areas they are knowledgeable about. An entrepreneur's social connections can also work for individuals to help identify opportunities due to information from these social contacts (Wry & York, 2017). The gradualness of the EE regards how quickly it, and its enabling capacity comes to be, and the predictability looks at if the change to the business market could be anticipated. Social movements often present themselves as gradual and unpredictable shifts to the business environment with uncertainty regarding their development (Davidsson et al., 2020). A relevant aspect in today's world is that as digital entrepreneurship grows, the spatial and temporal boundaries are being erased, which changes the characteristics of the EE (Chalmers et al., 2021). A third characteristic of the onset of the EE is evolution. Evolution looks at the speed and patterns the external enabler has when it grows over time. The second factor for how agents can take advantage of the EE is agency intensity, and regards the resources required for the set of mechanisms on the venture level (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022).

2.3.3 Mechanisms

The EE will, for the situations in which it works in enabling ways, activate certain **mechanisms** on the venture level. Mechanisms are described as "venture-level manifestations of EEs, specifying cause-effect relationships of what supply-, demand- or value-appropriation improvement an EE offers." (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022, p.655). The mechanisms can work by facilitating the initiation, development, or success of the venture creation process (Davidsson et al., 2020). Nine different mechanisms have been identified and are classified as **combination, compression, conservation, enclosing, expansion, generation, legitimation, substitution, and uncertainty reduction** (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022).

Legitimation as a mechanism can work in two main ways. Firstly, by legitimizing the process of venture activity more generally, and secondly, by legitimizing certain business practices and offers. This is connected to social acceptance of the activities and social movements. The reasoning behind this is that when consumers become increasingly aware and interested in particular products or services due to a social movement, this leads to legitimizing these types of ventures and their offerings (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022).

Demand expansion is another mechanism on the venture level that an EE may activate. This concept refers to an increase in the population's demand which can be connected to different shifts, such as larger purchasing power or an increase in unserved customer groups. Improved market access and, thus, demand creation are two important concepts connected to the mechanisms of demand expansion as a result of an EE (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). Furthermore, it is stated that social movements can influence the emergence of new organizational forms by motivating audiences or consumers to change their consumption patterns (Hiatt et al., 2009). In practice, this refers to creating demand for products that align with the movement's values (Akemu et al., 2016). It has also been argued that shifts to the business environment "have targeted consumers, retailers, and producers and have promoted the creation of alternative products" (Weber et al., 2008, p.529).

2.3.4 Roles

These mechanisms can then, if activated, affect how the venture creation process works by playing specific **roles**. These roles of the mechanisms are **Triggering, Shaping, and Outcome-Enhancing** (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). The roles are defined as "higher-order functions of EE mechanisms at different stages of a venture's development" (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022, p.647). Triggering as a role refers to incentivizing entrepreneurs to create the venture. Social movements can stimulate start-

ups by creating demand for a new category of products. This often occurs due to reduced social legitimacy for another product category (Davidsson et al., 2020). Social movements can thus work to trigger or inspire entrepreneurial activity by encouraging shifts in resources to the new socially legitimized product category (Hiatt et al., 2009; Akemu et al., 2016). The creation of new markets is further argued as a vital component of economic and cultural change within a society. These new markets are often connected to a more extensive mobilization of resources which studies argue can be connected to the rise of social movements (Weber et al., 2008; Akemu et al., 2016).

Shaping as a role, on the other hand, refers to how EEs can influence the venture's structure, products, services, and markets they aim to target. In addition, social movements are explained to play a role in shaping the venture and the products they offer. This is because social movements often work to create demand for particular products or services, which can influence the venture and its offering from the beginning, or how they choose to alter the offerings at a later instance by "guiding improvement of attributes of the offerings" (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022, p.658). Lastly, Outcome-Enhancing as a role looks at how the EE's presence contributes to a better outcome for the venture than if the disequilibrating circumstance to the business environment would not have occurred (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022).

The characteristics of the external enabler, and the mechanisms and roles these can play on the venture level, are all important. They are important because they determine which agents have the potential to benefit from it and what types of improvements or competitive advantage they can create for the agents. It has also been described how social movements can work as EEs and activate specific mechanisms on the venture level, such as legitimizing a particular venture and creating demand for the category of products (Kimjeon & Davidsson, 2022). Additionally, it is acknowledged that "actors themselves can have some influence on some external enablers and occasionally have a major role in them, as when entrepreneurial actors are also the inventors behind new technology or successfully lobby for the regulatory change they subsequently exploit" (Davidsson, 2015, p.11). This is an interesting area for further investigation where ventures, as agents, can influence shifts in the business environment, such as movements.

2.4 Social Movements & The Loop

Social movements aim to influence the market with their morals and, by doing so, change the way it operates. Hence, certain markets and industries have the potential to grow with the presence of social movements, which further strengthens movements and is essential for their continued growth. This

would mean that those markets are not only being influenced by the social movement but also further contributing to the movement's momentum. Entrepreneurs can further capitalize on social movements for financial gain and strengthen the movement simultaneously as entrepreneurs spread the movement's message (Munir et al., 2021). Furthermore, social movements and entrepreneurial networks are related as they reinforce one another (Hollow, 2020). It is also induced that there is a need for collaborative action, including outside actors, to make social change. This confirms how ventures and new industries are a part of the social movement but also benefit from its existence (Montgomery et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is argued that ventures not only act on opportunities created by change but also create these opportunities themselves, suggesting this form of feedback loop between social movements and ventures (Hiatt et al., 2009). This feedback loop is seen to be applicable to the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation, which is presented in Table 2 in the Appendix.

Another concept of importance is community, as research suggests that, in the emergence of new markets, a sense of collective identity may grow. The sense of community that the new market provides, and the increased knowledge this entails for individuals, stimulate further entrepreneurial activity. An example of this is when "the creation of a recognizable community of producers lowered the motivational and knowledge thresholds required for additional entrants and accelerated the growth of the (...) market segment" (Weber et al., 2008, p.551).

Moreover, by transferring resources and ideas amongst social identity groups together with social movements and formal organizations, there are results like innovation in the organization and simultaneously an improved status for the identity group (Yu, 2012). For individuals who adopt a particular identity, this may lead to a motivation to fit into the standards and context (Wry & York, 2017). Research further sheds light on the concept of community culture, defined as "the broader societal traits and relations that underpin places in terms of prevailing mindsets and the overall way of life in particular places" (Huggins & Thompson, 2014, p.3). The community culture is deemed to influence the number of entrepreneurial processes within a specific area that surrounds the spatial element of where entrepreneurial processes occur for a given industry. It is further argued that together with increased entrepreneurial activity and economic development, higher well-being for individuals at large is likely to occur. This is not only because of economic development but because flexible working conditions are increasingly allowed as more lifestyle-oriented organizations grow. This autonomy and independence of the individual are, in turn, explained as motivations for the individual to partake in entrepreneurial activity (Huggins & Thompson, 2014).

3. Method

In this thesis, four steps were followed to contribute to existing theory in the areas of social movement theory and the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation. These steps were: 1. sampling procedure, 2. collection of data, 3. categorization and analysis of data, and ultimately 4. the grounded theory development. This chapter explains the approach and motivation of these steps in detail. Furthermore, the empirical context is presented in detail to give the reader a complete understanding of the fitness movement's emergence and influence in today's business environment.

3.1 Research Design

This thesis aims to understand how ventures are influenced by social movements, as well as the particularly interesting aspect of how ventures, in turn, can influence social movements. The method deemed most fitting for this thesis is exploratory research aimed to build on existing theory (Chalmers, Mathews, et al., 2021). This means that the research is built upon an inductive research design. Furthermore, the data collection method considered most fitting to explicitly answer the research question is qualitative, as it opens possibilities to uncover personal experiences (Flick, 2020). As this thesis aims to build on existing theory and understand a phenomenon from the people living in the context of it, an inductive research design was deemed as most appropriate while implementing the method of qualitative data collection (Corley, 2015). The research paradigm of this thesis is thus an interpretivism paradigm, in which interpretations construct reality. According to Kimjeon and Davidsson (2022), there are only six qualitative research articles published on sociocultural changes, showing a lack of- and need for qualitative research on this topic. The research design relies on 8 in-depth interviews with entrepreneurs and other knowledgeable individuals within the industry. The data collected from the interviews were then interpreted and categorized to build on theory. This was done using the Gioia Method (Gioia et al., 2013). By collecting data through interviews, the subjects are given the opportunity to freely elaborate their answers, which gives a more in-depth understanding. However, as semi-structured interviews come with risks of misunderstandings, the questions needed to be stated clearly to mitigate the risk of misinterpretation. To further mitigate this risk, both thesis authors were present to interpret the answers during all interviews.

3.2 Empirical Context

It is a common sentiment that new venture creation is an area of entrepreneurship that should be further researched (Carlsson et al., 2013; Wiklund et al., 2011). Nonetheless, a context for research is necessary to understand how social movements continuously enable new venture creation and vice versa. For this thesis, the fitness movement will represent the empirical context. The fitness movement is a social movement that has immensely affected the business market during the last couple of decades. Furthermore, it is a particularly interesting context in that it continues to grow each year even though it has existed for a long time. This must mean that it is continuously attracting new participants as new ventures emerge and will thus be a helpful context in allowing us to answer the research questions.

3.2.1 The Emergence of the Fitness Movement

The fitness movement can be connected to the emergence of the previous concept of physical culture, where the initial bodybuilders emerged, and the idea of muscular bodies as an ideal was introduced. The movement was initially viewed as a subculture that, only a few individuals, and exclusively males, could participate in (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014). The roots of this subculture are argued to originate from the United States (Klein, 1994) and date back to the early 1970s when the emergence of fitness clubs, gyms, and other related enterprises took place (Stern, 2011). In the late 1900s, the idea of fitness had become an essential aspect of industrialization, connected to the perceived need for strong bodies. This is further argued to be the point in time in which exercise turned from a phenomenon practiced by a smaller group to becoming an activity practiced by a larger and more diverse group of people (Grant, 2013).

As the 21st century commenced, the social and cultural landscape shifted, and part of this shift was connected to the increased commercialization in society. The idea of becoming an elevated self by shaping one's body and exercising attracted many to the lifestyle connected to the fitness movement which enabled it to become a more inclusive movement (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014). Today, the gym and other fitness centers are viewed as a place for everyone, and fitness is an interest many people dedicate their spare time (Sassatelli, 2010). The fitness movement has thus been classified by Andreasson and Johansson (2014) as a folk movement. Furthermore, the idea of fitness is no longer as closely intertwined with the concept of bodybuilding (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014; Monaghan, 2002). One explanation for this is that today's fitness movement is built upon ideals surrounding a healthy lifestyle and beauty. In contrast, the concept of bodybuilding has become influenced by

perceptions surrounding unhealthy amounts of exercise, steroids, drugs, and hyper-masculinity (Hoberman, 2006).

3.2.2 The Fitness Movement as a Global Social Movement

As the initial ideas of bodybuilding and fitness have grown, the ideas have spread, and the movement can now be regarded as global. This was further enforced by the initial bodybuilders traveling the world and encouraging people to part-take in fitness-related activities (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014). Nonetheless, the movement's homogeneity level within different regions has not been determined. Some argue for varied local approaches to the fitness movement (Steen-Johnson, 2007), while others point to a more homogeneous market across the global landscape (Ritzer, 2013). However, the flow of resources on the global level means that the global and local are always bound together to some extent (Urry, 2002). This would mean that the fitness movement, and the industry that has grown from this, are globally connected and thus similar (Andreasson & Johansson, 2014).

3.2.3 The Fitness Movement at This Point in Time

As of 2022, the fitness industry was valued at 87 billion US dollars globally, and it is expected to grow by 171,75% by 2028. Furthermore, the growth rate of the fitness industry has been 8,7% yearly which is explained to be due to people's increased interest in prioritizing their health and not an increase in prices for the products and services that go into the industry (Kolmar, 2023). An international survey conducted by fitness and workout program provider Les Mills showed that in 2013, 61% of people who exercise were doing so in the gym, representing a higher number than for any other fitness activity. This classifies fitness as the biggest sport in the world at this time (Zabonick-Chonko, 2014). In 2019, there were 2 246 000 active gym memberships in Sweden, representing a large part of the population. Furthermore, the revenue from the health club industry in Sweden made up 912,65 million US dollars during the same year, emphasizing the extent of the industry (Baron, 2021).

Additionally, the fitness movement has found its way into the fashion industry and is influencing the styles created by designers to meet the increasing demand for sporty styles (Klein, 2014). The increased interest in healthy eating and self-care can further be connected to the fitness movement, which additionally expresses the width of the industry (Tiggemann, 2015). Thus, for this paper, any venture that emerged connected to people's increased interest in fitness, wellness clubs, gyms, healthy

food and living, and workout wear will be relevant as the fitness movement has potentially influenced it.

3.3 Sample Development

Sampling interview subjects was done by a non-probability sampling procedure using the search function on the social media platform LinkedIn. The subjects of interest were entrepreneurs, or other businesspeople with a lot of insight into venture's operations. The ventures of interest were any ventures deemed to have been influenced by the fitness movement. The aim of the sampling procedure was to find a broad variety of entrepreneurs, or other businesspeople, within different fields of the fitness industry to gain a broad understanding of this context. Furthermore, snowball sampling was used in the instance of recommendations from interviewee subjects which led to contact information of other entrepreneurs within the industry. Additionally, the entrepreneurs behind top-of-mind ventures with significant impact and industry market share were all contacted. The initial sample consisted of 30 potential data subjects, out of which 10 responded and 8 interviews were held. The two interviews not held were due to a lack of time of the potential interviewees. The interviewees mainly consisted of founders of ventures as these were the most eligible people to answer questions regarding the early development of the ventures. However, in some instances it was fitting to have interviewees with other positions in the venture since they were able to bring new viewpoints and perspectives to the table. The interviewees and their professions can be found in Table 3 in the Appendix. After the interviews were held it was considered whether more interviews would be necessary to answer the research question, but after consideration, it was decided that after 8 interviews, a saturation point was reached. Thus, another type of interviewee subject would have been required to get new information on the topic, which was likely to lead the research off its original course, and therefore that action was not taken. Nevertheless, the final interviewees ranged from small business owners to owners of market-leading companies within the industry. This allowed a wide range of data and different viewpoints and insights into the research, which was seen as valuable for the thesis.

3.4 Data Collection

The data was collected through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with interview subjects deemed important within the field and relevant to the research frame. The reason for choosing semi-structured interviews was to allow for the opportunity to go into topics of importance to the interviewees which also had potential to contribute to the research of this paper. Semi-structured interviews can range from open-ended to more theoretically driven questions, which is in line with

how this thesis's interviews were structured. In this case, the interviews were sufficiently structured to cover the exact topic. However, there was still room for the participants to provide new insights or meanings, which brought complexity to the topic (Galletta & Cross, 2013). The semi-structured interviews further allowed for follow-up questions which was necessary to elaborate on the interviewees' insights. Furthermore, open-ended questions were prepared and asked so that the interviewees could answer elaborately to enable a larger and more in-depth understanding of how social movements continuously enable new venture creation and vice versa.

The interview questions were divided into two sections, and the first section started with exploring the background of how and why the company started. This section continued with questions on the same track and would discover if and how the fitness movement acted as an external enabler for the creation of the venture. The second section of questions regarded the research question of whether the ventures, in turn, influenced the fitness movement. Thereby, this section included questions that allowed the interviewees to reflect and elaborate on how they believe their venture has influenced the social movement. The interviewees were regarded as knowledgeable agents in accordance with (Gioia et al., 2013). The interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes and were recorded after permission for this was given. The length of the interviews varied depending on the interviewee, their available time, and how elaborately they answered the questions. Nevertheless, all interviews were equally useful for the thesis, no matter the length. This means that the shorter interviews still extensively answered the questions asked during the interviews and delivered useful and unique insights.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis for this thesis was done in two steps to understand the data correctly. Firstly, the data was coded and categorized to lay the foundation of the analysis. Secondly, the grounded theory articulation was built to give meaning and present the data dynamically by showing the relationships of the second-order themes. These two steps of data analysis will be further explained in this section.

3.5.1 Data Categorization

The first step of categorizing data was to transcribe the recordings, which were then translated from Swedish to English. Seven out of the eight interviews were held in Swedish as that was the native language of those interviewees which thus made them feel more comfortable in answering the questions more extensively. However, the downside of doing most of the interviews in another language is the increased possibility of misinterpretations during translation. The translating was done through a few different websites due to trial and error, but one translation service was found to be the

most effective and, therefore, most used, and this was the built-in translator in Microsoft Word. Nevertheless, the translations needed to be corrected manually to ensure there were no misinterpretations and that all translations were correct.

After the eight interviews were transcribed and translated, the findings were divided into two sections. The first section represented findings surrounding if, and how, the ventures were enabled by the social movement in some way. These findings were deemed as important to discover if the movement had worked to enable new venture creation. Further, these findings were deemed of importance as they give an understanding for the reader of how ventures who were enabled, in turn, could influence the social movement in some way. The findings connected to how ventures, in turn, influence social movements are regarded as the main contributions of this thesis and were coded and categorized accordingly. The data categorization used a thematic approach based on (Gioia et al., 2013). First-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions were identified from the collected data. These created a data structure where the most critical interview insights were presented in a clear manner.

3.5.2 Theory Development

The theory development was reached by the creation of a grounded theory articulation that expanded upon the coding of the data with the aim of providing a dynamic view of the theoretical contributions of this thesis. By presenting a model of the grounded theory articulation, the reader is provided with explanations of how the second-order themes of the data interrelate, and thus an overview of how the investigated phenomenon occurs (Magnani & Gioia, 2023). Furthermore, the usefulness of grounded theory methods lies in "engaging a phenomenon from the perspective of those living it" (Corley, 2015. p.600). As the interpretivism research paradigm views the business environment as dynamic, with corresponding parts that undoubtedly influence each other, it is vital to present a model and explain contributions to theory precisely (Magnani & Gioia, 2023). The grounded theory articulation is further explained as an appropriate method for presenting findings of inductive research to create an understanding of the phenomenon and its connection with the context in which it occurs (Corley, 2015).

4. Findings & Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of this thesis. Starting off, the ways in which the fitness movement has worked to enable new venture creation will be presented to provide an understanding and background leading up to this paper's core findings. Secondly, a data categorization table of identified first-order concepts, second-order themes, and aggregate dimensions is presented, representing this thesis's core findings. Subsequently, all aggregate dimensions are further elaborated, and themes and concepts will be explained. Ultimately, the grounded theory articulation will be presented and explained, which builds on existing theory and presents the main contributions of this thesis.

4.1 Setting the Stage: The Fitness Movements Influence on New Venture Creation in Sweden

Most interviewees agree that the fitness movement has worked as an external enabler for their ventures' creation and continued growth. This is because they believe the movement has raised awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and increased demand for this category of products and services. As summarized by Interviewee F, "...yes absolutely, without the market itself and the interest, it would not have been possible to start this. Then it would have been completely unattractive." Interviewee G further reinforces this statement and answers: "Absolutely, absolutely, that's how it was then, and that's how it is now."

The findings show that a change in perception regarding the fitness concept has occurred and that the targeting has shifted to include a broader range of people. In connection with this, fitness practices and related products have become increasingly accepted by the public. This is further deemed to have occurred due to a shift in communication regarding fitness. Interviewee C explained how the fitness movement previously was perceived by stating that, "Strength training was in basement gyms. It was like these string tank tops. It was a lot of steroids, not because it's not a lot of steroids now, but it was a subculture among a certain type of men above all." However, as this perception has shifted to include a wider range of people, more people have felt welcome to participate. The findings further show that this was connected to the commercialization and accessibility of the fitness movement, which previously was explained as something only a limited group of people were welcome to join. This change is described by Interviewee F as he states that "it has started with the whole fitness

movement and to move it from basement rooms in as well as industrial areas to shopping centers or in the middle of as well as the shopping street in the middle of town that was not there before at all." This changing perception and increased accessibility of the fitness movement is something the interviewees agree has been important for their ventures as it has transformed the movement to serve larger groups of people, making the movement and its participation so large. This is further in connection with the changing goals of the movement from only focusing on aesthetics to including the overall health and well-being of the participants. As argued by, for example, Interviewees H and E, this has led to more people feeling included and welcome to participate. As a result, products that are aimed towards everyone, like breakfast products, have appeared. This can further be seen in the examples of Interviewees H and G, who sell products within this category. Interviewee H explained this in the following quote: "We have porridge products and things like that, that are more maybe for ordinary people. Not hard-core training people. Pancake mixes (...) and then I think we have easier to attract even slightly older people."

Subsequently, the portrayed negative connotations surrounding fitness practices have increasingly disappeared as a wider range of people have started promoting and participating in fitness-related activities and consuming fitness-related products. The shift in perception of fitness to being seen as something for people at large is thus seen as a vital shift in perception that has enabled the growth and legitimization of the industry. It was also found that the initial ventures within the fitness industry were important for legitimizing the industry. These initial ventures, in the context of Sweden, were larger gym chains that directed their communication toward a wide range of people. It has been seen that these initial ventures laid the ground for the fitness industry in Sweden and thus created the foundation for the industry to flourish to the great extent it has reached today. This correlates to previous social movement theory stating that the initial SMOs are significant for enabling other smaller ventures to emerge.

The findings have shown that the fitness movement has worked to enable new venture creation in the context of Sweden by activating two mechanisms on the venture level, which are legitimization and demand expansion. Additionally, other shifts have been identified as significant that occurred prior to or simultaneously with the fitness movement's growth. The identified shifts are: 1. the shift of people's daily life and routines becoming more sedentary, 2. development of digital technology and media channels, and 3. regulatory shifts in the context of Sweden. The shifts have further helped activate the two mechanisms on the venture level: legitimization and demand expansion.

The increased awareness and interest that has occurred regarding fitness is further connected to the role of media in the social movement. The increased exposure to fitness in media has motivated individuals to change their way of life and choose healthier habits, thus shifting their demand to alternative products in line with the movement. The ventures have utilized this, which has resulted in more ventures with goals aligned with those of the movement. Furthermore, the findings suggest that some ventures have altered their product offerings to include product ranges that exploit the fitness movement's demand, thus shaping the venture's offerings.

There has also been a cultural shift in people's day-to-day life during the last decades because people are becoming increasingly sedentary and need to exercise to stay healthy. Media exposure and increased research on the importance of fitness and health are further seen as vital for the increased awareness and interest of the movement, contributing to its growth. In the later years of the movement, ambassadors and other individuals present on social media platforms are also argued to have played a part in motivating more people to join the movement by participating in some fitness-related activity. Not to be forgotten is also that this increased exposure of the movement is likely to have contributed to the increase in demand, that is, the other mechanism identified to be activated by the fitness movement. Without the development of digital technology and social media channels, findings suggest that the growth of the fitness movement would not have been as vast. The use of social media is also explained as something that has triggered different trends and thus enabled different niches to form. These trends mean that niches continuously are enabled which consistently triggers new venture creation within the industry or shapes the offerings of already existing ventures. In correlation with established beliefs in social movement theory, the initial ventures in a new industry lay the foundation for it and can later lead to new niches forming which corresponds with the findings of this thesis.

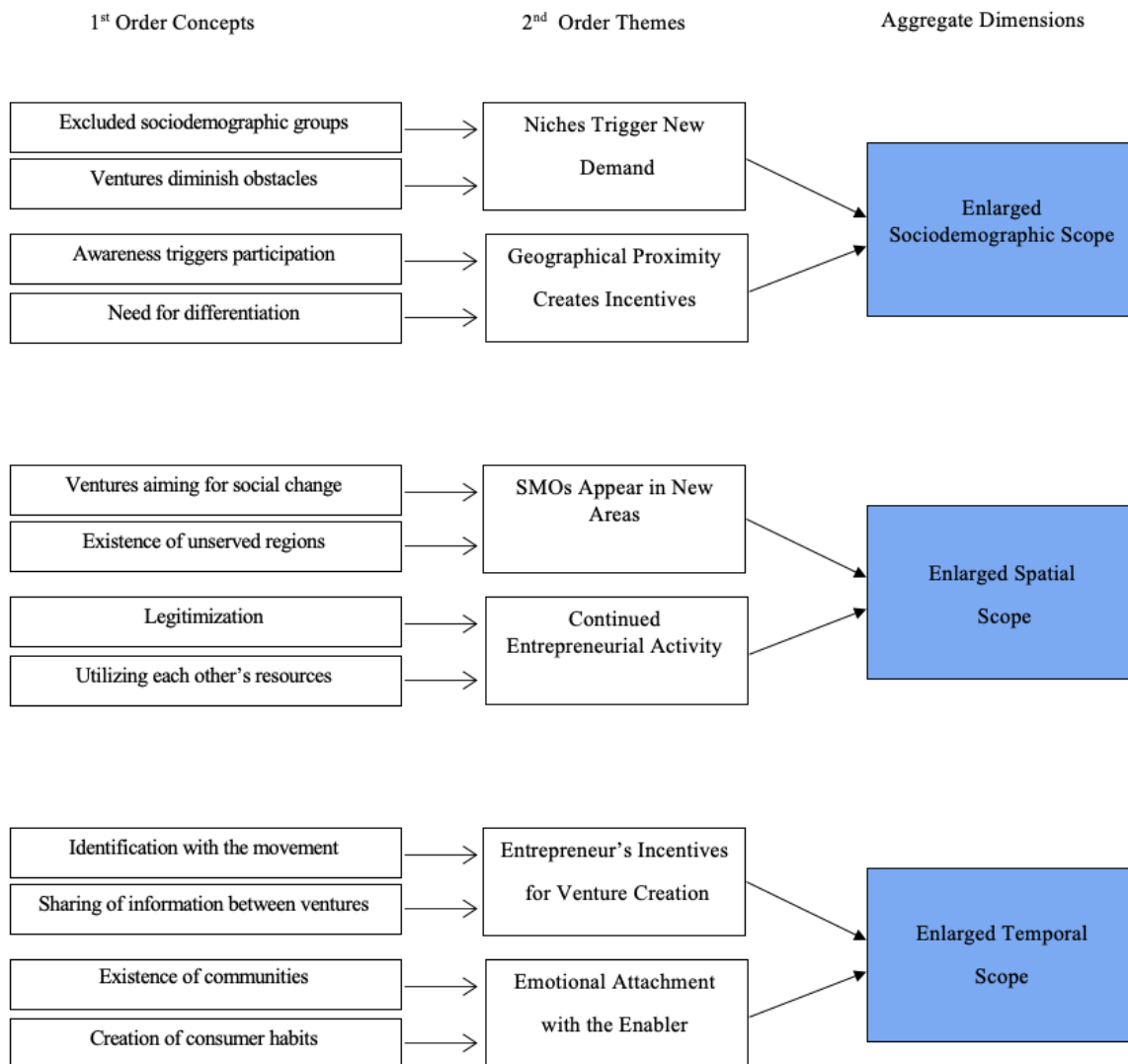
Demand creation for fitness-related products and services is also seen as connected to regulatory shifts such as the implementation of the Swedish health allowance. Regulatory shifts have made the Swedish context a very spatially fitting context for the growth of the fitness movement. As fitness is explained as something people can focus on once all their other needs are satisfied, the focus in politics on people's health and the introduction of the Swedish health allowance is argued to have contributed to the growth of the fitness movement. This regulatory or political shift has contributed to the momentum of the fitness movement and made the movement's growth so successful in Sweden's context.

To summarize, raised demand for fitness, a healthy lifestyle, and the legitimization of the new industry have created demand and unserved niches where opportunities exist for ventures to form. As the media pushes the idea of fitness as an ideal connected to a healthy lifestyle and beauty, more people are being exposed to this message. Furthermore, as lifestyles have become more sedentary, personal interests are further deemed to have played a large part in motivating people to join the fitness movement. The fitness movement is thus seen to have worked in outcome-enhancing ways for ventures, as well as by triggering ventures and, at times, shaping their offerings. As previously stated in connection to the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation, multiple shifts can work to reinforce the enabling influence of each other. The findings suggest that this has occurred in the context of the fitness movement in Sweden and that this has led to the successful activation of the mechanisms of legitimization of the industry and demand expansion.

4.2 Social Movements & Scope

However, as most interviewees state that the fitness movement has worked as an enabler in creating their venture and contributed to its success, several also argue that they play a role in contributing to the movement. Interviewee G exemplifies how their business contributes back to the movement by claiming that “On the one hand, we inspire through our marketing to get in. But we but above all it is within our products that the better products we have, the easier it is for those who intend to start living healthy to start and get into exercising.” This means ventures enabled by the fitness movement in their emergence or their operations, in turn, contribute to the movement. The findings suggest that this has occurred by enlarging the scope of the social movement. The findings show that three main scopes of the social movement were influenced by the ventures, which are the sociodemographic, the spatial, and the temporal scope of the movement. The data categorization table, shown in Table 4, presents the 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes, and aggregate dimensions, representing this thesis's core findings. A table with quotes motivating the 1st order concepts can be found in the Appendix as Table 5. The concepts, themes, and aggregate dimensions presented in the data categorization table will be elaborated on and explained further in this chapter to clearly present the main findings.

Table 4: Data Categorization Table



4.2.1 Enlarged Sociodemographic Scope

As the fitness market has become increasingly saturated and many of the larger gym chains have become well-established with large customer groups, new ventures must find a way to differentiate themselves. The findings suggest that one way to do so is by directing the products or services to people interested in participating but have yet to find a place where they feel comfortable doing so. The findings show that there is still much potential for the industry, and, as suggested by interviewee H, there are still gaps in the market, such as serving excluded **sociodemographic groups**. Interviewee D similarly states that "the potential is among those who do not train today, if you can find a way to attract, attract them to test your concept then you have a lot to gain (...)." A beneficial strategy of ventures is thus argued to entail targeting the products or services to previously excluded groups who

do not feel comfortable in the existing establishments. The findings show that ventures can do so by creating a differentiation, or niche, for their venture, which is aimed at serving these previously disregarded customer groups. By doing so, the **ventures diminish obstacles** of participation. This means that to attract new participants, ventures must offer something new that attracts these groups of people to the social movement and its related practices.

As stated by Interviewee E, people outside of the movement are either not interested in participating or have yet to find the right workout environment. The latter thus presents a large potential for ventures to capitalize. When inquired why some people have not found the right environment for them yet, interviewees B and H shed light on the fact that the large focus on aesthetics may scare people who do not feel comfortable with the image of their bodies, something that can work as an obstacle from participating in the movement. Further hindrances highlighted by interviewees are the lack of time many people have and a lack of knowledge in fitness. As stated by Interviewee B, there is a need for a more inclusive view of fitness and health that looks at the whole picture of a person's well-being. Interviewee B reinforces this by claiming that "there is large focus on appearance. And nothing wrong with that, as long as it doesn't get out of hand. I'd like to get a little more into the foundation," and further mentioned that ventures should focus on the larger aspect of a person's well-being. Another hinder is explained to be the geographical distance of products and services, such as fitness centers, which creates an obstacle for people to join the movement.

To accommodate some of the obstacles of people who aspire to join the movement, ventures have aimed to create a more inclusive view of a person's well-being. For example, Interviewee E has aimed to accommodate by taking away mirrors and by doing so, the focus on aesthetics. The interviewee further explains the reasoning for this by saying that "They can't see themselves at a traditional gym. They don't feel comfortable there, they don't feel comfortable that there are mirrors. Just a thing like that or so. So, I think you can. You can expand that universe (...) by having different offerings in the universe. And they don't have to be commercial." Another example stated by Interviewee E regards how their venture initially targeted the mass market, which later was refined. Now they target their services to a smaller and more defined segment since they have realized that it is a more profitable strategy. The shift in the organization's targeting, explained by Interviewee E, has changed from targeting everyone to instead focusing on the elderly population as well as people who have limited time and knowledge. Interviewee E explains this by saying, "this segment is also growing because you have more people that are growing older, you have more diabetes, you have more you know you

need to exercise (...)," which points to peoples' changing life conditions and the potential for ventures to serve these groups of people. The interviewee further explains that they aim to create an environment that feels welcoming and where the social aspect is also a big component. Furthermore, they have enabled parents with limited time to bring their children to the fitness center, which gives them opportunities to exercise. These offerings are examples of how ventures have worked to facilitate people's participation in the movement. The findings show that these ventures, entering the market with a specific niche, have a profitable position in attracting people outside the movement by directing their product specifically towards these sociodemographic groups. This is done by considering these unserved groups of people when implementing the venture and its operations. **These niches are thus argued to trigger new demand.** The findings further show that this new demand is from people previously outside of the movement, which means that the ventures have contributed to an enlarged sociodemographic scope of the movement. Looking at this broadly, saturated markets require ventures to find a niche where they can differentiate themselves. This leads to a larger chance of success for the venture but also generates interest and demand from the public who feel seen and comfortable in participating in the related activities with the movement, which strengthens the momentum of the movement.

Another way in which the findings show that ventures can work to incorporate more people into the movement is by choosing strategic geographical areas. By choosing smaller cities or rural areas, which are seen to be located further from the origin of the social movement, ventures have been able to establish themselves more easily in the market. As ventures **need to differentiate themselves**, this is a way for them to do so. Interviewees A and E explain how they have opened fitness centers in smaller cities where the larger gym chains do not operate but demand is still high. It is further explained by Interviewee A that these areas have less fierce competition and offer the opportunity to make a difference for people. The interviewee explained the thought process of starting the company in the following way: "living in the countryside, like I did, wouldn't be very smart I thought, who could I reach out to out here? But they said that's where the potential is to really start something." This venture thus created accessibility for people who wanted to start exercising as the fitness centers were now more accessible and available in smaller cities and rural areas. Additionally, this shows how people who previously have been part of the movement in some way now can partake in the movement's commercial aspect, which gives the ability for ventures to continue their operations and engage people in related activities. Ultimately, the people who have been interested in participating

can now more easily do so since they have a more accessible and available option to do so that requires less time and effort.

Furthermore, the findings shed light on the fact that not only do people with previously established demand for fitness-related products or service engage when a venture implements their offerings in new geographical areas, but so does people who have previously been outside of the movement. This means that as the venture is established, people outside of the social movement may become aware of the venture's offerings, which can trigger demand from these groups of people. The **increased awareness thus triggers the participation** of new sociodemographic groups. This would mean that, as the venture, and in such, the movement, becomes geographically closer to the individual, they are incentivized to partake in related activities. **Geographical proximity is thus seen to create incentives** for individuals to participate in the movement, as it diminishes obstacles to participation and raises awareness, creating new demand.

Furthermore, word of mouth between inhabitants of smaller cities and rural areas is a powerful tool that helps establish new ventures and their offerings in these areas, which is argued to play a role in the successful implementation of ventures in these areas. As explained by Interviewee A, most of the venture's customers have never participated in the fitness-related activities before the venture's implementation. This means that the strategic decisions of ventures incorporate more people into the movement. These are people with previously established demand and those who are incentivized to join the movement once a venture is established that provides an accessible way to participate.

It can further be argued that, by offering the possibility to participate in the movement in unserved geographical areas, ventures have found a gap where they can establish themselves. Nonetheless, they also contribute to the movement by creating accessible solutions for people to partake in and spark a demand amongst people who have not previously participated in any activity related to the social movement. This would mean that ventures exploit demand in unserved areas for their survival and create demand as they establish themselves. This is argued to reinforce the movement and incorporate new groups of people, enlarging its sociodemographic scope. It was also found that some organizations make it their strategy to open in new locations in unserved areas. This leads to more geographical areas being served by ventures with similar goals to those of the movement, which is argued to incorporate more people. This change of venture's geographical location, which includes new groups of people, can further be connected to the enlarged spatial scope of the movement. This

is because, as the offerings become available in new parts of the country, demand for related products and services is likely to increase in these regions.

4.2.2 Enlarged Spatial Scope

The findings further suggest that as ventures aim to differentiate themselves by making products or services available to new groups of people, they also serve new geographical areas and new parts of the country. It was argued by several interviewees that there is an **existence of unserved regions** in the country which means that there are possibilities to expand the movement and the connected industry to these areas. This is deemed attractive for **ventures aiming for social change** and making a difference in line with the movement's goals. The findings show that a venture's potential to contribute to change is more extensive in unserved areas, and this is also shown to be a way to differentiate the venture in the market. In the cases of entrepreneurs opening in geographically unserved areas, the main motivator was often to help people and make a difference in their lives. The new ventures were often met with great demand when opening in these areas, which shows that people have been interested in participating in the movement but have not had an accessible solution to do so. As mentioned, the willingness to help people is a large part of why people start ventures in connection to the fitness movement. Many interviewees claim that the goal of their venture is to help people within the fitness movement. Interviewee C expressed that their venture hopes to affect public health positively, as it is their mission to do so. Their goal is to help people continue exercising. Furthermore, Interviewee G has a goal to help people make healthier choices by offering these alternatives, or as they formulated it: "it is like our entire mission (...) to constantly facilitate the everyday lives of consumers to live healthier and we do this with our products, we simplify." The findings show that one way of doing so is by choosing strategic geographical locations to serve new parts of the country and make a difference in these areas. As the potential to make a difference is more extensive in these unserved geographic areas, the findings suggest that **SMOs will appear in these new areas**.

It was further found that, as ventures establish themselves in new geographical areas, such as smaller towns and rural areas, they **legitimize the practices** and create resources for more entrepreneurial activity to bloom. The findings suggest that ventures often utilize each other's resources in their progression. This means that as one venture becomes successful and legitimized in the market, other ventures can more easily establish themselves. This is similar to established beliefs in social movement theory which looks at how the existing ventures can make resources more easily accessible

for new ventures and thus enable them and work to legitimize the offerings in a specific region. It was further found that ventures can **utilize each other's resources**, which means they can aid each other in their development. This phenomenon is exemplified by Interviewee A, explaining how they rent out a room in the training facility to a massage therapist and invite other niched instructors to have exercise sessions at the gym. This shows how the creation of one venture can result in the triggering of other ventures in the same area, further enlarging the spatial scope of the movement. This, in turn, is deemed to make resources more accessible, which leads to **continued entrepreneurial activity**. As this occurs, the ventures have spread the movement to new geographical areas, meaning the spatial scope of the movement is enlarged. The interviewee further explained how opening a gym in a closely located geographical area has been possible after the first fitness center was established. In the other town, the venture has hired other people to aid in the venture's operation. This further shows that as a venture is opened in an area further from the origin of the movement, the practices are established in surrounding areas, leading to further enlargement of the spatial scope.

4.2.3 Enlarged Temporal Scope

As explained, the fitness movement has been described by most interviewees as enabling their venture. However, the entrepreneurs did not always reflect on the presence of the movement. Instead, they explain how they identified an opportunity and would later look back and realize that they started the venture at an ideal point where there was a demand for their product or service. This finding is connected to the duration of the fitness movement as it has been growing for a long time. Other interviewees also agree with the previous statement to a certain extent but also explain how they created a demand for the product or service once it was introduced to the market. Nonetheless, they all agree that the interest in fitness and health in the marketplace was vital for legitimizing the venture. The findings further suggest that the people who create ventures in connection with the fitness movement have two things in common; they have a huge interest in fitness and health and are also truly knowledgeable in the field. Interviewee B exemplifies this passion with the movement's practices by stating that "I'm constantly educating myself. I read more. It's not just a job for me. This is what I live with otherwise too and I want to be able to spread this knowledge so that in that way I think I am contributing." This quote further shows how **the entrepreneur identifies strongly with the movement**. The findings suggest that this identification can lead to entrepreneurs wanting to spread information to others. This can lead to the **sharing of information between ventures** which can aid in their implementation and strategic choices. Information is an abstract resource between entrepreneurs shared on different platforms and can give strategically valuable information regarding

the venture creation process. Entrepreneurs' identification with the movement and the sharing of information can **create incentives for continued venture creation of entrepreneurs**, which is argued to enlarge the temporal scope of the movement.

Nonetheless, information sharing can also influence individuals and consumers to participate in the movement, especially by keeping individuals involved in the activities related to the movement. Interviewee B said that one threshold for people to enter the gym could be the lack of information. Further, Interviewee C, who works with spreading information online through podcast and other media, said, "But our goal, on the contrary, is that they should continue to exercise. If they do not, if they do not keep exercising after six months or a year then we have failed and then they have disappeared as a potential customer for us." This quote shows how one venture can contribute to keeping individuals involved in fitness-related activities and thus continued participation in the movement, which enlarges the temporal scope. Nonetheless, the findings show that only information is not enough to keep an individual involved in the movement. Instead, a sense of community and the creation of habits are seen as vital elements for continued participation for consumers.

The findings further suggest that **communities** are important since they create an environment where people feel welcome and comfortable. The social aspect of the product or service is also identified as important in this case, especially for older people who, in the fitness movement, can combine exercise with socializing, which generates positive feelings in multiple ways. For example, Interviewee E mentioned that there is a big social component in their business. They offer free coffee, which the elderly members at the training facility enjoy after their workouts. Furthermore, Interviewee B claimed that communities could have enabling qualities and gave the example of CrossFit. This trend came with a strong community that made it possible for more people to join the fitness movement. This interviewee argued for increased participation in the movement in the past three years and stated, "Well, I think they looked back a little bit like. Checking what was really successful about these products that came? I think they noticed that there was a community and that there was a connection. How is this product, how can we do something similar? And then it has popped up all sorts of variations from there".

Findings further show that **consumers' creation of habits** is vital for keeping them participating in the movement. Several interviewees explained how, as individuals find a form of exercise fitting for them, they are more likely to continue. It was further explained that exercising and similar fitness-

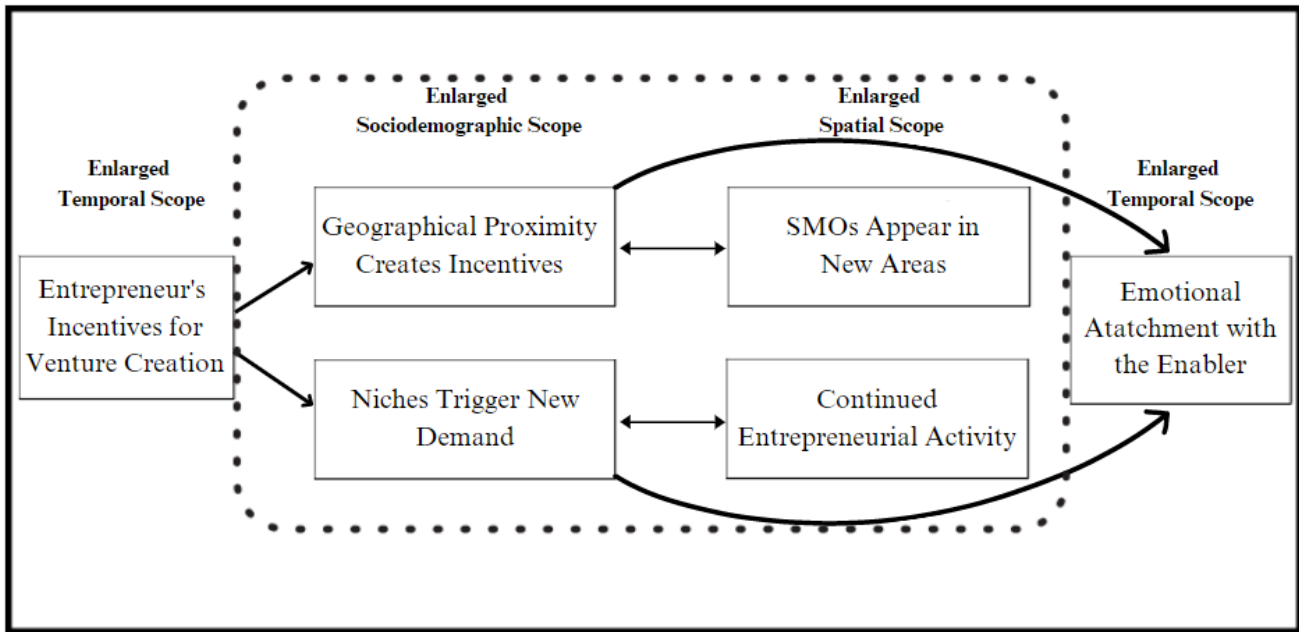
related activities become something one does not need to think about but simply do. This is due to exercise becoming a habit. Habit is thus explained as a more critical function than motivation, which often is discussed in connection with fitness and an active lifestyle. Interviewee C states that people ultimately see themselves as a person who works out, and this feeling of identification entails that one will continue with the activity. The three interviewees, C, D, and H, all used the example that when people see themselves as a person who works out, it is no longer simply about motivation, but it is something one just does, like brushing one's teeth.

The existence of communities and the creation of consumer habits are thus explained as the two concepts that lead to the consumer creation of an **emotional attachment with the enabler**, which leads to the continued participation of individuals for a long time and, thus, an enlarged temporal scope.

4.3 Grounded Theory Articulation

The scope of an External Enabler is one part of the determinants that represent the potential of it to work in enabling ways for new venture creation. As it has been found that ventures contribute to social movements by enlarging their scopes, we argue for a loop that should be added to the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation. As the findings have presented, ventures can influence the social movement's sociodemographic, spatial, and temporal scope. How this influence of ventures occurs, and is sustained, will be presented in the model of grounded theory articulation in Table 6 by explaining how the second-order themes of the data categorization in Table 5 are connected.

Table 6: Grounded Theory Articulation



Findings suggest that an entrepreneur can **gain incentives for venture creation** in two different ways. This can occur by feeling a strong sense of identification with the movement resulting from participation in related practices and a sense of passion connected to it. The incentives for venture creation can, however, also occur as the entrepreneur either identifies or creates an opportunity for a venture in the market. This was seen to be enforced as information is shared between established and aspiring ventures. As previously stated in the literature, social movements can lead to the creation of new industries and the initial ventures of an industry lead to a legitimization of the industry and its related practices. However, this legitimization is likely to lead to saturated markets, which means that entrepreneurs need to find a gap where there is unserved demand or potential for the venture to establish themselves. This means that there is a need for differentiation for ventures. Entrepreneurs can either choose to create a niched venture which targets their products or services to a previously excluded customer group, or they can choose an unserved area where there is demand of new groups to be met. These are the two ways in which ventures can differentiate themselves which both leads to an enlarged sociodemographic scope of the social movement if they succeed in recruiting new groups of people.

If creating a niched venture with the intention of establishing a position in the market, there is a need to reduce entry obstacles for consumers outside of the movement. The venture can successfully recruit previously excluded or unserved market groups by welcoming new customer groups and delivering an attractive service or product to this audience. This enlarges the sociodemographic scope of the

social movement. These new ventures that serve previously excluded customer groups can further reduce obstacles for other ventures to establish themselves. This is because they both legitimize the niched venture and their practices and because resources for the offerings can become more easily accessible. This represents the arrow between the box of **Niches Trigger New Demand** and **Continued Entrepreneurial Activity**. A cross-function of mechanisms results in this connection between the two boxes. As new niches are created, they can work to legitimize their practices or offers, which in turn, creates potential for other ventures.

Furthermore, the findings show that new ventures can share information regarding the business environment with other entrepreneurs, which reduces uncertainty. Additionally, the expansion mechanism is present since, when one venture appears, the resources for similar niches become more accessible. Furthermore, the motivation for the double-pointed arrow between the two themes is due to continued entrepreneurial activity and, thereby, new venture creation, which leads to the further legitimization and more resources which also can lead to new niches which serve and attract new groups of people.

Suppose the entrepreneur instead chooses a strategic geographical location where there is unserved demand to initiate their venture. In that case, they will not have the same need to operate as a niched venture and will instead attract new sociodemographic groups by serving a new area. The venture will then be able to incorporate new groups of people that reside in these areas and may further create awareness and, therefore, include new groups that previously did not have the demand to participate in fitness-related activities. By providing an accessible solution to participate in the movement, the ventures can contribute to an enlarged sociodemographic scope and create incentives for individuals to partake. This is also true when attracting individuals who previously did not have demand for related activities. Nevertheless, a clear relationship appeared between the theme of **Geographical Proximity Creates Incentives**, and the theme of **SMOs Appear in New Areas**. This is deemed to be because both findings are related to new geographical locations of the social movement, which both results in new sociodemographic groups, and thus an enlargement of the sociodemographic scope, but also an enlargement of the spatial scope, representing in what places the movement has its enabling potential. The findings suggest that, as SMOs aim to make a difference in line with the movement's goals, they also realize there are unserved geographical regions where the potential of doing so is larger. The mechanisms connected to this interrelation are legitimization and demand expansion of these areas. It is further argued that these two themes undoubtedly influence each other

since both types of entrepreneurship appear in these areas to recruit new groups of people to the movement.

As there is a need for differentiation in saturated markets, ventures either choose to take on a niche or serve a new region with unserved sociodemographic groups. Findings suggest that the individuals participating in movement-related activities may create an **emotional attachment with the enabler**. This phenomenon can occur by either participation in a community or by the individual's creation of habits to partake in related activities with the movement. Regarding the creation of communities, particular social dynamics have been identified that make the individual stay within the movement for longer. Thus, the creation of communities, in connection with the creation of a venture, can work to enlarge the temporal scope of the movement.

Furthermore, it is seen that consumers can create a habit of participating in a fitness-related activity, which means that they find themselves in the habit of participating in movement-related activities or consuming movement-related products. This habit means that the individual, who is now part of the social movement, continuously partakes by consuming related services or products, which leads to an enlarged temporal scope of the movement. Thereby, the creation of habit and community are essential for the movement's enlarged temporal scope.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

This chapter connects the findings with the theoretical background to present what both the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation, and Social Movement Theory can learn from this thesis. Limitations of the thesis are also provided in this chapter and future research suggestions. Lastly, the conclusion of this thesis is presented.

5.1 Discussion

As this thesis has combined two literature streams; thus, it also provides two contributions to literature. The findings show that ventures can influence social movements, in the function of a loop, by enlarging the scope of the movement. As the loop is derived from social movement literature, one contribution is a more defined view of how the loop can occur in the business environment. We also present a grounded theory articulation for how the loop occurs and is sustained, which provides a perspective of how ventures and social movements interrelate. Furthermore, a contribution to the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation is suggested, which presents the previously disregarded phenomenon of how ventures influence social movements.

5.1.1 Contribution to Social Movement Literature

The first contribution to literature provided by this thesis is to social movement literature. The thesis thoroughly explained and depicted how the loop function works in the relation between social movements and new venture creation. Previous social movement literature has mentioned a loop in which ventures influence the growth of social movements; however, how the loop works has not been explained in detail before. As the goal of SMOs is to address the same interests as the social movement and to make a change in the market, there is significant importance for social movement theory in understanding how the loop functions (Pacheco & Khoury, 2023). This thesis describes how the scope of the social movement can be influenced and enlarged by ventures, further allowing social movements to influence entrepreneurial processes positively. This contribution further reinforces the view of entrepreneurship and ventures as a vital component of social movements. It contributes to understanding how social movements continuously recruit new participants, allowing the movement's continued growth.

5.1.2 Contribution to the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation

This thesis also contributes to The External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation (Davidsson et al., 2020) by suggesting implementing a loop where social movements also are influenced by the ventures. This is argued to occur as ventures enlarge the scope of the social movement. The previous view of the one-way influence of social movements on ventures is taken to a larger perspective which looks at how the two components of social movements and ventures influence each other, now giving the framework a more dynamic perspective of the business environment. The suggestion to the framework of a loop connecting the influence of social movements and ventures is an important contribution. It is important since it allows for a deeper understanding of how the external shifts and ventures interrelate, giving a more nuanced view of the business environment and entrepreneurship.

5.2 Limitations & Future Research Suggestions

As this thesis investigates how social movements continuously enable new venture creation and vice versa, it is important to mention that only one social movement has been the foundation for answering this research question, namely, the fitness movement. This means that the ability of ventures within this industry to enlarge the scope of the related social movement may differ in the context of other social movements. However, it is argued that the characteristics and scope of a social movement can be influenced by ventures which suggests an interesting area for future research where another social movement can be applied as context. Furthermore, as the potential of the external enabler to work in enabling ways is dependent on context, a limitation of this thesis is that the geographical area for investigation was limited to the Swedish market. The drawbacks of solely investigating one geographical region may thus mean that the social movement's potential of working as an enabler may present itself differently in other regions. This is because it is widely believed that different regions have different enabling potentials for new venture creation, meaning the enabling potential of a social movement may vary in other regions and contexts. Nevertheless, this opens opportunities for future research, such as applying the framework and the theoretical contribution of the loop to another geographical area to further test this thesis's contributions. Lastly, a future research suggestion would be to investigate if the loop suggested to the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation applies to other external shifts in the business environment.

5.3 Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, two contributions have been made by providing contributions to social movement theory and the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation. As External Enablers can work in enabling ways for the venture creation process, this thesis further concludes that ventures, in turn, can influence social movements and contribute to its' momentum. This phenomenon occurs by the function of a loop where ventures enlarge the scope of the social movement and thus its characteristics. The particular scopes of the social movements which were seen to be enlarged by the influence of ventures were the sociodemographic, spatial, and temporal scopes. This occurs as new industries connected to the social movement are legitimized, and markets become increasingly saturated. At this point, there is a need for differentiation, which leads to the aim of recruiting new sociodemographic groups to the movement and serving new spatial regions as a means for differentiation. Ultimately, the temporal scope is enlarged by the social dynamic of the community along with the individuals' creation of habits to practices related to the movement. This enlargement of the movement's scope means that the enabling impact of the social movement becomes applicable in a larger range of contexts. In turn, this means that more ventures can be enabled by the movement, which sustains the loop and the enabling potential of a social movement.

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8. Appendix

Table 1: Keywords for Systematic Search

Disequilibrating Circumstance	Type of Change	New Venture Creation
<p>("soci* mov*", OR "soci* chang*", OR "soci* shift*", OR "soci* trend*", OR "soci* develop*", OR "soci* trans*", OR "soci* advanc*", OR "cultur* mov*", OR "cultur* chang*", OR "cultur* shift*", OR "cultur* trend*", OR "cultur* develop*", OR "cultur* trans*", OR "cultur* advanc*", OR "mov* soci*", OR "chang* soci*", OR "shift* soci*", OR "trend* soci*", OR "develop* soci*", OR "trans* soci*", OR "advanc* soci*", OR "mov* cultur*", OR "chang* cultur*", OR "shift* cultur*", OR "trend* cultur*", OR "develop* cultur*", OR "trans* cultur*", OR "advanc* cultur*")</p>	<p>("Shape*" OR "move*" OR "change*" OR "shift*" OR "develop*" OR "advance*")</p>	<p>("venture creat*" OR "venture found*" OR "venture gestat*" OR "venture emerg*" OR "venture form*" OR "business creat*" OR "business found*" OR "business gestat*" OR "business emerg*" OR "business form*" OR "firm creat*" OR "firm found*" OR "firm gestat*" OR "firm emerg*" OR "firm form*" OR "organization* creat*" OR "organization* found*" OR "organization* gestat*" OR "organization* emerg*" OR "organization* form*" OR "organsation* creat*" OR "organsation* found*" OR "organsation* gestat*" OR "organsation* emerg*" OR "organsation* form*" OR "creat* venture" OR "found* venture" OR "gestat* venture" OR "emerg* venture" OR "form* venture" OR "creat* business" OR "found* business" OR "gestat* business" OR "emerg* business" OR "form* business" OR "creat* firm" OR "found* firm" OR "gestat* firm" OR "emerg* firm" OR "form* firm" OR "creat* organization*" OR "found* organization*" OR "gestat* organization*" OR "emerg* organization*" OR "form* organization*" OR "creat* organsation*" OR "found* organsation*" OR "gestat* organsation*" OR "emerg* organsation*" OR "form* organsation*" OR "new venture" OR "new business" OR "new firm" OR "new organization" OR "new organisation" OR "nascent venture" OR "nascent business" OR "nascent firm" OR "nascent organization" OR "nascent organisation" OR "opportunit* identif*" OR "opportunit* creat*" OR "opportunit* discov*" OR "opportunit* develop*" OR "identif* opportunit*" OR "creat* opportunit*" OR "discov* opportunit*" OR "develop* opportunit*" OR startup OR start-up OR entrepreneur*)</p>

Table 2: Initial Loop Implementation to the External Enabler Framework for New Venture Creation

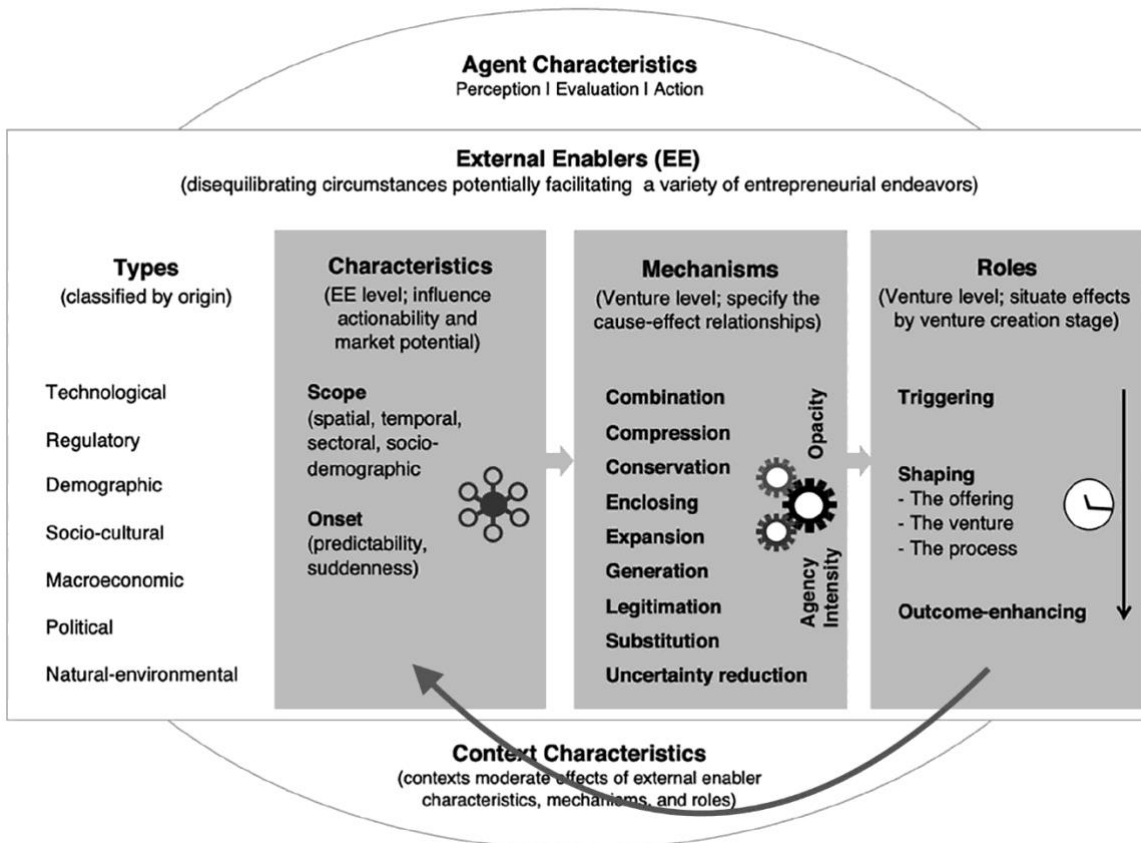


Table 3: Interviewee Information

Interviewee	Position	Company	Interview Duration
Interviewee A	Owner	Gym facility	40 min
Interviewee B	Owner	Training consultancy	30 min
Interviewee C	Co-owner	Podcast, app, blog, web shop	45 min
Interviewee D	Sales representative	Training equipment	60 min
Interviewee E	Franchise owner Sweden	Gym chain	60 min
Interviewee F	Owner	Website with B2B information, podcast	45 min
Interviewee G	Owner	Food supplements	25 min
Interviewee H	Owner	Supplements, podcasts, web shop, blog	25 min

Table 5: Table of Quotes

1 st Order Concepts	Quote 1	Quote 2	Quote 3
Excluded sociodemographic groups	“we have a lot of people that maybe have never gone to the gym” - E	“80% of those who train with me haven't done strength training before” - A	“They never get started for various reasons and further I think between 15% and 17% feel that I was never feeling safe with the equipment” - D
Ventures diminish obstacles	“‘It's so damn easy’, he said. I just click my band. I don't have to go and look for any weights” - D	“you don't have to think and you're in and out in around 45 minutes” - E	“It is really tough training (...) if you make it tough or you can make it lighter” - E
Awareness triggers participation	“there is a lot in the mass media that you need to exercise to live longer and that seniors have come in, that it's never too late to exercise” - A	“you have more you know you need to exercise, you have more people that sit more and so on” - E	“Oh yes. No, it will just grow (...) it's our increasing sedentary behavior, it's coming. I follow a lot of researchers and institutes. There have never been as many studies reports as there are right now about the risks of inactivity, the benefits of activity.” - D
Need for differentiation	“market is pretty saturated (...) how can we find new customer groups, so we see a differentiation?” - F	“. After all, we are unique individuals who seek different things, thrive in different environments so that what I would say there are better opportunities than ever for entrepreneurs to start training facilities that can really work.” - D	“so no, (...) you are completely wrong. It opens more so-called yes, but some niche gyms, some boutique gyms they like to call themselves” - D
Ventures aiming for social change	“If there is a common goal for the fitness industry then it is like - fitness for everyone” - C	“also to help the industry grow to highlight it in a positive way (...) hopefully as well as take inspiration from each other and thus build a better business which in turn hopefully helps people” - F	“it is like our entire mission (...) to constantly facilitate the everyday lives of consumers to live healthier” - G
Existence of unserved regions	“there haven't been many gyms around in the countryside, so most of it started here” - A	“Exclusion areas and so on. It is not at all a priority (...)” - F	“It's perfect for us because (...) SATS is never gonna open a full-fledged big gym there.” - E
Legitimization	“Yes and then commercialization in general of the product “gym”, it is somewhere where it has started with the whole fitness movement and to move it from basement rooms in as well as industrial areas to shopping centers or in the middle of as well as	“SATS and Nordic Wellness and fitness 24/7, nothing bad about them, they are all the customers to me, but I only mention them because they are they are important and big players” - D	“It was very important. It was. (...) part of the acceleration that they understood. You do not need to educate the customer or the consumer, but they understood so much more easily.” - G

	the shopping street in the middle of town that was not there before at all” - F		
Utilizing each other’s resources	“Municipalities primarily bought the outdoor gyms (...) Then individuals took a first step testing the outdoor gym thinking it was quite nice this to pull and lift a bit, I might go in and look someday, well yes, 30 new members in a week” - D	“She rents a room from me, a small room, and she is a PT. (...) then she has a masseuse business and some stuff too so it is a good complement, so we cooperate” - A	“it's the collaborations (...) Then it is also with suppliers then of gym equipment. It is companies that contribute with then naprapath help, masseurs, chiropractors, help, everything that may be needed.” - B
Identification with the movement	“He hung around a lot at ‘the colosseum’, that was a big training forum (...) And tired of answering the same questions over and over again about training and thought that then I might as well write down the answers in a blog” - C	“it is a fun industry that often develops with people who are passionate about exercise and health, who are in it and then now” - F	“I am so passionate about training. This is a completely unique product that really has the future ahead of it” - D
Sharing of information between ventures	“And then it was just this with sharing information (...) creating a new news source really with good and serious stuff” - F	“I know that many people have, like many, retrieve information there because (...) they have probably had the mindset that they should start something before (...)” - F	“information is ‘a and o’ (...) to be able to make an informed decision as well.” -Interviewee F
Existence of communities	“There's a big social component. We have free coffee. When you have exercised, you sit and you sit and chat” - E	“crossfit that made its entrance and got a completely different type of person to see that there is another type of training that one can devote to that is fun, as you do it together” - C	“It's easy to come along, it is the same in a workplace that you get carried away if you want to feel a belonging, a community” - D
Creation of consumer habits	“once they are stuck, they have established their habit of going to the gym 3 times a week, they have begun to identify themselves as a training person” - C	“we help more people succeed with their routines, which creates a larger market indirectly” - C	“it's really not fun every day to work out, but I still do it as well as I brush my teeth 2 times per day.” - D